



PROMOTING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN CAMBODIA

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Exchange Rates

The following exchange rates are used in this report:

2007	\$1 = KR4,060
2008	\$1 = KR4,060
2009	\$1 = KR4,140
2010	\$1 = KR4,044
2011	\$1 = KR4,016
2012	\$1 = KR4,033

Source: www.nis.gov.kh/nis/NA/NA2012.html

Abbreviations

ADB	-	Asian Development Bank
CIPS	-	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey
CRUMP	-	Cambodia Rural Urban Migration Project
CSES	-	Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey
GDP	-	gross domestic product
GMAP	-	gender mainstreaming action plan
ILO	-	International Labour Organization
LFPR	-	labor force participation rate
LFS	-	labor force survey
MAFF	-	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
MDG	-	Millennium Development Goal
MOP	-	Ministry of Planning
MOWA	-	Ministry of Women's Affairs
NIS	-	National Institute of Statistics
PPP	-	purchasing power parity
RS III	-	Rectangular Strategy Phase III
SMEs	-	small and medium-sized enterprises
TVET	-	technical and vocational education and training
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
VSTP	-	Voucher Skills Training Program
WDC	-	women's development center

Executive Summary

Women’s economic empowerment is essential for more inclusive growth in Cambodia. This study takes stock of the major gender issues in the Cambodian economy seen through the lens of women’s participation, benefit, and agency—the three prerequisites for a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth. It examines trends in the labor market and obstacles to women’s economic empowerment, particularly in agriculture, business development, and wage employment. Two special themes are highlighted given their centrality to the Cambodian context: labor migration and vulnerability to shocks and crises. The study then considers the institutional setting and legal framework before making a series of policy recommendations, identifying areas for further research, and highlighting how the Asian Development Bank (ADB) intends to promote women’s economic empowerment.

To paint an up-to-date picture of Cambodia’s labor force, data are drawn from the 2012 Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey, the 2013 Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey, and the 2013 Labor Force Survey. Labor force participation rates for both Cambodian women and men are the highest in the region, and unemployment is virtually nonexistent. However, opportunities for decent work are scarce and underemployment is an issue. Despite very high levels of participation in the labor force, the share of women’s vulnerable employment—the sum of own-account workers and unpaid contributing family workers—remains high at 70% in 2013. Other notable features of women’s economic empowerment include increasing labor force participation rates for women, with a decreasing gender gap and large increases in the number of women with jobs in wholesale and retail trade and services, manufacturing (mostly in textiles, garments, and footwear), agriculture, and accommodation and food service activities. Agriculture remains by far the most important sector of the Cambodian economy in employment terms, remaining the main source of livelihood for nearly 53% of employed women in 2012, as compared with 49% of employed men. Services and industry comprised 29% and 18% of women’s employment, respectively.

Four emerging trends are of particular concern in promoting women’s economic empowerment in Cambodia: (i) the predominantly young population and the growing number of labor force entrants, which pose a challenge to providing decent work for all; (ii) competition from more highly skilled labor in neighboring countries given regional integration; (iii) increased volatility of employment with a high reliance on export markets that are vulnerable to global shocks; and (iv) vulnerability to climate change, which particularly affects agriculture.

The obstacles to women’s economic empowerment in Cambodia include (i) the amount of time required to fulfill responsibilities in unpaid domestic and care work; (ii) women’s low levels of literacy, education, and skills; and (iii) a lack of access to resources

necessary for economic empowerment, e.g., in agriculture, business development, and wage employment.

Cambodia is experiencing high rates of labor migration, and nearly 60% of rural migrant women move to Phnom Penh. There is a clear gender division of occupations for migrant workers, with most migrants working in the garment industry and as self-employed business owners, and a significant amount working in the services and entertainment sectors or as domestic workers. Women migrants have lower average earnings and send more money home than their male counterparts, which means that women migrants receive less benefit from their work both in terms of direct earnings and in terms of what remains after remittances.

While poverty rates have fallen over the past decade, many Cambodians remain vulnerable to shocks and crises. In general, Cambodian girls and women experience greater vulnerability due to prevailing social norms and lower access to resources and employment opportunities to cope with shocks, as compared with boys and men. The types of risk that impact girls and women vary over the life cycle. For example, girls face greater risk of dropping out of lower secondary school, women of reproductive age experience substantial risks associated with pregnancy and childbirth, and older women have higher rates of injury and illness than older men. In addition, women experience particular risks associated with gender-based violence, macroeconomic shocks, and natural disasters. Coping with poverty and multiple vulnerabilities curtails women's ability to participate in the labor market, to derive equal benefits from their participation, and to exercise agency. Strengthening the national social protection system is one way to mitigate the risks that women face.

The institutions to support women's economic empowerment include the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) and gender working groups in each line ministry that prepare and implement gender mainstreaming action plans. Some of these exhibit promising features, but more work is required to connect them to the main planning processes, with adequate funding for implementation. In 2013, MOWA launched a Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Acceleration Framework Cambodia Action Plan focused on women's economic empowerment to contribute to the achievement of other MDGs in poverty reduction, health, and education. The plan prioritizes three areas of intervention: (i) providing training for jobs for women that are consistent with market demands; (ii) ensuring that women have the capacity to lead and grow their micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and can move from the informal to the formal sector; and (iii) improving livelihoods in rural communities, especially for poor women.

MOWA also manages a network of 13 women's development centers (WDCs), vocational centers offering training programs in areas such as handicraft production, hairdressing, tailoring, and food processing. WDCs face a host of challenges and are not reaching their full potential as centers that promote women's economic empowerment. Training needs to be more responsive to the labor market and should include entrepreneurial skills training, business development services, and current market information. Closer links should be established with Cambodia's technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system. There is considerable interest in MOWA to introduce public-private partnerships

at WDCs as a way of increasing their market and entrepreneurial orientation, and to ensure sustainable financing.

The analysis in this report leads to a series of policy recommendations in seven areas:

- 1) addressing the unequal unpaid domestic and care work burden of men and women to enhance women's human capital;
- 2) increasing women's access to the assets and resources that enhance agricultural and rural livelihoods, e.g., land, labor, and human and financial capital;
- 3) supporting a business enabling environment that recognizes women's specific constraints and increases women's access to assets and resources that enable business development and expansion;
- 4) supporting growth of wage employment opportunities and improving working conditions for women, through stronger enforcement of revised laws and regulations and access to training for women;
- 5) reducing the risks and enhancing the benefits of migration for women;
- 6) enhancing social protection for women to reduce vulnerability; and
- 7) enhancing MOWA and line ministry capacity to design and implement gender-responsive plans to promote women's economic empowerment.

ADB has long supported women's economic empowerment in Cambodia. Under the new Cambodia country partnership strategy 2014–2018, ADB will invest in gender equity in both core and noncore operational areas, making significant contributions to women's economic empowerment through gender action plans that mainstream specific gender targets in project design and monitoring frameworks. These investments will be in the agriculture and natural resources, transport and other infrastructure, water supply and sanitation, and governance and public sector management sectors, and particularly in education and TVET.

Through specific gender targets in **education and TVET investments**, ADB will promote women's enrollment, retention, and completion of formal TVET programs and promoting workplace readiness; ensure women's access to stipends for TVET, as well as to dormitories and career mentorship; and promote women's participation in courses in nontraditional areas.

In **water supply and sanitation**, ADB investments will facilitate access to safe water in urban and rural areas, delivering direct benefits to women through time savings and improved health and hygiene; promote agency through women's participation in water and sanitation user groups and as peer-to-peer facilitators; and reduce vulnerability through convenient access to water and sanitation facilities.

In **agriculture and natural resource management**, ADB investments will include targets to address productivity constraints in agriculture, the sector in which most Cambodian women work; promote women's access to economic and financial resources through land with security of land tenure and off-farm employment opportunities; enhance agency, through representation in project decision-making bodies, for example in water resource management; provide women with improved infrastructure to enable increased

productivity and income, reduce work burden, and improve access to education, health, and social services; and increase women's farming income through enhanced efficiency and climate resilience of irrigation systems and improved water resource management.

In **transport and other infrastructure**, ADB's investments will include specific targets to ensure women's access to jobs created by the construction and maintenance of 1,000 kilometers of rural roads; facilitate faster, year-round access to markets and services through upgraded and paved all-weather rural roads; expand tourism markets and promote women's access to tourism-related jobs; and enhance agency by ensuring substantial representation of women in leadership positions of destination management organizations.

Through specific gender targets in **governance and public sector management**, ADB investments will promote women's participation in planning and administrative functions in district and municipal structures; ensure greater integration of women's needs and priorities in the development of legislation, policies, and programs related to subnational democratic development; and strengthen gender awareness and capacities of male and female civil servants.

1

Introduction: Participation, Benefit, and Agency

The 2014 *Cambodia Country Poverty Analysis* of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) concludes that ensuring equal opportunities for girls and women is vital, and that one of the most sure-fire ways to achieve more inclusive growth in Cambodia is to promote women's economic empowerment. Emerging from that finding, this study was prepared to help inform the ADB Cambodia country partnership strategy, 2014–2018. It is based largely on a chapter drafted as a contribution to the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) forthcoming national gender assessment, for which MOWA sought technical inputs from development partners on different topics.¹ This study takes stock of the major gender issues in the Cambodian economy, with a particular focus on the period 2008–2013. It first examines status, trends, and emerging issues in the labor force before focusing on barriers to women's economic empowerment. Two special themes are highlighted next: women and labor migration and girls' and women's vulnerability to shocks and crises. The report then considers the institutional and legal context for women's economic empowerment before making a series of policy recommendations and identifying areas for further study. The final section sets out how ADB plans to contribute to women's economic empowerment in Cambodia during the country partnership strategy period.

Defining women's economic empowerment. While the concept of women's economic empowerment continues to evolve,² the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) definition provides a useful starting point. The OECD Development Assistance Committee's Network on Gender Equality refers to women's economic empowerment as

The capacity of women and men to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes in ways that recognise the value of their contributions, respect their dignity and make it possible to negotiate a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth. Economic empowerment increases women's access to economic resources and opportunities

¹ For example, the chapter on education and training was prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; the United Nations Development Programme prepared the chapter on the institutional framework for gender mainstreaming; Oxfam Great Britain contributed the chapter on women's political participation and decision making; and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade prepared a chapter on gender-based violence. As of September 2014, MOWA planned to publish these inputs as a series of policy briefs before the end of the year, with the full Cambodia Gender Assessment postponed to 2015.

² For a review, see Kabeer 2012.

including jobs, financial services, property and other productive assets, skills development and market information.

Women's economic participation and empowerment are fundamental to strengthening women's rights and enabling women to have control over their lives and exert influence in society.³

This definition incorporates the three key dimensions of **participation** in and **benefit** from economic growth plus the role of **agency** in terms of negotiation and decision making. These three dimensions are also reflected in the Cambodian MOWA understanding, where women's economic empowerment "means that women should not only have equal access to education, health care or jobs in the civil service, but moreover to opportunities for starting and doing their own business and earning income from gainful employment."⁴ MOWA's mission statement is that women and girls enjoy equal access to services and control of resources, with equal opportunity to take part fully in national life and enjoy protection against all forms of discrimination and violations of their human rights. The ministry's 5-year strategic plan (Neary Rattanak) is designed to support women to access and claim their right to fully participate and benefit from economic and social development, and also as decision makers.

Recent literature explores the importance of agency in women's economic empowerment, gender equality, and inclusive growth. For the World Bank (2014), agency is the ability to make decisions about one's own life and to act on them to achieve a desired outcome, free of violence, retribution, or fear. In this definition, agency occurs at both the individual and collective levels. The attention to agency goes back to earlier academic and policy discourses about power and how women bring about change. While economic empowerment does not guarantee gender equality, it does provide an important mechanism for women to negotiate improvements in their well-being. Women's economic empowerment is an essential element of inclusive growth.

A note on data sources. This analysis is based on a literature review and key informant interviews in Cambodia in 2014, integrating information drawn from multiple sources. Documents reviewed include strategy and program documents of line ministries, MOWA, development partners, and civil society organizations. There are three main data sources used to analyze the labor market: (i) the Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey (CSES) of various years, (ii) the 2013 Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013, and (iii) the 2013 Labor Force Survey. These three surveys use a comparable definition of the labor force (or economically active population), which is the number of persons employed or unemployed in the reference period. For all three data sources this includes people engaged in subsistence production. However, the three data sources are not strictly comparable because they use different reference periods and age groups. All three sources are intended to be nationally representative, although they differ in the number of households covered. Details are as follows:

³ OECD 2011, p. 6.

⁴ Ing. 2012.

- (i) In the **CSES**, the labor force refers to the number of persons employed or unemployed and the labor force includes persons engaged in subsistence production. The reference period is the 7 days prior to the survey. The CSES uses a population age group of 15–64 years. The total sample comprised 12 monthly samples and is nationally representative. The CSES is conducted annually, with larger samples of about 12,000 households (1,000 per month) every 5 years (e.g., 2004 and 2009) and smaller samples of about 3,600 (300 per month) in the interim years.⁵
- (ii) In the **2013 Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey (CIPS)**, the labor force is the number of “persons with main activity as employed or unemployed during the reference period of 1 year preceding the census date” and is the same as the economically active population. While the reference period is 1 year prior to the survey of 3 March 2013, a person is considered as “having worked, if he/she worked at least 6 months (183 days) or more during [the] reference period.” The CIPS covered 28,650 households. The labor force participation rate is estimated for the population age group 5 years and older. The labor force includes people engaged in subsistence production, given the definition that work includes work for “wage, salary, profit or family gain in cash or kind.”⁶
- (iii) In the **2013 Labor Force Survey**, the labor force “refers to person 15 years or older who contribute or are available to contribute to the production of goods and services in the country. They are either employed or unemployed during the reference week prior to the survey.” The labor force is the currently economically active population and includes persons engaged in subsistence production as well as production for sale. The reference period is 1 week prior to the survey, which was conducted over the period 26 February to 13 April, 2012, covering 9,600 households. While the survey was conducted at only one point in the year and thus cannot account for seasonal differences in labor force participation and employment (which are pronounced particularly in the agriculture sector), this survey does provide useful information not available in the other two sources, such as data on earnings, time-related underemployment, precarious employment, and informal employment.

⁵ MOP 2013c, Chapter 10, p. 103.

⁶ MOP 2013a, p. 145.

2

Women's Economic Empowerment: Status, Trends, and Emerging Issues

2.1 Status: Participation

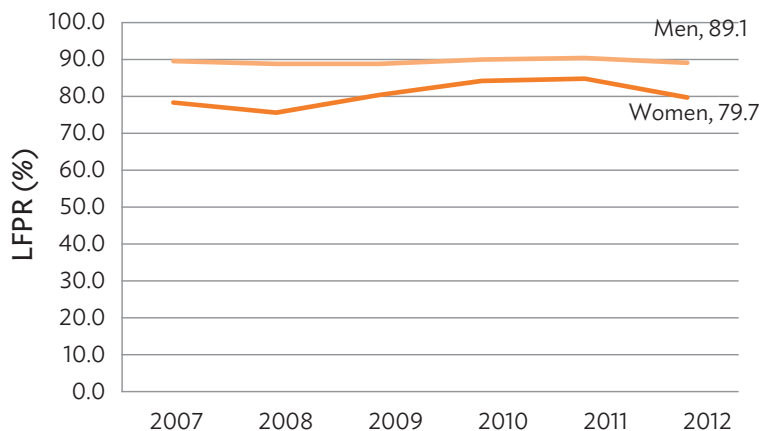
Notable features of Cambodian women's economic empowerment include

- (i) increasing labor force participation rates for women, with a decreasing gender gap;
- (ii) a falling share of vulnerable employment for women, but with an increasing gender gap;
- (iii) a greater transition away from agriculture for men than for women; and
- (iv) large increases in the number of women with jobs in wholesale and retail trade and services, manufacturing, agriculture, and accommodation and food service activities.

The women's labor force participation rate (LFPR) has increased, but a gender gap remains. Women's labor force participation for the age group 15–64 years increased slightly from 78.3% in 2007 to 79.7% in 2012, resulting in a slight decline in the gender gap from 11.2 to 9.4 percentage points (Figure 1). Men's labor force participation was 89.6% in 2007 and 89.1% in 2012. The drop in the women's LFPR from 2007 to 2008 is likely due to the global financial crises, when the demand for labor fell. Women's labor force participation rate was higher in the years 2009 through 2011 than in 2007 and 2008, as well as in 2012, likely due to young women and older women joining the labor force when women were laid off from the textile, garment, and footwear sectors as a result of the global financial crises, which is discussed in further detail in section 5.3. Women comprise 49% of the total labor force aged 15–64 years, and there were 3.8 million women in the labor force in 2012 (CSES data). Women's LFPR is higher in rural areas (82%) than in Phnom Penh (72%).

While women's LFPR increased and men's LFPR remained relatively stable from 2007 to 2012, there are noteworthy changes in the age–sex LFPRs over this period (Figures 2 and 3). This may reflect women's and men's educational and labor market opportunities. For women, the LFPRs were higher in 2012 compared with those in 2008 for each age group, with the exception of the age group 15–19 years. This may reflect increased participation in education by young women. For men, the LFPRs were higher in 2012 compared with those in 2008 for each age group 25 years and above and were lower for the age groups 15–19 and 20–24 years. Again, this may suggest increased participation in educational activities.

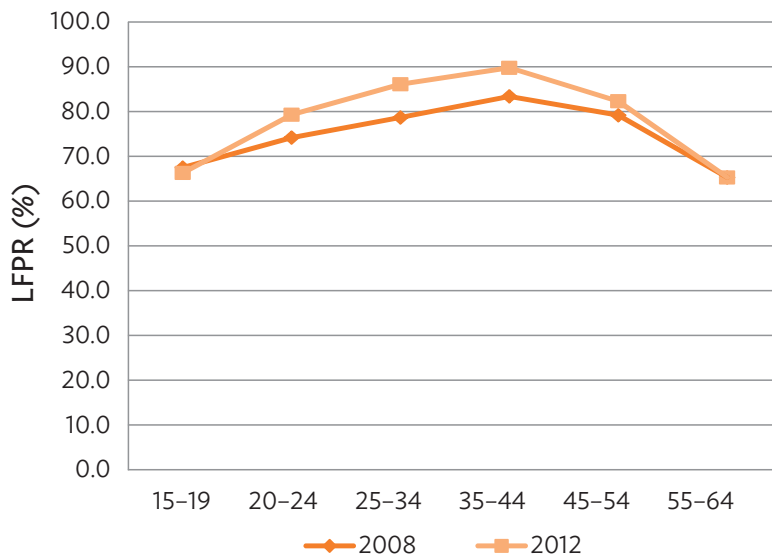
Figure 1: Labor Force Participation Rates (15–64 years) by Sex, 2007–2012



LFPR = labor force participation rate.

Source: Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Planning. 2012c. *Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 2012*. Phnom Penh.

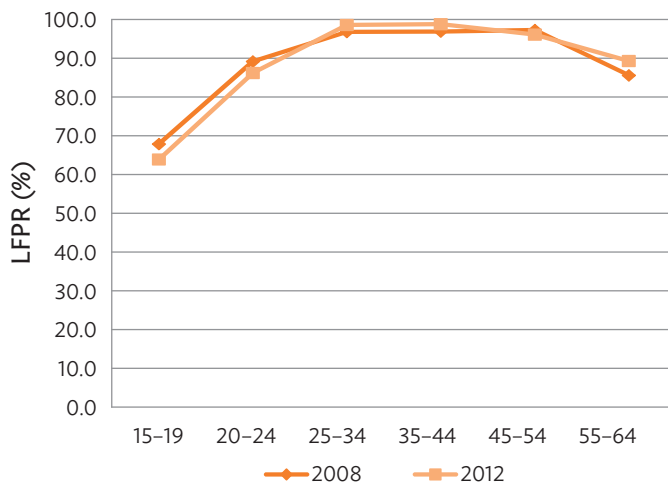
Figure 2: Labor Force Participation Rates by Age Group, Women (15–64 years), 2008 and 2012



LFPR = labor force participation rate.

Source: Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Planning. 2012c. *Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 2012*. Phnom Penh.

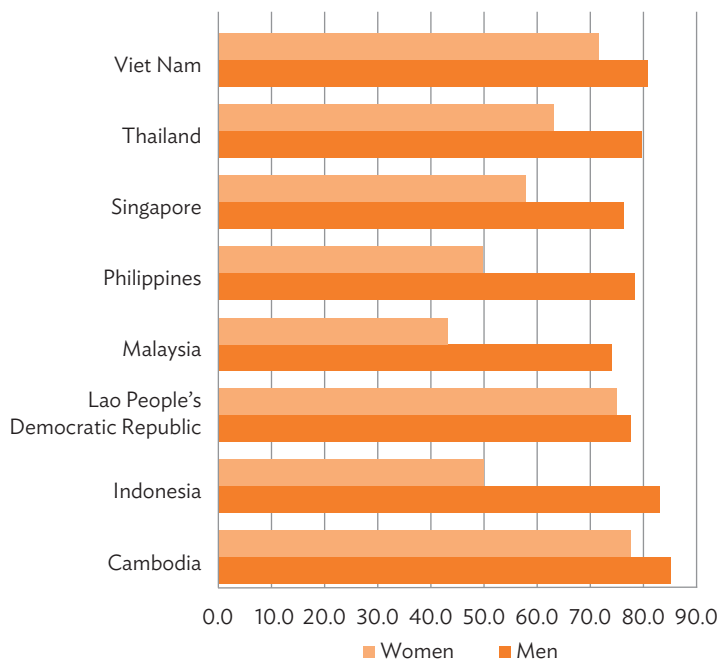
Figure 3: Labor Force Participation Rates by Age Group, Men (15–64 years), 2008 and 2012



LFPR = labor force participation rate.

Source: Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Planning. 2012c. *Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 2012*. Phnom Penh.

Figure 4: Labor Force Participation Rates (15+ years) in Selected Southeast Asian Countries, 2012 (%)



Source: International Labour Organization. 2013b. *Key Indicators of the Labour Market*. 8th edition. Geneva.

LFPFRs for both women and men in Cambodia are the highest in the region. Although the LFPFR for women in Cambodia is the highest in the region, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has a lower gender gap (Figure 4).

The transition of employment away from agriculture has been greater for men than for women. Production in the Cambodian economy has shifted away from the agriculture sector toward the industrial and service sectors. Over the period 2008–2012, the average annual growth rate of output was 6.3% in industry, 5.5% in services, and 4.5% in agriculture. Agriculture accounted for about one-third of gross domestic product (GDP) during 2007–2012 despite the movement of labor out of the sector, suggesting increasing labor productivity. Agriculture's share of GDP fell from 37.9% in 2000 to 31.7% in 2007, and rose again to 35.6% in 2012. Agriculture grew more slowly than other sectors on average over the last decade.⁷

Structural change in the production of goods and services is associated with shifts in employment for both women and men away from agriculture and into industry and services. The shift in employment out of agriculture and into industry has been greater for men than for women. In 2008, agriculture accounted for roughly the same percentage of women's (55.5%) and men's (55.7%) employment. By 2012, however, agriculture accounted for a slightly larger share of women's than men's employment (52.8% and 49.3%, respectively) (Table 1). Thus, based on the CSES, agriculture remains a key source of employment and livelihood for about one-half of all employed persons aged 15 to 64 years. If the entire employed population 15 years and older is considered, then the importance of the agriculture sector for rural livelihoods is even more substantial as it accounts for 66.3% of all women employed and 62.1% of all employed women and men in 2012, based on the 2013 Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey.⁸

Correspondingly, employment in the industrial sector has increased for both men and women. In 2008, industry accounted for about the same share of employment for women

Table 1: Distribution of Employment by Major Sector, Women and Men Aged 15–64 Years, 2007–2012 (%)

	Agriculture		Services		Industry	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
2007	56.1	59.4	28.4	26.3	15.5	14.3
2008	55.7	55.5	28.6	28.6	15.7	15.9
2009	57.4	57.8	24.0	26.0	15.5	16.2
2010	52.9	55.4	30.1	29.1	17.0	15.5
2011	55.0	56.6	28.7	26.0	16.3	17.5
2012	49.3	52.8	31.7	29.1	19.0	18.1

Source: Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Planning. 2012c. *Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 2012*. Phnom Penh.

⁷ ADB 2013c, Table 2.4.

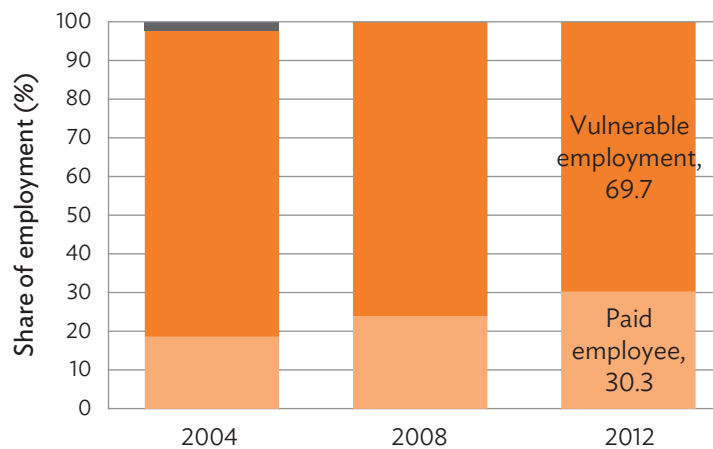
⁸ Custom table generation using the CIPS data and provided by National Institute of Statistics.

(15.9%) as for men (15.7%), and by 2012, industrial employment accounted for 18.1% of women’s employment and 19.0% of men’s employment.

The share of vulnerable employment has decreased, but the gender gap has increased.

The shares of vulnerable employment declined for both women and men between 2008 and 2013. Vulnerable employment, as defined by the International Labour Organization, is the sum of own-account workers and unpaid contributing family workers. Vulnerable workers, compared with paid employees and employers, are less likely to have decent working conditions including adequate remuneration, social security, or voice through representation in trade unions and other organizations.⁹ In contrast, decent work refers to opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income; security in the workplace and social protection for families; better prospects for personal development and social integration; freedom for people to express their concerns, organize, and participate in the decisions that affect their lives; and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men. The share of vulnerable employment for women declined from 76.0% in 2008 to 69.7% in 2012, while for men it declined from 67.1% to 58.8% over the 2004–2012 period (Figures 5 and 6).¹⁰ The decline in vulnerable employment and the rise in share of wage employment indicates greater opportunity for productive employment and decent work.

Figure 5: Distribution of Employment by Class of Worker, Women (15–64 years), Selected Years

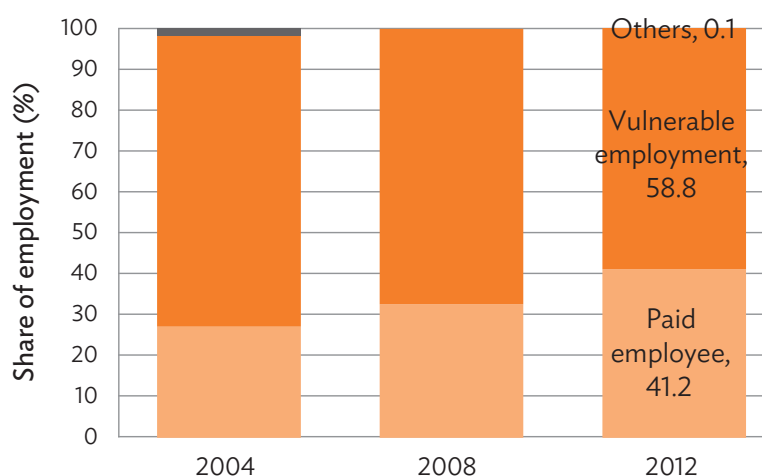


Source: Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Planning. 2012c. *Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 2012*. Phnom Penh.

⁹ Otober 2011.

¹⁰ There has been a substantial change in the composition of vulnerable employment, with a shift away from unpaid contributing family worker to own-account worker, over the period 2008 to 2012. Part of the rise in the share of own-account work is due to a change in the survey in 2009 in which spouses of own-account workers were recorded as also being own-account workers rather than unpaid contributing family workers.

Figure 6: **Distribution of Employment by Class of Worker, Men (15–64 years), Selected Years**



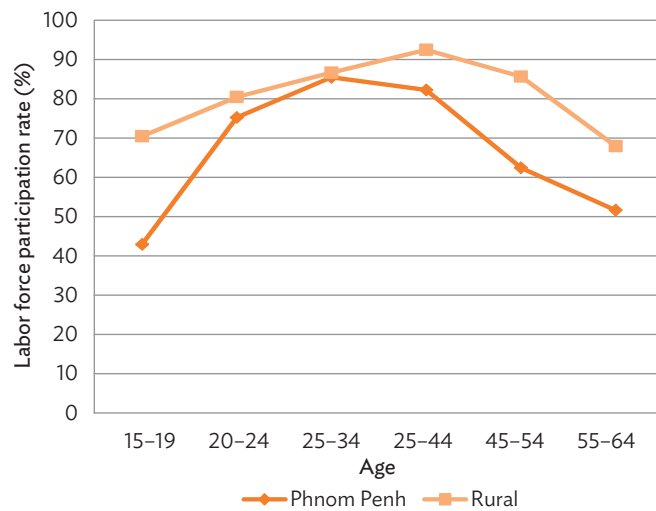
Source: Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Planning. 2012c. *Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 2012*. Phnom Penh.

However, the decline in the share of vulnerable employment has been greater for men than for women, resulting in an increased gender gap in vulnerable employment from 8.9 to 10.9 percentage points between 2008 and 2012. While opportunities for better working conditions have increased, women's disadvantage relative to men has increased.

The largest increases in numbers of employed have been in wholesale and retail trade and services, manufacturing, agriculture, and accommodation and food service activities. Among women 15 years and older, these four sectors show the largest absolute increase in numbers of employed women between 2008 and 2013. In each of these four sectors, employment increased by more 60,000 women over this period. Among men 15 years and older, the industry sectors with absolute increases in numbers of employed men of more than 60,000 were wholesale and retail trade and services, construction, manufacturing, and public administration.

Young women are more likely to work and less likely to be in school. Young women aged 15–19 years have a higher LFPR (66.3%) than young men (63.7%), consistent with the finding that they are less likely to be in school than their male counterparts at this age (CSES 2012). The gender gap in LFPR for young workers is greater in Phnom Penh than in rural areas: in Phnom Penh the LFPR for young women is 43.0% compared with 36.5% for young men. This indicates that young urban women are participating in the labor force to a greater extent than young urban men, and are less likely to be in school. Young rural women are much more likely to be working than young women in Phnom Penh. Women's LFPR for this age group in rural areas is 70.5%, compared with 43.0% in Phnom Penh. This

Figure 7: Women’s Labor Force Participation Rates by Age and Location, 2012



Source: Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Planning. 2012c. *Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 2012*. Phnom Penh.

reflects the higher poverty rates and the demand for women’s agricultural labor in rural areas and greater educational opportunities in Phnom Penh (Figure 7).

Women in the labor force have low levels of education. In 2013, 84% of employed women aged 15 years and older had primary school education or less, compared with 76% of employed men (custom CIPS table). Higher enrollment rates of girls and the fall in gender gap at the lower and secondary school levels will positively impact educational levels of employed women in the future.

Unemployment rates in Cambodia are generally low compared with those in other countries. The unemployment rates for women and men were 0.1% and 0.2% in 2012, respectively, for the age group 15–64 years, based on the 2013 CSES data.¹¹ There is some evidence that unemployment rates for women and men have risen since 2008. The unemployment rates based on the Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey (CIPS) data were 2.8% in 2013, up from 2.4% in 2008, for women and 2.2% in 2013, up from 1.7% in 2008, for men (CIPS 2013). The higher unemployment rates based on the CIPS data, compared with the CSES data, may arise in part from the broader age group and more relaxed definition of unemployment used in the CIPS.

Young workers have higher unemployment rates compared with the labor force as a whole. For example, the youth unemployment rate defined for the age group 15–24 years is estimated to 3.6% for women and 3.9% for men, compared with 2.7% for women and men

¹¹ Available at http://www.nis.gov.kh/nis/CSES/Data/CSES_2013/CSES_Labour.htm

for the age group 15 years and older, based on the 2013 Labor Force Survey (LFS) data (LFS 2013: 51 and 55). Unemployment rates are generally higher in urban than rural areas, and among people with no education and with a university education (LFS 2013). Young workers with a university degree have particularly high unemployment rates (LFS 2013). Apart from unemployment, many workers experience time-related underemployment, defined as working less than 40 hours per week and being willing and available to work additional hours. The survey generally shows that the time-related underemployment rates are higher for men than women, with the exception of women aged 15–19 in urban areas (LFS 2013).

2.2 Status: Benefit

Despite high levels of participation in the economy, women benefit less from their participation in the economy than men. This is because of women's high concentration in vulnerable employment (discussed in Section 2.1). Vulnerable employment, especially unpaid contributing family worker status, offers few opportunities for income or good working conditions. Men's employment is also more diversified than women's.

Women in agriculture. In 2012, more than half of employed women aged 15–64 years nationwide (52.8%) and an even larger share in rural areas (65.2%) worked in the primary sector (agriculture, forestry, and fisheries). If looking at workers aged 15 years and older, 66.3% of all women's employment and 62.1% of all men's employment is in agriculture (CIPS 2013), indicating the importance of agriculture as a form of livelihood for older people in a context of low social security provision. While the value of agricultural production is relatively low, agricultural production is less susceptible to external shocks than the manufacturing sector. It is, however, more susceptible to natural disasters such as floods and droughts.

In rural areas, women and men are more likely to combine economic activities to earn a livelihood, compared with people in urban areas. In rural areas, 47.1% of women and 52.5% of men had secondary employment in 2013, compared with 11.0% of women and 13.3% of men in urban areas. For rural women, livestock farming is a key secondary activity (CIPS 2013). In 2012, women in agriculture earned an average monthly salary of \$103, which was 91% of the average for men at \$114 (Table 2). Obstacles to women's economic empowerment in agriculture are discussed in Section 3.3.

Women in business. Women own 65% of all businesses and this ownership provides a source of income for more than 329,000 women. However, the majority of women's businesses are microenterprises: 51% engage only one person, and 96% engage four or fewer persons. While women are more likely than men to own a business, women's businesses are concentrated in a smaller number of industry sectors than men's. Four sectors account for 97.1% of all businesses: wholesale and retail trade and services (66.4%), accommodation and food (16.7%), manufacturing (9.8%), and other services (4.2%). All other sectors account for less than 1% each. Women's businesses constitute the majority in only 3 of

Table 2: **Average Monthly Income for Employees (15 Years and Older) by Industry by Sex, 2012**

Industry	Both Sexes		Men		Women		Women/ Men
	KR	\$	KR	\$	KR	\$	%
Agriculture	439,529	109	457,760	114	416,558	103	91
Industry	449,210	111	510,418	127	379,240	94	74.3
Mining & quarrying	464,769	115	475,846	118	295,596	73	62.1
Manufacturing	422,892	105	525,452	130	374,983	93	71.4
Apparel	383,491	95	439,925	109	370,992	92	84.3
Electricity, gas, etc.	666,344	165	659,705	164	900,000	223	136.4
Water supply, sewerage	622,476	154	655,456	163	405,727	101	61.9
Construction	485,892	120	493,907	122	423,274	105	85.7
Services	527,489	131	551,815	137	478,486	119	86.7
Wholesale & retail trade	643,954	160	661,769	164	614,392	152	92.8
Transportation & storage	556,425	138	564,628	140	473,902	118	83.9
Accommodation & food	431,204	107	460,059	114	406,340	101	88.3
Information & communication	759,465	188	938,305	233	429,229	106	45.7
Financial & insurance	823,380	204	793,097	197	885,476	220	111.6
Real estate activities	574,920	143	574,920	143	0	0	0
Professional, scientific	1,037,120	257	1,089,741	270	899,592	223	82.6
Administrative & support	488,965	121	618,250	153	398,408	99	64.4
Public administration	429,403	106	426,259	106	456,937	113	107.2
Education	460,242	114	514,542	128	403,944	100	78.5
Health & social work	513,762	127	588,922	146	455,609	113	77.4
Arts & entertainment	743,581	184	852,441	211	594,868	148	69.8
Other service activities	499,316	124	539,839	134	444,407	110	82.3
Households as employers	387,195	96	369,119	92	390,437	97	105.8
International organizations	968,325	240	874,608	217	1,267,046	314	144.9
Total	477,517	118	518,202	128	418,808	104	80.8

\$ = United States dollar, KR = Cambodian riel.

Note: \$1 = KR4,033 in 2012.

Source: Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Planning; and International Labour Organization (ILO). 2013. *Cambodia Labour Force and Child Labour Survey 2012: Labor Force Report*, Phnom Penh and Geneva.

17 sector categories: wholesale and retail trade, accommodation and food services, and financial and insurance activities.¹²

More detailed disaggregation of industry sectors shows that women's businesses are further concentrated in a few categories. Within manufacturing, women's businesses are concentrated in weaving of textiles and manufacture of apparel. Within wholesale and retail trade and services, women's businesses are primarily in the categories of nonspecialized retail, food retail, small food stalls, beverages and tobacco products, and textiles and clothing. In the accommodation and food category, the majority of women's businesses are in restaurants and mobile food service activities and beverage services, as opposed to accommodation.¹³

Despite owning a majority of the country's businesses, women's businesses account for only 40% of total business revenue and 51% of total business profits. Women's businesses therefore are on average smaller and less profitable than male-run businesses.

The annual profit per enterprise for men's enterprises is almost twice the profit from women's enterprises: \$4,929 compared with \$2,644, respectively (MOP 2013f). However, considerable variation in profits per enterprise make comparison of averages somewhat misleading. Data from the 2011 economic census indicates that 72.5% of all women's enterprises have annual profits less than \$2,000 and 36% have annual profits less than \$750. Issues in women's economic empowerment in business are discussed in Section 3.4.

Women in wage employment. Wage employment for women represents a small share of women's paid work. As noted above, the share of wage employment among women aged 15–64 years was 30.1%, with vulnerable employment accounting for the remainder. If the broader age group 15 years and older is considered, the share of wage employment is even smaller (CIPS 2013).

Women benefit less than men from wage work. Average monthly wages among women wage workers aged 15 years and older were 418,808 riels per month (about \$104), compared with 518,202 riels per month (about \$128) for men. Thus, women earned 80.8% of men's earnings, unadjusted for human capital differences (Table 2). According to the World Bank (2013) there is some evidence that the gender wage gap grew between 2009 and 2011, since the estimates that control for gender differences in education and other characteristics show that the gender wage gap grew from 20% in 2009 to 30% in 2011.

Women's wage work is highly concentrated, given that the manufacturing sector alone accounts for 45% of women's wage work. Public administration and education account for a further 5.5% and 7.7% of women's wage work, respectively (CIPS custom tabulation provided by the National Institute of Statistics). In the manufacturing sector, average monthly wages for women at 374,983 riels (about \$93) are lower than the average monthly wages across all industry sectors. The gender wage gap was also larger in the manufacturing sector than the overall gender wage gap. Thus, while wage work offers the potential for

¹² Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Planning. 2013f. *Economic Census of Cambodia 2011: Analysis of the Census Results, Report No. 9, Women in Business*. National Institute of Statistics. Phnom Penh.

¹³ Footnote 12. Table 2.8.

better working conditions such as access to some forms of social insurance (e.g., workplace injury) and an employment contract, having a waged job does not necessarily result in a smaller gender wage gap or higher absolute wages.

The benefits to women of wage work in the garment sector remain low. Despite the fact that labor productivity in the garment sector doubled between 2007 and 2012, the minimum wage remained constant until the increase to \$100 per month in January 2014, well below the \$160 minimum recommended by labor representatives.¹⁴ Later in 2014 the minimum wage was increased again, to \$128 per month. Despite some improvements in compliance with the Labor Code promoted by the International Labour Organization's Better Factories Cambodia monitoring program, working conditions remain poor. Better Factories Cambodia reports compliance rates below 100% on a variety of decent work measures, with particularly low compliance in the categories of safety and health, welfare provisions, hours worked, and labor relations. While compliance with standards rose between 2005 and 2009, working conditions along many dimensions deteriorated after 2010.¹⁵ Some of the top noncompliance issues are overtime greater than 2 hours per day, excessive heat in factories, lack of masks, and chemical containers not labelled in Khmer. The unionization rate is only 58% and there is evidence of anti-union discrimination in some factories. Section 2.3 on agency discusses trade unionization, freedom of association, and collective bargaining in further detail. Issues in women's economic empowerment in wage employment with a particular focus on the garment sector are discussed in Section 3.5.

2.3 Status: Agency

Women have less access than men to higher-skilled occupations, public sector employment, and business associations and networks. All of these offer opportunities for decision making and agency affecting women's economic empowerment. Occupational segregation is extensive and women continue to be concentrated in lower-skilled occupations compared with men. In 2012, less than 4% of women (compared with 6% of men) were employed in the three highest-skilled occupations (managers, professionals, and technicians and associate professionals). Women's employment is highly concentrated in three lower-skilled occupations: services and sales (21.6%); agriculture, forestry, and fishing (42.4%); and crafts and related work (15.4%)¹⁶ (Figure 8). Thus, women continue to be underrepresented in occupations that provide opportunities for decision making such as in the public sector and as professionals.

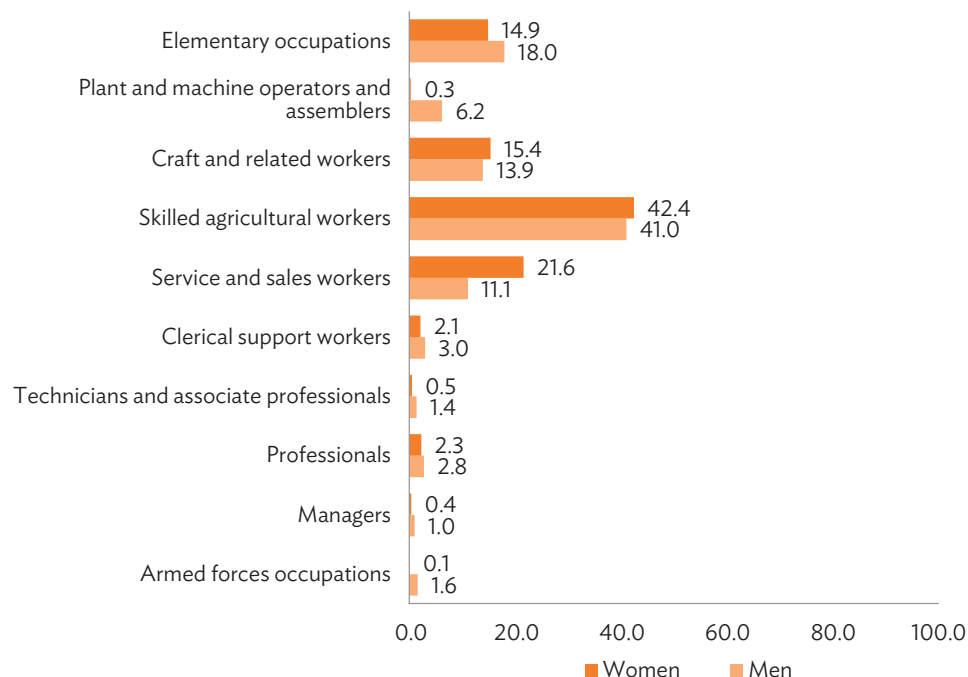
Women comprise only a small share of public sector employment, which tends to provide better opportunities for decent working conditions and for social protection in the form

¹⁴ The official poverty line for Phnom Penh in 2009 was KR6,347 per capita per day, equivalent to about \$47 per capita per month (Ministry of Planning 2013). The average household has five members. Two garment workers earning a monthly salary of \$100 each in 2013 would not have been able to keep a family of five out of poverty.

¹⁵ International Labour Organization and International Finance Corporation 2013, Graph 1.

¹⁶ The share of women's employment as skilled agricultural workers based on the CIPS 2013 is 64.5% which is likely due to the broader age group considered.

Figure 8: Distribution of Employment (Workers Aged 15–64 Years) by Main Occupation by Sex, 2012 (%)



Source: Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Planning. 2012c. *Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 2012*. Phnom Penh.

of pensions. While the female share of employment in the civil service increased from 22% in 2008 to 34% in 2011 (National Strategic Development Plan Update 2009–2013), women still comprise just over one-third of the civil service, and women are even less represented at higher levels in the civil service. For example, women comprised 18% of employment at the director general level in 2010 (UNDP 2012, Table 2). Based on the CIPS 2013 data, the female share of employment is even lower in the narrower category of Public Administration and Defence and Social Security, with women comprising 15% of total employment in 2013, up from 13% in 2008. This category comprises only 1% of all women's employment, compared with 5.6% of all men's employment.

Despite their numbers in terms of business ownership, women have lower levels of agency than men, who dominate the Government-Private Sector Forum and chambers of commerce. While an association of women in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) has been established, it is based in Phnom Penh and draws on women from the higher end of the SME sector. Women in microenterprises are not represented in policy formulation. Cultural norms and greater domestic responsibilities also mean that female entrepreneurs are less able than men to exercise agency, engage in networking, and obtain important business information and contacts.

Agency through trade unionization. Decent work requires “freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives” (ILO 2012) and as Rodgers (2008) notes, it involves organization, representation, and voice. While the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively is recognized, given Cambodia’s ratification of International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions No. 87 and No. 98 and the country’s Labor Law, workers and trade union activists continue to be harassed, intimidated, and even killed (ITUC 2013).

Trade unions provide the primary mechanism for supporting workers and for facilitating dialogue with employers over working conditions and with governments over legal frameworks and policies. The number of trade unions has increased substantially, in large part associated with the expansion of the garment industry: the number of trade unions increased from 87 in 2001 to 1,758 in 2010. The number of federations of trade unions increased from 9 to 41 over the same period. However, although the number of unions has increased, the effectiveness of their representation varies substantially (ILO 2012) given the influence of political parties, avoidance strategies of employers, individual interests of union leaders, and the multiplicity of unions (Nuon and Serrano 2010).

One indicator of the extent to which workers are represented by a trade union is the gross trade union density rate, defined by the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) as the percentage of workers in a given reference group who are trade union members. Labor Force Survey data show a gross trade union density rate of 10% for all paid employees in 2012, higher for women at 16% than for men at 5%. The union density rate among paid employees is highest in the industry sector at 19%, followed by 5% in services. It is highest in the garment sector where 37% of all male employees and 38% of all women employees are trade union members. Since women comprise the majority of workers in the garment sector, it follows that women employees are more likely to be trade union members than men. Among all paid employees, women comprise 68% of all trade union members and 82% of all trade union members in the garment sector in 2012.¹⁷

Despite the large numbers, women have disproportionately low levels of participation in union leadership and women-specific initiatives are not well incorporated into collective bargaining. Women are underrepresented in trade union leadership positions. A survey of workers by Nuon and Serrano (2010) found that only one-third of union officers were women. Women-specific initiatives within union structures and issues for collective bargaining are limited. In the same survey, only 41% of workers reported that there were women’s committees within the union, only 25% of workers reported that their union had a policy requirement for quotas for women’s participation in education and training, and only 3% provided day care services to facilitate women’s participation in union activities.

Collective bargaining has thus far not given priority to initiatives that would promote gender equity in the workplace and facilitate women being able to combine child-bearing and child-rearing roles with paid work. In the 2010 Nuon and Serrano survey, 19% of workers reported that their union negotiated maternity leave beyond what is provided by law, 18%

¹⁷ Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Planning; and International Labour Organization (ILO). 2013. *Cambodia Labour Force and Child Labour Survey 2012: Labor Force Report*. Phnom Penh and Geneva.

reported that the union negotiated protection against sexual harassment, and only 18% reported action on equality of opportunities for training and education.

2.4 Emerging Trends

Four emerging trends are of particular concern in promoting women's economic empowerment in Cambodia: (i) the predominantly young population and the growing number of labor force entrants, (ii) competition from more highly skilled labor in neighboring countries, (iii) increased volatility of employment with a high reliance on export markets, and (iv) vulnerability related to climate change.

A growing working age population intensifies the challenge of providing productive and decent work. Over 78% of the 14.7 million Cambodians live in rural areas, although urbanization is occurring as a result of rapid rural out-migration (CIPS 2013). The working age population aged 15–64 years grew by 1.3 million between 2008 and 2013, from 8.3 million to 9.6 million persons. The working age population as a share of the total population increased from 62.0% to 65.6% over this period. In 2013, women accounted for 52% of the total working age population in Cambodia. (CIPS 2013). The share of the working age population is higher in urban areas compared with rural, primarily as a result of enormous rural–urban migration (Section 4). The working age population share is higher in urban (70.5%) than rural (64.3%) areas (CIPS 2013).

While a rising share of the working age population means a declining dependency ratio, which is generally positive, the challenge has been to ensure the economy generates sufficient jobs and decent work for job seekers. The challenge of generating sufficient jobs will continue in the medium term: the working population is estimated to grow by an additional 1.3 million persons between 2013 and 2020 (calculated from CIPS 2013).

Deepening globalization means potential competition from more highly skilled labor in neighboring countries. Employment creation for unskilled workers, and particularly for Cambodian women disadvantaged by their lower literacy relative to men and to men and women in neighboring countries, will be even more critical with deepening globalization and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations economic integration in 2015.

Employment volatility increases with reliance on export markets. While Cambodia's export-oriented and open development strategy has contributed to employment growth in the garment sector, the negative impact of the global financial crisis in 2008–2009 on women's employment underscores the necessity of diversification and of reducing reliance on external demand.

Global climate change is increasing vulnerability, especially for women with marginal access to land. Cambodia is particularly vulnerable to climate change, which is associated with more variable and extreme weather patterns. The devastating floods of 2011 and 2013 had particularly negative impacts on agricultural production, employment in the agriculture

sector, rural households, and women. Borrowing money was a main coping strategy, leading many households into a vicious cycle of debt. Activities to mitigate the impacts of climate change along with adaptation activities will be increasingly important (Box 1).

Box 1: Why Climate Change Matters for Women's Economic Empowerment

Climate change is an issue of national significance for Cambodia's development. Most policy discussions on climate change are taking place in the context of environmental sustainability and green growth—all three of which are interconnected. In Cambodia, the effects of a changing global climate relate predominantly to extended droughts, flooding, rising temperatures and changing weather patterns, including unprecedented heavy storms. All of these impact on agriculture and the lives of rural communities. As a majority of Cambodian people still rely on rain-fed rice farming as a main source of household income, climate change directly threatens livelihoods of both women and men. Poor management of natural resources and uncontrolled depletion of natural forest cover put Cambodia's environmental sustainability and resilience to climate-related disasters at risk. The impact on local economies of cyclones, floods, droughts, and irreversible soil erosion is significant. The result is immense hardship for the rural and urban poor. Most issues concerning sustainable mitigation of climate change—such as the reduction of greenhouse gases and green growth—are connected to human economic activity. Possible solutions to the challenges of climate change in Cambodia include the following:

- Invest in the promotion of low-technology, user-friendly climate monitoring (weather forecasting) tools, including for households headed by women.
- Develop women's skills to prepare for climate-related disasters and build resilience to impacts, for example through women's development centers.
- Make use of women's development centers for promotional campaigns related to climate change mitigation.
- Introduce energy-saving, clean (renewable) power supply for households.
- Promote climate-friendly, low-carbon economic activities among women.
- Encourage community-based sustainable forestry campaigns (e.g., tree planting) for diverse, carbon-absorbing, multipurpose forest plants such as bamboo and others.
- Explore and promote opportunities for using information and communication technology for women in agriculture and in development of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises.
- Promote nonfarm income-earning and business opportunities among women, such as through business associations.

3

Obstacles to Women's Economic Empowerment

There are a number of obstacles to women's economic empowerment in Cambodia, including (i) the amount of time and responsibility for unpaid domestic and care work, (ii) low levels of literacy and education, and (iii) a lack of access to resources necessary for economic empowerment. Obstacles in accessing resources are assessed here with respect to agriculture and rural livelihoods, business development, and wage employment, given their importance for women's economic empowerment.

3.1. Unpaid Domestic and Care Work

Unpaid domestic and care work provide important and valued goods and services to household members and communities (Elson 1999). Despite the substantial value of unpaid domestic and care work, the value remains unrecorded in national income accounts and the relationships between the nonmonetary (unpaid) and monetary (paid) sectors are invisible. Women's unpaid domestic and care work likely constrains women's participation in paid work. Some unpaid domestic work and care work activities are not only time consuming but repetitive and monotonous and could potentially be reduced through infrastructure improvements, as well as access to time-saving technology.

Women perform the majority of unpaid domestic and care work in households and the community. Based on a time use survey conducted in 2004 (the most recent time use survey available for Cambodia), married women aged 18–64 years on average provided 3.5 hours per day more unpaid domestic and care work than men. All girls and women have a greater total work burden—the sum of unpaid domestic and care work, market work, and agricultural work—than men, regardless of marital status, age, and rural or urban location.¹⁸ While this valuable work provides important goods and services for household members, it constrains women's participation in paid work. Unpaid household chores are also a barrier preventing some girls from attending school. Women face a double burden in that they are expected to keep the house and family while working and bringing in an income at the same time.

¹⁸ Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Planning (MOP). 2007b. *Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 2004, Time Use in Cambodia*. Phnom Penh.

3.2. Low Literacy and Education Levels

Although improving, women have low literacy and education levels which, along with gender gaps, constrain women's economic empowerment. The low levels and gaps curtail women's participation in paid work and economic opportunities more generally. The lower levels of literacy and education also reduce the benefit from paid labor in terms of wages and self-employment income.

For adults aged 15 years and older, the literacy rate among women in Cambodia increased from 59.9% in 2004 to 67.7% in 2008 and to 73.2% in 2012. The gender gap in literacy has declined although was still at 13.7 percentage points in 2012 for Cambodia as a whole. The gender gap in literacy was 15.0 percentage points in rural areas, compared with 8.6 percentage points in Phnom Penh and indicates the greater difficulties women in rural areas have in obtaining more highly skilled economic opportunities, relative to men (Table 3). The gender gap in literacy increases with age, as shown in Table 4.

Despite improvements, the net enrollment rates of girls and boys in lower and upper secondary school are still low, particularly in rural areas. Girls also tend to drop out in greater numbers than boys. Education issues and the barriers faced by girls in accessing secondary education and technical and vocational education and training are analyzed in detail in the *2014 Cambodia Education Sector Assessment, Strategy, and Road Map*.

Table 3: Adult Literacy Rate (15 Years and Older) by Geographical Domain and Sex, Selected Years (%)

Domain	2004			2008			2012		
	Women	Men	Gap	Women	Men	Gap	Women	Men	Gap
Cambodia	59.9	80.3	20.4	67.7	84.6	16.9	73.2	86.9	13.7
Phnom Penh	86.6	96.8	10.2	88.9	96.9	8.0	89.8	98.4	8.6
Other urban	71.2	85.9	14.6	77.6	89.7	12.1	81.3	91.8	10.5
Other rural	54.4	77.1	22.8	63.2	82.2	18.9	69.2	84.2	15.0

Source: Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Planning. 2012c. *Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 2012*. Phnom Penh.

Table 4: Literacy Rate by Age Group and Sex, 2012 (%)

Age Group	Women	Men	Gap
15–24	91.3	92.8	1.5
25–34	78.3	86.8	8.5
35–44	74.2	83.5	9.3
45–54	61.9	82.3	20.4
55–64	56.2	85.7	29.5
65+	26.1	75	48.9

Source: Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Planning. 2012c. *Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 2012*. Phnom Penh.

3.3. Issues in Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods

As highlighted in Section 2, agriculture is by far the most important sector of the Cambodian economy in employment terms. However, the small gross domestic product (GDP) share relative to employment share reflects the low productivity and implies low returns to labor and threats to agricultural workers' economic security. Under these circumstances, ensuring that women benefit fully from their participation in the agriculture sector is critical. At present the goal of ensuring that women fully benefit from their participation in agriculture is, for a multitude of reasons, far from being achieved. Despite higher levels of participation in the agriculture sector than men, women's economic empowerment is constrained by the low level of benefits that women receive and by barriers to their agency.¹⁹

Women's disadvantaged position in agriculture is evident in their lower access to land, extension services, financial services, markets, and technology. These multiple obstacles to women's economic empowerment in agriculture are discussed below after a brief overview of the sector.

The agriculture sector is dominated by crop production and the rice crop is most important. Out of the agriculture sector GDP in 2012, 55% was accounted for by crops, 25% by fisheries, 14% by livestock and poultry, and 6% by forestry and logging. Agriculture remains predominantly rain-fed and subsistence. The nonrice crops are cassava, maize, soybeans, mung beans, and vegetables. Despite increases in rice production, surplus, and exports, fewer than half of rice-producing households produce rice for sale.

Activities within the agriculture sector are highly gendered. In rice production, women are usually responsible for activities such as seed preparation, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, transporting, and low-technology pest control. Men are generally responsible for land preparation, water control, pesticide control, and manual threshing. Women are largely responsible for vegetable production, primarily for own household consumption. When men are engaged in vegetable production for sale, women play a role in selling these vegetables. With regard to livestock, women are typically responsible for raising pigs and poultry, which are important for own household consumption as well as a source of cash income, and men tend to be responsible for larger livestock such as cows and water buffalo. In the fishery, women are responsible for fixing nets and cleaning and marketing fish. Despite this gendered division of labor, there is some flexibility, particularly in households where men are absent and women take on the traditionally male tasks of dealing with authorities, selling surpluses, buying inputs, and attending meetings. Apart from agricultural tasks, women are engaged in range of rural livelihood activities such as operating small shops, food preparation, and sewing. Men often migrate during the dry season and find employment in the construction sector.

Increasing mechanization in agriculture is predicted to reduce the wage-earning opportunities that are important to households with little or no land, and particularly for women. Tractors are being introduced to save time and labor in land preparation, and

¹⁹ The analysis in the remainder of this section is drawn from the World Bank *Gender in Agriculture Assessment* (forthcoming 2014) except where other references are cited.

harvesting machines and threshers are being introduced. The latter two tasks in particular tend to be undertaken by women and so will reduce the demand for women's labor.

Women have less access to land than men. In 2009, about 96% of agricultural households had access to agricultural land, although much of the land is considered of poor quality. Households headed by women comprised 20% of agricultural households in 2008 and compared with households headed by men, they had smaller amounts of land: 1.1 hectares compared with 1.5 hectares. The difference is larger in the plateau and mountain zones. Households headed by women are also less likely to purchase land and have access to irrigation water.²⁰ Married women may not be able to choose what crops to grow on a household piece of land, especially if the household is land constrained and husbands want to grow a particular crop.

With respect to land title and ownership, there is pervasive evidence that women are not being equally included in the land registration process. Between 2000 and 2010, more than 1.3 million land titles were issued. However, women were not equal beneficiaries. When land titling increases land values, women have been marginalized within households or communities in some instances as a result. This has also occurred when private companies have confiscated land. Women, especially in households headed by women, have lost their livelihoods. In general, women's knowledge of their rights and their decision-making role in land redistribution processes has been low.

To compound this situation, compliance with legal requirements is often compromised and gender biases negatively women's access to land. Mehvar, Sore, and Sambath (2008) document one example where land that women inherited from their parents had been registered, without their knowledge or consent, jointly with the husbands from whom they had long been separated. In addition, there have been reports of forced evictions that accompanied agribusiness expansion, megaprojects, and free trade and investment zones, which particularly adversely affect women as family and community structures break down.²¹

In an environment where a third of rural women are not literate, their ability to defend and advance their legal rights is severely constrained. Even though 70% of land titles were registered in the names of both husbands and wives, social norms restrict women's ability to make decisions over land, and when family breakup or divorce occurs, they can lose their rights to land. Women experience insecurity even when land is registered jointly because of difficulties in claiming land in the event of divorce, separation or abandonment, or multiple marriage arrangements. Bugalski (2012) reports that the current land registration system, rather than equitably settling land ownership, is leading to increasing land evictions and land conflicts, increasing landlessness and inequality in landholdings. Vize and Hornung (2013) describe conflict over land as the single most important issue facing Cambodia. As a marginalized group with less power, women are particularly affected by these trends.

²⁰ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); Cambodia National Institute of Statistics (NIS); and Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Planning (MOP). 2010. *National Gender Profile of Agricultural Households, 2010. Report Based on the 2008 Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey*. Phnom Penh.

²¹ STAR Kampuchea 2013; McGinn 2013.

Indigenous people, for whom collective land ownership is recognized by the government, are also at the forefront of this conflict.

Extension services in Cambodia are generally rudimentary, and exhibit significant gender disparities. Extension workers are predominantly men and concentrate their services predominantly on male agricultural activities and workers despite the fact that over a half of all agricultural workers are women. The FAO estimates that women receive only 10% of extension services. Both households headed by men and women suffer from significant postharvest losses and therefore require gender-neutral extension services (FAO, NIS, and MOP 2010).

Households headed by women have less access to farm equipment, tools, and communication devices. For example, 31% of households headed by women had access to plows compared with 48% of households headed by men, and the gender gap was over 23 percentage points in the plateau and mountain areas of the northeast. Only 15% of households headed by women, compared with 27% of households headed by men, had access to a telephone (FAO, NIS, and MOP 2010). Women also have less access to technology, and activities in which women could utilize increased technology, such as fish storage and processing, remain underexamined.

Women are also constrained in their ability to market their goods. This arises for multiple reasons including women's responsibilities for child care, concerns over safety and security when traveling and in public spaces, low levels of financial literacy, and informal fees imposed on vendors, as well as difficulties in forming and maintaining sellers' groups among women that can bargain for higher product prices.

3.4 Issues in Business Development²²

While women run 65% of all businesses, the business are on average smaller and less profitable than businesses run by men. Women's businesses are more concentrated in the wholesale and retail trade and services sector. Women are less likely than men to have a registered business. Among women's businesses, only 1.7% are registered while 6.6% of men's businesses are registered. Women's businesses are small both in terms of physical space and in the number of people employed in the business. One-third of female-run businesses have establishments of less than 5 m² (compared with 13% of male-run businesses). Over half of female-run businesses operate with no additional workers and one-third engage one extra person; 84.2% therefore engage one or two individuals (compared with 68.9% of male-run establishments that operate at this size).

Most businesses in Cambodia are relatively young and their number has increased dramatically since 2007. Over 10% of all existing businesses in the 2011 Economic Census were formed in 2008, 12.4% were started in 2009, and 17.3% in 2010. While small business failures and turnover are common and hence a young business age might be expected, it also reasonable to assume that their rapidly increasing number is a reflection of a high rate

²² Unless otherwise noted, data in this section are from the 2013 Economic Census of the National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning.

of growth of new labor market entrants and limited employment opportunities, especially in the period after the global financial crisis. Businesses run by women and men have been increasing at similar rates.

As business managers, women face many obstacles including low levels of literacy and limited access to training, particularly in nontraditional areas. Market vendors and microvendors face harassment from market managers and security officials. In the 2008 International Finance Corporation (IFC) survey of women entrepreneurs, women business owners reported feeling a greater threat of unofficial fees and bribes being charged by government officials as well as less ability to negotiate these payments than men. Women also reported that dispute settlement was difficult for them and that they felt disadvantaged in the court system relative to men.

The IFC survey highlighted obstacles to the growth of women-run businesses including (i) a lack of access to infrastructure (such as roads and electricity), (ii) cultural biases that lead to discrimination and do not value women as businesspeople, and (iii) an inability to access finance (especially long-term finance) as a result of limited collateral and low levels of formal education. However, this last point may no longer be as much of an issue: according to the Network Information Exchange, which collects data from 37 microfinance institutions and 5 organizations, the total number of women borrowers reached nearly 1,006,700, or 80% of their total clients in 2013. Leading commercial bank ACLEDA had more than 179,300 individual women borrowers in March 2013, or 53% of its total borrowers. However, women's average loan size is smaller than men's. ACLEDA's active loan portfolio is about \$730.02 million for women and \$838.34 million for men. Another concern is that women borrowers often do not have much control on the use of loans taken out in their names, but as borrowers they are responsible for loan repayment. Women appear to be better at saving than men, comprising 70% of the depositors (more than 688,660 individuals) among the institutions of the Network Information Exchange. Phnom Penh sees by far the highest number of both creditors and depositors.

3.5 Issues in Wage Employment and the Garment Sector

The share of wage employment in total employment has increased but remains small, particularly for women. For women, the industry sector accounting for the largest share of wage work is the manufacturing sector, and specifically, garment and footwear manufacturing. The manufacturing sector alone accounted for 45% of all women's wage employment, amounting to 327,000 women workers (in 2013). In contrast, for men, the industry sector accounting for the largest share of wage work is public administration and defense; this sector alone accounted for 214,914 employed men (21% of men's wage employment). The next largest industry sector is construction (CIPS custom tabulation provided by the National Institute of Statistics).

The garment sector is highly gendered: more than 90% of its workers are women.²³ This very high proportion of women has led to the feminization of the Cambodian industrial workforce. Garment workers are predominantly young migrant women from rural areas. About 17% of the garment sector's workforce are less than 19 years of age, 61% are 20–29, and only 8% are older than 35. Levels of education are low, with 43% having no education or have not completed primary education. Only 4% of garment workers have completed grade 9 or higher. Most are single (58%) while a third are married. Of those married, close to two-thirds have one child and a quarter have two children. Given the strong gendered social norms and family hierarchies that dictate that elder sisters have a duty to provide care and support for other family members, the decision to migrate and enter the garment sector tends not to be an individual choice but rather a family responsibility borne of economic necessity.

The garment sector generally has more formal working conditions than other industries, largely a result of the Better Factories Cambodia monitoring initiative. Factory work—as employment in the formal economy with basic rights and benefits—can increase women's economic empowerment, particularly in the context of a predominantly rural and low-income economy such as Cambodia. However, problems with the enforcement of labor laws remain. Labor laws provide for maternity leave of 90 days on half pay and benefits, but compliance remains limited and employers will often exploit the loophole of short-term contracts that don't include benefits. With a workforce in prime reproductive age this constitutes a significant obstacle for women. Returning to work in the absence of adequate and affordable child care presents a further obstacle. When at work, female workers also report physical and sexual harassment with limited complaint mechanisms.

Better Factories Cambodia has also documented overtime, safety, and health concerns. Survey findings include that only a quarter of factories limited overtime to the legal 2 hours per day maximum. In terms of agency, women play only limited roles in union and management affairs. Women have been involved in strike activity, however, especially in support of the higher minimum wage campaign, which culminated in the 2010 legislation to increase the minimum wage. It remains the case though that, culturally, women in factory work are regarded with suspicion and have low social status.

²³ The following paragraphs are based on Dasgupta, Poutiainen, and Williams 2011, pp. 12–17.

4

Women and Labor Migration

Cambodia is experiencing high rates of geographic labor mobility. The Cambodia Rural Urban Migration Project (CRUMP) survey estimated the flow of migrants from rural areas at 4% of the population in 2011, with 45 of 375 villages surveyed having lost more than 10% of their population to other districts within Cambodia or internationally.²⁴ The 2013 CIPS estimated the stock of migrants within Cambodia at 4.2 million (29% of the population), based on the definition that a person is a migrant if they were enumerated at a place different from their birthplace. This has increased from 27% in 2008. Women are active participants in internal and international migration, and comprised 50% of the stock of migrants in Cambodia in 2013.

Migration is predominantly within Cambodia, and primarily to Phnom Penh. About 70% of rural migrants move internally and 30% move internationally: about 50% of all rural migrants moved to Phnom Penh, 6% moved to other urban areas, 4% moved to another rural area within the same province, 9% moved to another rural area in another province, and the remaining 30% moved internationally.

The migration and mobility of the population in Cambodia is distinctive for two reasons related to its history. The first is the effect of return migration to Phnom Penh and other urban areas following the enforced movement to the countryside enacted by the Khmer Rouge regime. Approximately 20% of the Cambodian population lived in urban areas in 2010 compared with 40% in other countries in the region. The second is the population increase, and fertility increase, that accompanied the end of the civil war and led to a demographic structure that is highly skewed toward the younger population, who have a higher propensity to migrate.

In addition to these specific factors, Cambodia also experiences migration due to factors commonly found elsewhere, such as rural–urban income differentials and employment prospects. In Cambodia, the pull factors are particularly associated with employment in the garment industry in urban areas and the growing tourism industry, which has seen an eightfold increase from 1999 to 2011, reaching close to 3 million visitors per year. Push factors including the practice of dividing land among offspring and conflict over land have made rural livelihoods more precarious.

²⁴ Unless otherwise indicated, figures in this section are from Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Planning. 2012. *Migration in Cambodia: Report of the Cambodian Rural Urban Migration Project (CRUMP)*. Phnom Penh.

Women migrants from rural areas are more likely to migrate internally and less likely to migrate internationally than men migrants. Among rural women migrants, 74% migrate internally and 26% migrate internationally; among rural men migrants, 65% migrate internally and 35% migrate internationally. Women migrants are slightly younger and more likely to be single than male migrants. The gender dimensions of migration are analyzed in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 for the two main streams of migration, internal and international.

4.1 Migration from Rural Areas to Phnom Penh

Phnom Penh is the most rapidly growing city in Cambodia and the destination for most internal migrants. Almost 59% of all rural migrant women move internally to Phnom Penh, with 15% moving to other rural and urban areas within Cambodia. In this respect, rural–Phnom Penh migration is more important than the other forms of migration for women, and much more important for women than men. Rural–Phnom Penh migration accounts for only 42% of all male migrants.

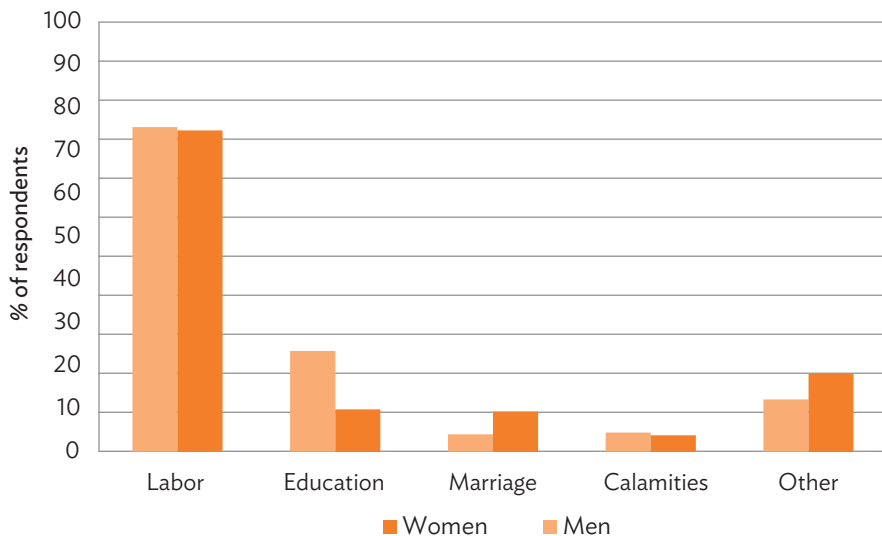
In general, women migrants tend to have greater education and are more likely to be single, compared with women nonmigrants. About 26% of nonmigrant women have no education compared with 6% of migrant women. More educated women migrants are more likely to find work in the garment industry while less educated women migrant workers are more likely employed in domestic work. Two-thirds of migrant women are single, compared with a quarter of nonmigrant women. Among the married migrant women, 30% have no children and another 30% have one child; among nonmigrant women, 62% have three or more children. Having children reduces migration for women but not for men.

Among migrants to Phnom Penh, about three-quarters of both women and men migrants identified employment as one of the reasons why they migrated (Figure 9). However, education is a more important determinant of migration for men than for women, given that 23% of men and only 10% of women cited education a reason for migration.

There is a clear gender division of occupations for migrant workers (Figure 10). One-third of women migrant workers work in the garment industry, over one-quarter were self-employed business owners, and over 10% work in the services and entertainment sectors. Almost 7% of the surveyed migrants were domestic workers although this may be an underestimate given the difficulties of including this group in surveys (Holliday, forthcoming). In contrast, a quarter of men migrant workers were employed as laborers (in construction or nonconstruction work), 17% as drivers, and 16% were business owners. As noted in the CRUMP report, except for business owners (mostly tertiary sellers of goods, like fruit, clothes, cigarettes, or small consumable items), there is little overlap between men and women in terms of the occupations of migrant workers.

The fact that occupations are gendered is important because there are significant wage differences between occupations, which therefore translate into gender wage differences. The three lowest-paying occupations—domestic workers, services and entertainment sector workers, and garment workers—account for large shares of women’s employment.

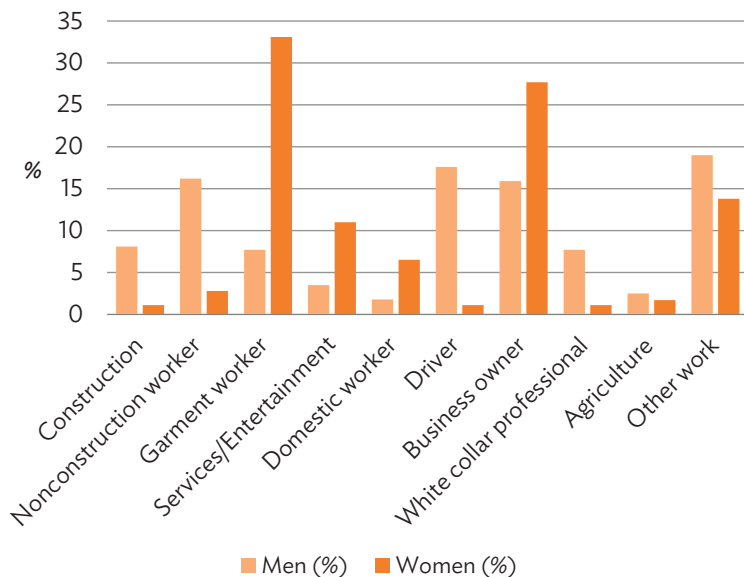
Figure 9: Reasons for Internal Migration, Cambodia, by Sex



Note: Multiple answers were possible, so numbers may sum to more than 100.

Source: Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Planning. 2012. *Migration in Cambodia: Report of the Cambodian Rural Urban Migration Project (CRUMP)*. Phnom Penh.

Figure 10: Distribution of Migrants by Occupation, by Sex



Source: Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Planning. 2012a. *Migration in Cambodia: Report of the Cambodian Rural Urban Migration Project (CRUMP)*. Phnom Penh.

For example, the garment sector accounts for 33% of all women migrants' employment and provided average monthly earnings of 383,000 riels per month (about \$95). Domestic work provided average monthly earnings of only 188,000 riels per month (about \$47). One of the occupations with higher earnings for women migrants is operating a small business, which is associated with average earnings of 604,000 riels per month (about \$150).²⁵

Low incomes and other factors cause significant levels of stress among all migrants with some stress indicators, such as loneliness, more apparent among female migrant workers. For example, 96% women migrants report worrying about earning enough money (91% for men), 85% worry about the health of their parents (81% for men), 41% report being less healthy after moving to Phnom Penh (34% for men), and 39% report feeling very lonely in the past month (29% for men). The stress over earning enough money meant that over 20% of workers in the CRUMP survey reported that they had gone to work ill because they did not want to lose the pay, although this figure was not reported disaggregated by gender.

Despite receiving lower incomes, women migrant workers (internal and international combined) were more likely to remit money to their parents and to remit more money on average. More than three-quarters (76%) of women migrant workers sent money to their parents, compared with 68% of men. Among migrants who remit, the average annual remittance amount was 1.2 million riels (\$298) for women and 1.0 million riels (\$248) for men. Given that women have lower average earnings and remit more money than men migrants, this indicates that women remit a greater percentage of their earnings. Thus, women migrants receive less benefit from their work both in terms of direct earnings and also in terms of what remains after remittances.

Remittances to rural households raise household income, although the World Bank reports that over the period 2004–2009, increases in income from self-employment income and wage labor were greater than increases in remittance income.²⁶ Research based on the CSES 2007 indicates that less than 24% of households received remittances. For households with internal migrants, remittance income accounted for 11% of total household income. For households with international migrants, remittance income accounted for 20% of total household income (CDRI 2011). Thus, remittance income can improve the well-being of household members accessing this income, but it is not always the poorest households that send migrants (CDRI 2007).

Beyond remittances, migration of some household members increases the time commitments and responsibilities of family members who are left behind. Grandparents and remaining children, particularly grandmothers and daughters, increase their time commitments to child care activities. In some cases, daughters withdraw from school to take over child care duties previously performed by the migrant. The impacts on the elderly may be mitigated, however, by the presence of nonmigrating adult children living in the vicinity.²⁷

²⁵ MOP 2013a, p. 7.

²⁶ World Bank 2013.

²⁷ Hak et al. 2011.

4.2 International Migration

Almost 26% of rural women migrants migrate internationally, compared with 35% of rural male migrants. From the CRUMP survey it is reported that migrants with less education are more likely to migrate internationally, while the more educated migrate to Phnom Penh, although this finding is not reported by sex. Cambodian women migrants have migrated both legally and irregularly as domestic helpers, factory workers, laborers, entertainers, and food-processing workers (Maltoni 2011).

The two main destinations for women and men international migrants are Malaysia and Thailand, with men also migrating in substantial numbers to the Republic of Korea. The number of Cambodian women migrating through official (documented) channels to Malaysia increased dramatically between 2008 and 2010 as a result of the ban placed by Indonesia in 2009 on migration of domestic workers from Indonesia to Malaysia. Cambodia introduced its own ban on domestic worker migration in 2011 (Government of Cambodia 2011). While the ban has reduced the flow of women migrants to Malaysia from Cambodia, it has not eliminated it as it does not cover migration into other sectors, such as into factory work. The number of women migrating through official channels to Thailand has continued to increase.

The number of irregular (undocumented) international migrants is much greater than the number of legal migrants. For example, the number of official Cambodian migrants to Thailand as of May 2013 was recorded as 76,377, while the number of irregular migrants to Thailand as of 2011 was estimated to be between 125,000 and 180,000.²⁸

Apart from occupations related to agriculture and construction in which both women and men are employed, women are more likely to be employed in domestic work and factories, whereas men are more likely to be employed in fishing.

Migrants pursue migration through irregular channels instead of official channels because of shorter waiting times and lower costs. For example, with respect to Thailand, irregular cross-border migration requires an annual pass of \$20 and inland migration requires various broker fees estimated to be between \$100 and \$200. This is significantly lower than the regular migration fees of \$700 (Hing, Lun, and Phaen 2011).

The recruitment conditions of women migrant workers to Malaysia and elsewhere have been highly problematic. They include the falsification of identity documents to facilitate the migration of underage girls and excessive fees charged by recruitment agencies. In Malaysia, there are reports of physical abuse and economic exploitation, wage arrears, and the confiscation of passports, essentially turning domestic workers into bonded laborers (Asia Foundation 2011, Léone 2012). In Thailand, women migrant workers are largely employed in aquatic product processing, seasonal farming, and domestic work, with an increasing number also finding employment in manufacturing (Maltoni 2011). Women migrant workers in agriculture and plantations can face exposure to chemicals, which

²⁸ See ILO 2013 and Hing et al. 2011, p. 10.

affect their long-term health (Cambodia 2010). Although the time and financial costs of irregular migration are lower compared with official migration, other costs are likely to be higher. Exploitation, denial of basic rights, forced labor, sexual harassment, and trafficking pose substantial risks to all migrants, but particularly to people migrating through unofficial channels (Hing et al. 2011).

Migration to the Republic of Korea is seen as an example of good practices in labor migration management (Holliday, forthcoming), although it is predominantly a route for male migration since it is mostly for semiskilled work, thereby excluding many potential women migrants.

The regulation and monitoring of international migration flows is likely to be increasingly important for Cambodia given its identification as an emerging migration country²⁹ and the relatively weak and ineffective policy and institutional framework for managing and regulating international migration and protecting international migrants.³⁰ According to the Asia Foundation (2013), particularly at risk are young rural women who face pressures to seek work abroad to help to alleviate poverty at home.

CRUMP found that remittances from international migrants are more variable than from internal migrants but are higher on average. The time and financial costs of sending remittances are large and detract from the net benefits of migration (Heng, personal communication, 2014).

4.3 Migration and Participation, Benefit, and Agency

Through the lens of women's economic empowerment, the trends suggest that women are participating in migration to the same extent or more than men. They comprise 57% of all migrant workers. However, not all women participate in the same way. Migrant women tend to be young, single or married with no children or one child, and to be more educated than their nonmigrating age cohort. They primarily migrate for employment opportunities, as do men, but less so for educational purposes than men. However, participation in migration cannot, in itself, be taken as an indicator of empowerment unless the conditions of that migration are also considered.

While women and men may cite employment equally as the main purpose of migration, they do not benefit in the same way from it. Women are concentrated in occupations in which salaries are lowest and they remit more of their incomes to their parents. One of the sectors into which they migrate, domestic work, not only has low salaries but also exposes migrant women to risks of physical and sexual abuse. This is also a risk in the entertainment and services sector. The extent of the problem for international migration was so high that a ban was placed in 2011 by Cambodia on domestic work migration to Malaysia, although not before a substantial increase in migration following an earlier ban enacted by Indonesia.

²⁹ Maffii and Piras 2014, p. 17.

³⁰ Hing, Lun, and Phaen 2011, p. 1.

All migrant workers report high levels of stress over money, parental health, and loneliness, with stress rates slightly higher for women than men migrants.

Migrant women workers' agency and ability to act freely and independently are also very limited. Some migrant women business owners may become more financially independent and gain greater autonomy, but the profile of the typical woman migrant worker—young, single, and engaged in the garment, entertainment, and services industries, or domestic work—suggests that this is the exception rather than the norm.

5

Girls' and Women's Vulnerability to Shocks and Crises

5.1 Poverty, Vulnerability, and Gender

The poor and near-poor are particularly vulnerable to shocks. Shocks can refer to uncertain events at the individual level (such as illness, injury, or unemployment); at the community or regional level (such as seasonal unemployment or natural disasters, such as floods, which occur more frequently with climate change); and at the national level (including food, fuel, and financial crises). There are also more predictable events that carry certain risks to well-being, such as old age or childbirth. Many of the known risks and shocks, along with key determinants of vulnerability, impacts, and key vulnerable groups, are analyzed in Cambodia's 2011 National Social Protection Strategy for the Poor and Vulnerable (Council for Agricultural and Rural Development 2011). Poor households are more vulnerable due both to a higher probability of experiencing shocks and because the impacts of the shock are greater when people have fewer resources—such as savings, social assistance transfers, or education—to use in dealing with the shock.

Cambodia's income poverty rate declined significantly from 47.8% to 22.9% between 2007 and 2009 and then continued to decline, though at a much-reduced pace, to 19.8% in 2011 and 18.6% in 2012, based on the national poverty line (Table 5).³¹ Thus, in 2012, about 2.8 million people survived on income below the relatively low national poverty line. Poverty rates are lower in urban than in rural areas, where nearly four out of five Cambodians live, but poverty in Phnom Penh is increasing.

People with income just above the poverty line are also vulnerable to shocks and crises since the impacts can push them into poverty. According to the international poverty line of \$1.25 per day (in purchasing power parity [PPP] terms), almost 19% of the population was poor in 2009, but 41% had less than \$2 (PPP) per day (Table 5). The share of the population between these two lines, nearly one-third of all Cambodians, provides one estimate of the population that is near poor and thus particularly vulnerable to negative impacts of shocks and crises. Three-quarters of the population had less than \$3 (PPP) per day.

³¹ The new national poverty line is still a low estimate of the cost of survival as it is based on the cost of 2,200 calories and a small cost for nonfood items; the new poverty line for Cambodia is 3,871 riels per capita per day (about \$0.94) in 2009 prices, with higher poverty lines for Phnom Penh and other urban areas, and a lower line for rural areas (Ministry of Planning 2013a).

Table 5: Poverty and Inequality Indicators, Cambodia, Selected Years

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
GDP growth rate (real, %) ^a		13.3	10.8	10.2	6.7	0.1	6.0	7.1	7.3
GNI/capita (current \$) ^a		460	520	580	660	690	740	800	880
Population (in millions) ^b									
Cambodia	12.66					13.73	13.96	14.16	14.38
Urban	2.39					2.64	2.70	2.81	3.13
Rural	10.27					11.09	11.26	11.35	11.25
Poverty headcount, \$1.25 a day (PPP) (%) ^c	32.8			30.8	20.9	12.9	11.3	10.1	
Poverty headcount, \$2 a day (PPP) (%) ^c	64.4			59.4	51.0	40.7	40.8	41.2	
Poverty headcount, national poverty line (%) ^d									
Cambodia				47.8	29.9	22.9	21.1	19.8	18.9
Rural				53.2	31.9	24.6	22.7	20.7	
Other urban				41.0	30.5	19.2	17.0	22.5	
Phnom Penh				19.1	13.6	12.8	12.4	10.9	
Inequality (Gini) ^c	0.355			0.413	0.352	0.347	0.336	0.318	
Consumption share of poorest 20% (%) ⁵				6.85	7.46	8.00	8.34	8.98	
Maternal mortality (per 100,000 live births) ^e		472					206		
Human development index ^f		0.501	0.511	0.520	0.526	0.528	0.532	0.538	0.543
Inequality adjusted human development index ^f									0.402
Multidimensional poverty ^f								45.9	
Gender inequality index value ^f		0.548					0.486		0.473
Gender gap index ^g			0.629	0.635	0.647	0.641	0.648	0.646	0.646
Economic participation index ^g			0.675	0.664	0.659	0.649	0.638	0.632	0.646

– = no data, GDP = gross domestic product, GNI = gross national income, PPP = purchasing power parity.

Sources:

^a ADB. 2013. *Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2013*. Manila.

^b Cambodia Ministry of Planning. *Cambodia Socioeconomic Survey 2012*. Phnom Penh.

^c World Bank PovCalNet database.

^d ADB. 2014. *Cambodia Country Poverty Analysis*. Manila.

^e Cambodia, Ministry of Planning. 2011. *Achieving Cambodia's Millennium Development Goals Update 2011*. Phnom Penh.

^f UNDP Human Development Data Online.

^g World Economic Forum Online Indicators.

The very rapid decline in income poverty between 2007 and 2009 appears surprising given that it coincides with the period of the global financial crises, which was widely expected to lead to increased poverty given the significant layoffs in the garment and construction industries along with rising food and fuel prices.³² The World Bank (2013) attributes the decline in the income poverty rates to the increases in the price of rice, rice production, agricultural wages, and self-employment income. The increase in the price of rice would have different impacts on households depending on whether they were net purchasers or suppliers of rice. Rural households with landholdings less than 0.5 hectares are estimated to be rice purchasers and hence would be negatively impacted by the increased rice price, but households with larger amounts of land and surplus rice production would benefit from the increased price of rice.

As ADB's Country Poverty Analysis 2014 points out, if poor households increased borrowing and debt levels during the financial crises in order to cover expenditures on food, health care, and social ceremonies, then the reported decline in income poverty rates will overstate the improvements in well-being during this period. Data from the 2009 CSES indicates that poorer households are more likely than richer households to be in debt, to have higher amounts of debt relative to consumption expenditures, to pay higher interest rates on the debt, and to borrow for consumption expenditure such as food or cultural ceremonies—in other words, nonproductive expenditure. They are also more likely to be in rural areas, and rely on agricultural production as the main source of livelihood.

Since poverty rates are generated at the household level, a decline in the poverty rate does not necessarily mean that the improvements in well-being were shared equally by women and men, and girls and boys. Evidence from other countries indicates that women and girls are disadvantaged in the allocation of intrahousehold resources such as food, health care, and leisure. The high prevalence of malnutrition and anemia among women in Cambodia (Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2010), for example, may suggest that increases in income disproportionately favor men and boys.

Despite a decline in the income poverty rate, low income and human poverty remain a pervasive problem. Based upon the multidimensional poverty index, the percentage of the population in poverty fell from 59% to 46% between 2005 and 2010.³³ In other words, in 2010, nearly half of the population was deprived in at least one-third of the multidimensional poverty indicators, and the percentage of people considered multidimensionally poor was more than double the percentage considered income poor.

5.2 Women's Vulnerability Over the Life Cycle

In general, Cambodian girls and women experience greater vulnerability to shocks and risks due to social norms and their lower access to resources and employment opportunities to

³² In contrast, based on panel data for four periods between 2001 and 2011, Tong (2012) finds that the poverty headcount rose between 2008 and 2011.

³³ The multidimensional poverty index reflects 10 indicators related to education, health, and standard of living.

cope with shocks, as compared with boys and men. The types of risk that impact girls' and women's vulnerability vary over the life cycle.

Girls still have less access to higher levels of education than boys and experience higher rates of illiteracy, as discussed in Chapter 4, and poverty and social norms continue to adversely impact girls' access to education.³⁴ Among children aged 6–17 years, 11.9% of girls and 10.5% of boys are reported to be not attending school because the family is too poor. Indicative of social norms that value boys' education over girls', a higher percentage of girls than boys are not attending school because they must contribute to household income (31.4% for girls versus 26.9% for boys) or must help with household chores (9.1% for girls, 6.6% for boys) (Figure 14). Further research is required to understand why girls in particular face these constraints to education and what measures can alleviate the constraints.

Girls' lower levels of education compared with boys will curtail the nature of their participation in and benefit from the labor market in the future, and thus, the potential for future economic empowerment.

Women of reproductive age experience substantial risks associated with pregnancy and childbirth. Maternal mortality rates continue to be higher in Cambodia compared with neighboring countries; for example, the maternal mortality rate in Cambodia is 206 (per 100,000 live births), compared with 12 in Thailand and 69 in Viet Nam (World Bank World Development Indicators).

The risks are higher for women in rural areas and in poor households. The risks associated with pregnancy and childbirth are lower if the woman receives antenatal care and the birth is attended by a skilled birth attendant. Women delivering babies in rural areas are less likely to have a doctor present during the delivery and more likely to have a midwife, traditional birth attendant, or friend or other person assist with delivery, compared with women in Phnom Penh. For example, only 13% of births in rural areas were attended by a doctor, compared with 32% in Phnom Penh, in 2012.

Households headed by women are likely to experience shocks differently than households headed by men due to social norms and more limited economic opportunities and income. Households headed by women comprise 22% of all households in the 2012 CSES. There appears to be little difference in the overall income poverty rates of households headed by women and those headed by men in 2011. The World Bank estimates that 20.1% of households headed by men and 22.5% of those headed by women were income poor in 2011.

Further investigation is required to determine whether (i) the poverty gap for poor households headed by women is similar to that of households headed by men and (ii) the determinants of poverty are similar. While certain factors, such as the size and composition of the household, years of education of the household head, and size of landholdings, statistically affect per capita consumption (World Bank 2013), these determinants may

³⁴ Although net enrollment rates at the primary level are comparable for girls and boys, and girls have a slight advantage at the lower secondary level, the net enrollment rate for girls is lower than for boys at upper secondary school (aged 15–17 years); the national net enrollment rates are 18.9% for girls and 24.0% for boys (2012 CSES).

differ for households headed by women and those headed by men. Analysis of 2004 data indicates that once household composition is taken into account, households headed by women, with no adult males, and with more than two children are much more likely to be poor and the girls are more likely to be working, compared with comparable households headed by men (MOWA 2008, pp. 50–51).

In rural areas, households headed by women, compared with those headed by men, may be more vulnerable to shocks such as a rise in rice prices. In the World Bank's 2013 poverty assessment, it is argued about one-third of rural households were negatively impacted by the increase in the price of rice in 2008 because they had insufficient land to meet their subsistence needs and had to purchase rice. Since households headed by women, on average, have smaller land holdings than those headed by men (FAO, NIS, and MOP 2010), they are more likely to be affected by an increase in the price of rice.

Elderly women and grandmothers and children left behind in rural areas are particularly vulnerable to shocks and crises. About 20% of migrants in Phnom Penh with children report that their children are not living in Phnom Penh and the majority live with their grandparents (MOP 2012a). The poverty rate is reported to be higher for households comprised only of children and older persons (Evans, cited in ADB 2013a). Elderly women may be faced with increased unpaid domestic and care work related to looking after children and with little income. Older women also have higher rates of injury and illness than older men. According to the 2012 CSES, 23% of women, as compared with 13% of men, aged 45–59 reported experiencing an illness or injury in the last 30 days.³⁵

Violence against girls and women is widespread in Cambodia.³⁶ A 2009 MOWA survey found that 53% of women reported knowing a woman abused by her husband. In terms of their own experiences of violence, 79% reported having been yelled at by their husbands, 31% reported having been cursed at, 6% having had items thrown at them, 4% experienced having their head knocked on the floor, and 1% reported having been threatened with a knife. There are also high rates of emotional, physical, or sexual violence against women³⁷ and acceptance of domestic violence (Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2011). In the UN Multi-Country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific's survey of more than 1,850 men in Cambodia between the ages of 18 and 49, more than one in five (20.8%) admitted to having raped a woman. Cambodia was unusual in the region for men reporting more sexual than physical violence against an intimate partner. When asked whether there are times when a woman deserves to be beaten, one-third (32.8%) of the 620 Cambodian women interviewed believed that there was (Fulu et al. 2013).

The high rates of acceptance of violence against women is problematic for women's economic empowerment and overall well-being. Increases in participation, benefit, and agency related to paid work may exacerbate the violence that women experience, making

³⁵ The causes of the illness or injury are not documented.

³⁶ The full MOWA Cambodia Gender Assessment 2014 will contain a stand-alone chapter on gender-based violence contributed by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, so the issue is not covered in great detail in this study.

³⁷ Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2005.

it harder for women to fulfill traditional female roles and responsibilities, which in turn may contribute to further violence. Breaking this cycle will require strategies to (i) achieve a more equal distribution of unpaid domestic and care responsibilities between men and women, and (ii) eliminate acceptance of acts of violence.³⁸

5.3 Girls' and Women's Vulnerability to Macroeconomic Shocks

Women's systemic lower command over productive resources including education, land, technology, and financial resources translates into lower labor market earnings, lower bargaining power within the household, fewer options, and hence higher risk and greater vulnerability during economic crises such as the global financial crisis which started in 2008 (Floro et al. 2009, pp. 3–4). Crises may therefore disproportionately impact women because of their greater vulnerability, and this impact may go beyond the immediate crisis period and affect their longer-term welfare and economic empowerment.

Given considerable gender and age segregation in the labor market, the global financial crisis of 2008–2009 had strong immediate gendered employment effects and may have contributed to different gendered coping responses. In terms of the immediate effects of the global financial crisis, exports fell and about 71,000 workers were laid off from the textile, garment, and footwear sector. About 90% of employees in this sector are women, and the number of workers fell from 353,000 in 2007 to 282,000 in 2009, thereafter rebounding to 319,000 in 2010 (Dasgupta 2011, Table 2.1). Men's wage employment is concentrated in the construction sector, which was less negatively impacted by the global financial crisis than the textile, garment, and footwear sector. Not only did the number of people employed in the garment industry fall but workers who kept their jobs experienced lower earnings due to fewer hours of work.³⁹

There is some evidence younger women and older women moved into the labor force in order to compensate for the loss of employment earnings from the garment sector. This argument is supported indirectly by the observed trends in labor force participation rate (LFPR) by age and location. According to the CSES, in 2009 and 2010 the LFPR for all women (aged 15–64 years) was higher than in 2007 and 2008. Between 2007 and 2009, the LFPR for women aged 35–44 years increased by 2.6 percentage points from 84.5% to 87.1%; the LFPR for young women in Phnom Penh aged 15–19 years increased by 4.5 percentage points, from 36.1% to 40.6%; and the LFPR for women aged 45–54 years in rural areas increased by 5.5 percentage points from 83.3% to 88.8%. Changes in LFPR by age and location for men are smaller than for women, perhaps in part due to their slightly higher overall LFPR, and the less dramatic drop in labor demand in the dominant wage employment sector for men.

There is also direct evidence that households responded to the global financial crisis by sending more girls and women into the labor force. Based on a June 2009 survey of

³⁸ Sokbunthoeun, Sedara, and Viroth 2013; see also Brickell, Prak, and Pach 2014.

³⁹ Sothath and Sophal 2010; Kang et al. 2009, cited by Hing 2011.

1,070 households in 15 villages, Sothath and Sophal (2010) indicate that in response to a decline in remittances, households sent more household members into the labor force. The percentage of households sending migrants increased from 15% in June 2008 to 24% in July 2009 and a higher percentage of households headed by women than those headed by men migrated. Surveys of households in nine villages in 2008, 2009, and 2011 indicate that rural employment increased as a result of the global financial crisis and that this was primarily due to women's increased employment; the increase in the employment rate in 2008, relative to 2007, is statistically significant for women, and insignificant for men.⁴⁰

Women who were laid off from the garment sector moved into various services and entertainment sectors—including in karaoke bars, beer halls, massage parlors, and brothels—or returned to rural areas to undertake agricultural activities. In a survey of 357 girls and women working in the entertainment sector, Sothath and Sophal (2010) found that the majority had entered the workforce during the global financial crisis and that 32% had previously been unemployed, 39% had been engaged in rural farming, and 13% had been garment factory workers.

Beyond affecting employment, the global financial crisis also led to reduced expenditure on food and health care services which particularly affected girls and women. Food consumption was compromised as 39% of households surveyed reported that mothers and elder sisters ate less in order to leave a higher share of food for other family members (Sothath and Sophal 2010). While all families, especially poor ones, were adversely affected by the global financial crisis, this was particularly felt by mothers and elder female children. Poor households and households headed by women were more likely to take loans to cover food and health expenses, which further points to the gendered impact of the crisis (Sothath and Sophal 2010). It cannot be assumed that a rebound in macroeconomic indicators will be immediately translated into improving conditions at the household level. Coping strategies that reduce consumption and education can be expected to have longer-term impacts.

5.4 Girls' and Women's Vulnerability to Natural Disasters

The 2011 flood caused displacement of 64,000 households; damage to houses; and loss of agricultural production, animals, and income. The costs were disproportionately borne by households in the poorest wealth quintile. Compared with households in the wealthiest quintile, households in the poorest quintile were much more likely to be displaced due to the flood, more likely to have a household member migrate out, more likely to have their children working, and more likely to have taken out more loans as a result of the flood. Further with respect to debt, households in the poorest quintile were most likely to identify debt as the main difficulty faced in the months since the floods, and loans were taken primarily to cover food costs.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Hing 2013.

⁴¹ World Food Programme et al. 2012.

Women and households headed by women may be particularly affected by natural disasters because they tend to have less access to information about the natural disaster, have fewer connections to community consultations, are less able to draw on credit, have less free time, and may be less able to migrate (Solar 2010). Natural disasters may also accentuate the amount of time women need to allocate to unpaid activities such as collecting drinking water and collecting firewood.

Natural disasters lead to increased indebtedness, as noted in the case of the 2011 flood, and may contribute toward not only voluntary migration but forced labor, bonded labor, and trafficking.⁴² While these forms of labor apply to both girls and boys, and women and men, the type of work differs, with men working on fishing boats and women in factories, domestic work, and sex work. Girls and women are particularly vulnerable because of gender norms around female submissiveness and familial piety and because the labor extracted is often sexual. Young women particularly feel obligated to help their families and may “choose” to migrate to urban areas to find work and to remit money.⁴³

5.5 Multiple Vulnerabilities Inhibit Women's Participation, Benefit, and Agency

Coping with poverty and multiple vulnerabilities curtails women's ability to participate in the labor market, to derive equal benefits from their participation, and to exercise agency. Girls and women are particularly disadvantaged by shocks and crises because women experience more restricted access to resources and opportunities and thus have more limited coping mechanisms (Plan International 2013). Indicative of discriminatory norms and practices, the gender inequality index for Cambodia at 0.473 is greater than the average for countries in East Asia and Pacific of 0.333, reflecting the restricted opportunities and discrimination experienced by Cambodian women (UNDP 2013).⁴⁴ Women face risks that men don't (for example, childbirth and domestic violence), risks that are likely to be accentuated in the context of natural disasters and macroeconomic shocks. When households are forced to reduce consumption, women and girls tend to suffer disproportionately, making economic empowerment even more elusive. Gender-responsive social protection programs to address various life cycle risks and shocks are an essential element of women's economic empowerment and inclusive growth. Social protection is discussed further in Section 6.

⁴² Forced labor refers to the situation in which a person provides labor because of a threat of violence or some form of coercion and typically occurs when the person agrees to work under an expected set of conditions but is forced to work under a different set of conditions. Bonded labor refers to labor that is provided to pay off a debt but the amount of time required is unreasonable due to the interest charged or the value given to the labor (Jordan 2011).

⁴³ Sandy 2011 and Orchard and Saville 2012.

⁴⁴ The gender inequality index is a summary index capturing women's disadvantages in reproductive health, political representation, education, and the labor market, which ranges from 0 (equality between men and women) to 1 (inequality between men and women).

6

The Institutional and Legal Context for Women's Economic Empowerment

6.1 Institutions for Women's Economic Empowerment

The Rectangular Strategy Phase III 2014–2018. The context for developing policies and strategies to promote women's economic empowerment is the government's Rectangular Strategy Phase III 2014–2018 (RS III). The objectives of RS III are economic growth, employment particularly for youth, poverty reduction, and strengthening institutional capacity and governance. RS III is the government's blueprint to guide the activities of all stakeholders to strengthen long-term sustainable development aimed at promoting economic growth, job creation, equitable distribution of growth, and effectiveness of public institutions and management of resources.

Gender equality is not explicitly mentioned in the overarching objective of RS III, but the document clearly refers to promoting the role of women in the economy, empowering women, and further mainstreaming gender in government initiatives as priorities. The four strategic rectangles of the RS III are (i) promotion of agriculture, (ii) development of physical infrastructure, (iii) private sector development and employment, and (iv) capacity building and human resource development. While there is potential to promote women's economic empowerment through each rectangle, attention is given in this chapter to the rectangles on agriculture, private sector development and employment, and social protection within the rectangle on capacity building and human resource development, because they are most closely aligned with the issues discussed in this report.

The government recognizes that promotion of the agriculture sector (including livestock and aquaculture) are important for economic growth and equity. The RS III indicates support for intensifying agricultural production through new technologies, mechanization, irrigation, diversification, and the promotion of commercialization and agro-industry.

With regard to the private sector and employment, the RS III indicates it will introduce an industrial development policy to facilitate moving upward in the regional and global value chain. As part of this strategy, the government plans to strengthen the investment and business environment to enhance production for export. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are to be integrated into global value chains, and the SME Framework is to be updated to guide this planning.

With respect to employment, the RS III aims to develop a national employment policy; create an employment forum to link demand and supply and training; expand services

under the National Employment Agency; strengthen the Labor Law; support Better Factories Cambodia; enhance the rights, health, and safety of migrant workers; and link trade with improving working conditions, providing vocational training, strengthening labor dispute resolution mechanisms, and implementing the Labor Law.

Finally, within the capacity building and human resource development rectangle, RS III indicates that the government will strengthen the social protection system and that priority will be given to implementing the 2011 National Social Protection Strategy for the Poor and Vulnerable.⁴⁵ RS III also indicates support for a comprehensive social security system, a national policy on disability, a national policy for elderly people, mechanisms to respond to disasters, measures to distribute land, and the promotion of financial inclusion.

The government's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment is also clearly expressed in other planning documents and strategies, including the National Strategic Development Plan 2014–2018, and in its commitment to achieving the Cambodia Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Ministry of Planning's 2011 MDG update states that “women's position, whether in education, technical skills or public life, is yet weaker compared to that of men in Cambodia. It implies that the struggle for gender equality must continue” (MOP 2011). Targets related to MDG 3 on gender equality and women's economic empowerment include reducing significantly gender disparities in upper secondary and tertiary education, eliminating gender disparities in wage employment in all economic sectors, eliminating gender disparities in public institutions, and reducing significantly all forms of violence against women and children (MOP 2011).

MOWA's last five-year strategic plan, Neary Rattanak III 2009–2013, outlined strategies to ensure gender-responsive national policies, legislation, and reform programs; to support the economic empowerment of women; to ensure legal protection from violence and sexual and labor exploitation; to promote change in attitude and behavior that discriminate against women; to develop the capacity of women; and to address barriers in order for women to access and claim their right to fully participate in and benefit from economic and social development, also as decision makers.⁴⁶ In 2013, MOWA launched the MDG Acceleration Framework Cambodia Action Plan 2013–2015, which focuses on women's economic empowerment to contribute to the achievement of other Cambodia MDGs in poverty reduction, health, and education. Developing the action plan was an interministerial effort supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and coordinated with line ministries, development partners, NGOs, and the private sector. The action plan prioritizes three areas of intervention:

- (i) providing training for jobs for women that are consistent with market demands;
- (ii) enhancing micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises led by women to ensure that women have the capacity to lead and grow their enterprises and move from the formal to the informal sector; and
- (iii) improving livelihoods in rural communities, especially for poor women.

⁴⁵ Social protection encompasses noncontributory social assistance (safety nets) to protect the most vulnerable in times of need, contributory social insurance (social security), and labor market programs. Social protection programs typically interact with policies on education, technical and vocation education and training, health, and public works.

⁴⁶ Neary Rattanak IV 2014–2018 was under preparation when this report was written. It was released in December 2014.

Women's development centers. As part of its national gender equity and economic empowerment strategies, MOWA has established women's development centers (WDCs) in 13 provinces. The WDCs are vocational centers offering training programs in areas such as handicraft production, hairdressing, tailoring, and food processing. There are 138 administrative and training staff, and approximately 1,900 trainees complete WDC courses each year. However, training has limited impact and has minimal outreach to rural communities. The course offerings are supply driven and enrollments are declining, reflecting the decreasing relevance of the training offered (MOWA and ADB 2013).

The WDC training programs have the potential to contribute to increasing women's income, increasing their influence over the income, and reducing migration. While there are some examples of well-functioning WDCs, many have not been reaching their potential including the Siem Reap WDC, newly constructed in 2010, which has been unable to connect with the significant tourist market in the area (MOWA and ADB 2013).

The MOWA MDG Acceleration Framework Cambodia Action Plan identifies the following challenges with respect to WDCs:

- limited role and functions of WDCs;
- WDCs only provide traditional vocational skills, not entrepreneurial skills training, business development services, current market information, or access to credit;
- skills provided that do not match the local market demands and a lack of trainers with the relevant cutting-edge knowledge to match such market needs and to address the unique needs and challenges of women;
- inadequate monitoring and follow-up system of WDCs to assess the impact of the skills trainings; and
- limited coordination between WDCs and other vocational training centers (such as those run by the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, the private sector, and NGOs).

According to the action plan, WDCs have not reached their intended potential. The WDCs concentrate more on women's traditional occupations and have not addressed other parts of their mandate including the provision of enterprise development skills, literacy programs, information on legal protections and health and nutrition, and other life skills. The centers have not become "centers" in the sense of community spaces that are visited and utilized by women and girls seeking information and assistance in meeting their employment and business aspirations.⁴⁷

In general, WDCs lack a coherent management strategy and a monitoring and information sharing process that allows WDCs either individually or collectively to assess the success of their training programs, identify best practices, and share experiences across programs and centers. In some cases, it appears that such training is not regularly offered. There is also a lack of a transparent financial system in reporting income flows from sales and expenses.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Yamamoto 2013.

⁴⁸ Footnote 45, p. 42.

Based on evaluations of existing WDC programs, it is necessary to strengthen WDC training to ensure that training is responsive to specific labor demand in the region, provides bridge training to technical and vocational education and training, and incorporates training in nontraditional female areas where there is high labor demand. A new management framework and strategy will also need to be adopted if WDCs are to move closer to realizing their potential. In this context, there is considerable interest in MOWA to introduce public–private partnerships for WDCs as a way of increasing WDCs' market and entrepreneurial orientation. While some elements of public–private partnerships may be desirable, it is also clear that they are not a panacea and face their own challenges.⁴⁹ A greater understanding within MOWA of what WDCs can offer and what such partnerships would entail is essential. Annex 1 presents a case study of support to the Siem Reap WDC in establishing a first public–private partnership.

Line ministries. Each ministry has a gender focal point and a gender working group tasked with developing and implementing a gender mainstreaming action plan (GMAP). Some of these groups are more active than others, and capacity is at varying levels. However, some of the individual ministry GMAPs exhibit promising features for promoting women's economic empowerment. These include identifying women's constraints in accessing resources needed for economic empowerment; documenting women's lower benefit from government programs; advancing women-specific initiatives and gender-responsive measures to promote women's access to benefits and services; and including explicit sex-disaggregated targets for delivery of benefits and services, which will also be useful for monitoring and accountability (ADB 2013b). However, despite positive aspects of several GMAPs, as Chea (2011) analyzes, more work is required on how to undertake gender mainstreaming and connecting GMAPs to the main planning processes, as well as adequately funding implementation. Each line ministry has prepared or is in the process of preparing a 5-year development plan to align with the RS III and the related GMAPs are at different stages of preparation. There are opportunities to share good gender mainstreaming practices among the line ministries and thereby enhance the new GMAPs. The GMAPs of three ministries are considered here given their centrality to women's economic empowerment—the ministries of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; Commerce; and Labor and Vocational Training—along with the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development given its role in coordinating the National Social Protection Strategy for the Poor and Vulnerable.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) has prepared the Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategy in Agriculture 2006–2010 (MAFF 2006). The MAFF GMAP contains objectives relating to greater inclusion of women in the civil service, enhanced capacity to integrate gender, and increased ability of rural women to access and manage resources, building and promoting gender equality in access to extension services. With regard to the latter, specific mention is given to assistance with social land concession, participation in the private sector, participation in village and community groups, credit, and extension services. The forestry and fisheries administrations have each developed a separate gender mainstreaming plan and strategy. The MAFF GMAP indicates that data

⁴⁹ See Gärtner, Schumacher, and Grossman 2010; and Yamamoto 2013.

will be collected to monitor gender mainstreaming and that the document will be reviewed in 4 years.

The MAFF GMAP has positive elements in line with good practices for promoting women's economic empowerment. For example, specific constraints women experience are highlighted and some targets for monitoring purposes are included.

Despite positive gender design elements, there is no evidence of gender-responsive implementation. It appears that MAFF has not undertaken a systematic evaluation of the implementation and achievements of the GMAP. Gender policies have not been translated into practice due to a lack of leadership commitment, financial resources, and institutional and human capacity, and weak enforcement of antidiscrimination provisions and law (STAR Kampuchea 2013). As stated in the World Bank's *Gender in Agriculture Assessment* (forthcoming 2014), despite official endorsement of numerous gender policies and strategies, reducing gender inequalities in agriculture has been slow to take place due to continued lack of institutional and human capacity in gender and failure to translate gender policies into practice.

A report by Sophorn and Velasco (2010) indicates that further capacity building in using gender mainstreaming frameworks is needed. Women continue to have unequal access to agricultural extension services, gender considerations in forestry programming are not fully developed, and women have been unable to access fisheries-related programming due to time, cultural, and education constraints. Thus, understanding and addressing the constraints to women's access to resources in agriculture and in receiving benefits from government programming are required.

The Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MLVT) has adopted a detailed GMAP approach. The GMAP 2009–2013 contained a variety of gender-responsive initiatives related to employment and migration. The new GMAP Phase III (2014–2018) aims to promote gender equity and reduce gender gaps through labor and vocational training, and in November 2013 MLVT issued Prakas No. 301 on establishing a committee for gender work with 22 members. The nine objectives of the new GMAP are

- mainstreaming gender in MLVT policies, programs, and projects;
- increasing the number of women in MLVT decision-making positions;
- increasing civil servants' and students' gender awareness;
- promoting enforcement of the Labor Law to improve working conditions for women;
- mainstreaming gender in the enforcement of the law on social security;
- creating opportunities for women in the labor force to access labor and vocational services;
- setting up a sex-disaggregated labor force data system;
- cooperating with the private sector to promote gender equality in enterprises; and
- cooperating with ministries and development partners and seeking technical and financial assistance to implement the GMAP.

The Ministry of Commerce conducted a review of the past performance and has developed a new GMAP for 2014–2018. The GMAP 2014–2018 indicates that further study is required to determine the outcomes of programming on men and women and to further understand the specific challenges experienced by women business owners. It is acknowledged that men have benefited disproportionately from some programs related to SMEs because they are more likely to be owners. The new GMAP has positive features including explicit attention to microenterprises and concrete initiatives to assist women to expand their businesses, with appropriate targets set to monitor the inclusion of women business owners, could help enhance gender mainstreaming. The establishment of the “single window” for business registration announced in March 2014 within the Ministry of Industry and Handicrafts, which was newly created in 2013, may facilitate registration (Reaksmey and Willemyns 2014). The Ministry of Industry and Handicrafts will continue to design programs in line with the Ministry of Commerce GMAP.

The Government–Private Sector Forum provides a mechanism for government and business interactions aimed toward improving the business environment. The forum has working groups aligned with a number of ministries. The extent to which the groups adequately promote women's economic empowerment needs to be assessed, particularly since concerns have been raised that the groups are comprised mostly of men and the focus is on issues of importance to big businesses (MOWA 2008). The inclusion of the Cambodian Women Entrepreneurs Association in the forum is a step forward.

The Council for Agriculture and Rural Development has the government mandate to develop and implement the National Social Protection Strategy for the Poor and Vulnerable. The objectives of the strategy are to (i) support the basic needs of the poor and vulnerable during emergencies and crisis; (ii) reduce poverty and food insecurity of poor and vulnerable mothers and children and hence human capital development; (iii) provide employment for the working-age poor and vulnerable; (iv) ensure the poor and vulnerable have access to affordable quality health care and financial protection in the case of illness; and (v) provide income and support for special vulnerable groups including single women with children, people with disabilities, orphans, and the elderly.

The strategy has not yet been implemented nationally, but a number of pilot projects have been implemented with donor support. The pilot projects include cash support to women to defray travel costs associated with obtaining antenatal, childbirth, and postnatal care (support from the United States Agency for International Development); productive assets and livelihood support for informal workers (support from the World Food Programme); social service delivery mechanism (support from the International Labour Organization); and cash for public works (support from the Asian Development Bank). There is also ongoing discussion about the design of a small conditional cash transfer pilot program to support women's and children's health and nutrition, expected to start by early 2015 and run for 18 months (support from the World Bank).

While the National Social Protection Strategy for the Poor and Vulnerable recognizes women-specific vulnerabilities related to childbirth and girls' more restricted access to school, it is unclear how women's specific needs will be taken into account in the design and implementation of programs to meet the other objectives. To the extent that the IDPoor

program is used to identify and target beneficiaries, it is necessary to determine whether girls and women, along with households headed by women, are appropriately captured. Given that the IDPoor targeting occurs only every 3 years, there is the general problem that it will fail to capture people who fall into poverty after the targeting has been conducted.

With respect to the proposed conditional cash transfer pilot, international good practices indicate the importance of considering women's preferences for type and timing of payment (cash, in-kind), and design features that can best support livelihood activities as well as enhance children's education and health services.

6.2 Legal Norms⁵⁰

Cambodia has ratified 13 International Labour Organization conventions and is also a signatory to United Nations human rights covenants and conventions. These include the Convention for Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was ratified by Cambodia in 1992 (Peng et al. 2012). In addition, Cambodia has its own labor law, adopted in 1997, and human rights are guaranteed by the Constitution. Antidiscrimination provisions are included in the Constitution and Article 36 of the Constitution specifically recognizes the value of women's work in the home as equal to that performed outside of the home. In general, Cambodia has adopted a legal framework that enhances women's legal position and can contribute to their economic empowerment.

Nondiscrimination in employment is provided in articles 12 and 279 of the Law on Labor. Employers cannot discriminate on the basis of sex in hiring, defining and assigning work, vocational training, promotion, remuneration, granting of social benefits, or discipline or termination (Peng et al. 2012). However, a number of problems, in addition to implementation, have been identified with the law. First, it does not define what constitutes an act of discrimination and, second, legislation does not specify whether it refers to direct and indirect discrimination. Third, the legislation applies only to Khmer citizens.

Particular concerns exist where discrimination takes the form of sexual harassment, a concern for women and especially for those employed in the services and entertainment sectors. This arises because what constitutes sexual harassment is not clearly laid out nor understood by many women. In addition, complaints must be reported to the police; this complaint mechanism is inappropriate and intimidating to many women, with the result that many incidents of sexual harassment are unreported.

The enforcement of the Labor Law is problematic, with only 18 trained inspectors responsible for Cambodia's 375,000 enterprises. This also means that aspects of the Labor Law, such as those that provide employees (both men and women) with 7 days of paid special leave for personal reasons, stipulate severance pay, entitle working women to breastfeeding time (1 additional hour of break for infants up to 1 year), and require enterprises employing over 100 women to set up childcare facilities or provide payment in lieu, are subject to incomplete enforcement (Peng et al. 2012).

⁵⁰ This section is based on ADB and ILO 2013a unless otherwise noted.

There is an increasing use of short-term contracts, which can discriminate against women. The Labor Law specifies that employment contracts can be of fixed or indefinite duration. Importantly, the distinction is clear between the two and limits are placed on the successive use of fixed-duration contracts, which can otherwise be used to limit worker benefits and discriminate against women employees who become pregnant.

Despite the presence of antidiscrimination legislation, there is no provision for “equal remuneration for work of equal value,” although “equal pay for the same work” is included in the Constitution (Peng et al. 2012). Minimum wage legislation is in place and has been applied to the garment, textile, and shoe industries, the industries in which a large number of women are employed. As noted in previous sections, the adequacy of the minimum wage has been questioned, not least by unions in these sectors. Many women working in the domestic, tourism, and entertainment sectors are not covered at all.

Rural women in theory have equal rights to land ownership following the provisions of the Land Law adopted in 2001 (Peng et al. 2012). In practice, however, there are examples of gendered land grabbing (as well as land grabbing in general) in which men take over the legal title to land even where women have legal rights to it as well. Women are not aware of their rights and have little recourse to legal advice.

Laws protecting migrant workers are important for Cambodia given the extent of internal and international migration that takes place. However, the government has yet to ratify the International Labour Organization Convention on the Protection of Migrant Workers and Members of their Families or the Convention Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers (CEDAW 2013). National laws, however, have been reviewed and changed. In particular, in 2011, Sub-Decree 190 on the Management of the Sending of Cambodian Workers Abroad through Private Recruitment Agencies was passed. This replaces and expands previous legislation and provides a framework through which guidelines (*prakas*) will be established covering the inspection of recruitment agency training centers, complaints procedures, contract terms between agencies and migrant recruits, price regulations for passports, and ways of reducing health vulnerabilities. Protection for migrant workers once abroad is provided through memorandums of understanding with receiving countries including the Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Qatar, and Thailand. If enforced, these memorandums can provide a level of legal protection to migrant workers at all points in the migration process.

7

Policy Recommendations and Areas for Further Research

This section presents seven clusters of policy recommendations that MOWA and development partners may consider and advance through the planned strategy for women's economic empowerment in Cambodia, through their own projects and programs, and through their advocacy and support for gender mainstreaming in line ministries. This section concludes with eleven areas for further research to support evidence-based policy making for women's economic empowerment.

7.1 Address the Unequal Unpaid Domestic and Care Work Burden of Men and Women and Enhance Women's Human Capital

- Emphasize positive aspects of a more equal distribution of unpaid domestic and care responsibilities between men and women and find ways to encourage men to take on household tasks, for example, through social marketing, behavior change and outreach activities, particularly through NGOs.
- Reduce women's unpaid work through improvements in basic infrastructure and services that reduce time poverty and human poverty, such as improved access to safe water and to preschools and schools, and access to time-saving devices.
- Continue to enhance girls' and women's human capital through gender-equitable access to formal education and technical and vocational training, including in nontraditional higher return occupations that are expected to experience increases in labor demand (such as mechanics, electronics, construction, and so on).⁵¹

⁵¹ A more comprehensive list of policy recommendations related to reducing the barriers to girls and women's education and training can be found in a stand-alone chapter of the MOWA Cambodia Country Gender Assessment (forthcoming 2015) and the related policy brief (forthcoming 2014) as well as in ADB. 2014. *Cambodia Education Sector Assessment, Strategy and Road Map*. Manila.

7.2 Increase Women's Access to the Assets and Resources that Enhance Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods (Land, Labor, and Human and Financial Capital)

- Monitor and report implementation of the Land Law to ensure that women are able to register inherited land in their own name, and that land acquired during marriage is jointly registered, addressing the specific obstacles women encounter in registering land.
- Examine the needs of specific groups of vulnerable women such as divorced, separated, or abandoned women with respect to their land rights.
- Raise awareness of land and property rights among women and rural organizations, recognizing women's specific needs and interests in both common and private lands.
- Increase women's participation and benefit from agricultural diversification, intensification, commercialization and postharvest production using gender-responsive design features, targets, and accountability mechanisms.
- Strengthen gender mainstreaming and initiatives targeted to women in line ministries, especially the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MLVT), to ensure women participate and benefit from government programming.
- Ensure women have access to and control over machinery, tools, new technology, inputs, irrigation, and credit and extension services (delivered by a growing share of female extension staff) to increase agricultural productivity, and facilitate women's access to markets.
- Ensure women have access to new agricultural technologies such as threshing machines, and that women who are displaced from wage-earning opportunities as a result of mechanization are supported in finding new economic opportunities, for example through MLVT's provincial training centers or MOWA's women's development centers.

7.3 Support a Business Enabling Environment that Recognizes Women's Specific Constraints and Increases Women's Access to Assets and Resources that Enable Business Development and Expansion

- Continue to support the business enabling environment for SMEs, recognizing women's specific constraints, such as difficulties in registering property and businesses in their own name. This will include better training of officials and enforcement of business regulations and procedures pertaining to SMEs, including the elimination of unofficial fees.

- Increase women's access to assets and resources necessary for developing and expanding their businesses and employing others by addressing the general barriers noted earlier.
- Strengthen gender mainstreaming and initiatives targeted to women in line ministries, especially the Ministry of Commerce and the new Ministry of Industry and Handicrafts, to ensure that women participate and benefit from government programming.
- Increase women's access to technical and vocational education and training, business development and financial services, financial literacy and entrepreneurship skills, and marketing information—particularly in rural areas.
- Support women's businesses in profitable sectors considered nontraditional for women and assist women entrepreneurs to acquire the necessary skills.
- Assist women to participate in national and international business networks, in the Government–Private Sector Forum, in producer associations, and in women-specific business associations to advocate for themselves and for increased access to information, training, and markets. Assess barriers to women's involvement in existing producer associations and ways to strengthen the benefits to women from participation.

7.4 Support Growth of Wage Employment Opportunities and Improve Working Conditions for Women through Stronger Enforcement of Revised Laws and Regulations and Access to Training for Women

- Strengthen capacity for and implementation of gender mainstreaming and initiatives targeted to women in line ministries, especially MLVT.
 - Ensure that women have access to training that will enhance their employment opportunities, as production processes become more sophisticated and products change with diversification (for example, supervisory skills and technological skills needed by industry).
 - Support efforts to promote women into more senior positions, such as through the Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia's training center for garment workers.
- Revise laws and regulations to promote gender equality in the labor market and monitor and enforce labor laws and regulations.
 - Revise legislation on equal remuneration for work of equal value to ensure it is consistent with international core labor standards, including the use of objective criteria.
 - Revise the Labor Law to ensure that discrimination includes both direct and indirect discrimination, establish sanctions for discrimination, clarify the meaning of sexual harassment, and include paid domestic workers in the definition of workers.
 - Monitor and address the problem of multiple short-term contracts and reduce practices that discriminate against women for pregnancy and maternity leave.

- o Review the complaints process and ensure it is clear and responsive to women's needs.
- o Increase the number of trained labor inspectors and increase enforcement capability, paying attention to gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and working conditions of women.
- Support the development of an independent minimum wage-setting mechanism being discussed by MLVT (with ILO).
- Continue to support the ILO Better Factories Cambodia mechanisms to promote productive and decent work in the garment sector, and ways to extend initiatives across other sectors, formal and informal.
- Support training for women to improve negotiation skills regarding working conditions and raise awareness about labor rights and sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Support the government's National Employment Agency at national and subnational levels to eliminate direct and indirect discrimination against women and other vulnerable groups in employment services.
 - o Ensure job postings are open to men and women and raise awareness of employers about nondiscriminatory recruitment and promotion practices.
 - o Encourage the private sector to adopt gender-responsive human resource practices.

7.5 Reduce the Risks and Enhance the Benefits of Migration for Women

- Ratify the Convention on Domestic Workers and the Convention on the Protection of Migrant Workers and Their Families.
- Develop and monitor implementation of bilateral memorandums of understanding with selected migrant-receiving countries to protect women migrants' rights and safety at all stages in the migration process.
- Strengthen gender-responsive services for migrants through subnational and national resource centers.
- Implement a comprehensive system of data collection that logs migrant workers at each stage of the migration process and also collect statistics on disputes and cases of exploitation, abuse, and trafficking.
- Implement an effective complaints mechanism that can be accessed by the migrant workers in the receiving country.
- Continue initiatives aimed at preventing the trafficking of women as well as the physical and sexual abuse of migrants.
- Standardize and reduce the fees and costs associated with migration.
- In partnership with the financial services industry, standardize the system for sending remittances to reduce the time and cost.
- Consider options for a contributory benefits scheme for migrant workers to help with the cost of training or in emergencies.
- Develop in-country services for Cambodian migrants in receiving countries.

7.6 Enhance Social Protection for Women to Reduce Vulnerability

- Strengthen MLVT initiatives to enhance social security (social insurance) for formal sector workers, e.g., health insurance by 2014, pensions by 2015.
- Assess pilot programs to extend social security to informal workers (with ILO assistance).
- Support implementation of the 2011 National Social Protection Strategy for the Poor and Vulnerable and the 2014 National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition, and further develop a comprehensive gender-responsive social protection system (a minimum social protection floor should include legal entitlement to essential health care, family and child benefits above the poverty line, basic unemployment benefits, and old age and invalidity benefits (ADB and ILO 2013a).
- Assess the gender-responsiveness of social protection pilot programs (such as the cash for work and conditional cash transfer programs) and scale up successful programs.
- Ensure that the Ministry of Planning's IDPoor targeting mechanism appropriately includes poor households headed by females and explore mechanisms for updating IDPoor more frequently.
- Ensure the National Social Protection Strategy for the Poor and Vulnerable can quickly and effectively respond to vulnerabilities arising from natural disasters and external shocks causing loss of income and livelihood opportunities.

7.7 Enhance MOWA and Line Ministry Capacity to Design and Implement Gender-Responsive Plans to Promote Women's Economic Empowerment

- Enhance MOWA's ability to support gender mainstreaming and gender-specific activities in line ministries.
 - Continue to build capacity and strengthen coordination within line ministries to analyze, design, implement, and monitor gender-responsive policy and programs, especially the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; the MLVT, the Ministry of Commerce, and the Ministry of Tourism.
 - Support development of a gender mainstreaming action plan (GMAP) in the new Ministry of Industry and Handicrafts (see recommendations related to strengthening women's businesses).
 - Ensure that recommendations from the Millennium Development Goals Acceleration Framework and the forthcoming women's economic empowerment strategy and program are included in line ministry GMAPs.
- Support the national employment policy being drafted by MLVT and incorporate and monitor gender-equitable employment targets.

- Support initiatives to hire women into the public administration using quotas and targets, and ensure that women in public administration have equal access to national and international capacity development initiatives.
- Advocate for analysis of the direct job creation impact of all fiscal expenditures in all line ministries. For example, analyze the gendered impacts of infrastructure projects funded by the government and/or by development partners and ensure that women benefit from these directly created jobs by setting targets for women's employment, e.g., in road construction and maintenance, school construction, and so on.
- Strengthen women's development centers and ensure adequate management and financing.
 - Focus on attracting involvement of the private sector, social enterprises, and nongovernment organizations to support the operation and management of women's development centers (WDCs), particularly through (i) clarifying MOWA's institutional arrangements with regard to public-private partnerships, (ii) clarifying the scope and value of the public offering to potential private partners, and (iii) clarifying the legal operating environment and type of agreement that can be entered into.
 - For vocational training, explore formal collaboration with MLVT provincial training centers and other technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutes in (i) strengthening WDC training options and avoiding overlap, (ii) ensuring that training is responsive to local labor demand, (iii) providing bridge training to formal TVET enrollment, (iv) offering training in entrepreneurship and business development skills, and (v) including training in nontraditionally female areas where there is high demand.
- Support women's ability to advocate for their own economic empowerment through business associations and Cambodian and international civil society organizations engaged in women's economic empowerment initiatives, such as through the Cambodian Women Entrepreneurs Association and the Government-Private Sector Forum working groups.

7.8 Areas for Further Research

- Investigate the gendered impacts of fiscal policy (taxation and expenditure) and trade patterns and policy (exports and imports).
- Analyze the implications for women's economic empowerment of (i) the Association of Southeast Asian Nations economic integration and (ii) Cambodia's rise to lower-middle-income country status.
- Assess whether current surveys on employment reliably provide information about paid domestic workers.
- Assess economic opportunities for women in postharvest agriculture.
- Explore international best practices in reducing the risks and enhancing the benefits of women's labor migration, for example, in the Republic of Korea and the Philippines.
- Assess opportunities to create value chains (or linkages) especially in tourism (e.g., vegetables and food for restaurants, handicrafts).

- Assess good practice on financial literacy training and financial services for women.
- Analyze the good practices and lessons related to support for growth of microenterprises, and draw implications for the “one village–one product” strategy.
- Assess the income poverty gap for female-headed and male-headed households.
- Undertake new time-use survey to update data last collected in 2004.
- Given the comparatively little theoretical and empirical literature on agency (relative to participation and benefit as elements of women’s economic empowerment), undertake research on the meanings and experiences of agency for Cambodian women across various socioeconomic groups.

8

ADB Support for Women's Economic Empowerment

ADB sees gender equality and women's empowerment as essential for inclusive and sustainable development. Gender equality needs to be pursued both in its own right for a just and equal society, and for better development outcomes—inclusive growth, faster poverty reduction, and progress toward the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. ADB includes promoting gender equity as one of the five drivers of change in its long-term strategic framework Strategy 2020. Without harnessing the talents, human capital, and economic potential of women, the goals of poverty reduction and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific will not be met.

The Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Operational Plan 2013–2020. This new plan sets out the strategic directions and the guiding framework for delivering better gender equality outcomes in Asia and the Pacific, translating Strategy 2020's gender equity as driver of change into concrete and measurable operations to support gender equality outcomes. In the plan, ADB commits to improving the design, implementation, and monitoring of its investments for the delivery of better gender equality results and outcomes; to rebalancing toward more gender-equity-themed operations that support gender equality objectives; and to piloting innovations with potential for scaling up. Opportunities for more direct investments in women and girls to narrow gender disparities will be explored in areas such as (i) girls' secondary education and completion; (ii) access to productive assets, labor-saving technology, jobs, and income-earning opportunities; (iii) skills training and school-to-work transition programs for female youth; (iv) financial services and business development services for women entrepreneurs; (v) policy and legal reforms to tackle issues of gender-based violence and anti-trafficking, and; (vi) giving women voice in decision making in formal and informal institutions.

Promoting economic empowerment in Cambodia. In Cambodia, ADB promotes gender equality and women's empowerment through (i) gender action plans that mainstream gender targets in project design and monitoring frameworks across a range of sectors, (ii) focused technical assistance, and (iii) policy dialogue. Under the completed country partnership strategy, 2011–2013, ADB implemented project-specific gender action plans with gender design features, targets, and indicators that promoted women's participation and more equal access to benefits in agriculture, rural development, irrigation and water resources, education and technical and vocational education and training (TVET), health, rural water supply and sanitation, and social protection. The inclusion of gender-related loan and grant assurances helped improve the monitoring and documentation of gender equity results.

According to the final review of the country partnership strategy, 2011–2013, 75% of approved projects had either a gender theme (GEN) or an effective gender mainstreaming (EGM) classification, well exceeding the ADB-wide target of 50% of annual operations. In addition, the Cambodia Resident Mission gender team formulated two Gender and Development Cooperation Fund grants approved in 2012. The first supported the development of public–private partnerships at the Siem Reap Women's Development Center in collaboration with the Ministry of Women's Affairs (Annex 1). The second promoted women's access to rural road construction and maintenance jobs with the Ministry of Rural Development (Box 2). In addition to these smaller stand-alone gender technical assistance activities, the ADB Cambodia Resident Mission continued to support the implementation of 12 project gender action plans, working with project implementation teams and gender working groups across 11 line ministries.

Strengthening technical and vocational education and training.⁵² ADB's significant support for the development of Cambodia's nascent TVET system has been particularly

Box 2: Promoting Women's Access to Jobs in Rural Road Construction and Maintenance^a

This Gender and Development Cooperation Fund grant was implemented by CARE Cambodia and social marketing firm 17 Triggers from 2012 to 2013. It aimed to increase access for Cambodian women to rural road rehabilitation and maintenance jobs created by the ADB-financed Rural Road Improvement Project (RRIP), which upgraded about 500 kilometers of rural roads in seven provinces. The grant successfully developed and tested gender training manuals and behavior change materials under the Ready for Roads brand, trained trainers to work with national and local government officials, worked with road contractors and rural community members, and supported communes to develop registration lists for local residents interested in rural road construction jobs. More than 700 women signed up, illustrating the grant's success in opening the eyes of participants to the opportunities available to them. Changing road construction contractors' attitudes toward what women can do was a key focus. The activities were designed to help achieve the project's gender action plan target of women having access to 40% of the unskilled labor days created, thus giving them access to income and supporting women's economic empowerment.

Khoun Sophorn, a RRIP road construction worker from Kampong Speu, said that the project allowed her to earn money without having to work far away from her home and family, unlike jobs at garment factories. Khieve Sophal said her work as grass planter and road maintainer, earning \$109 per month, enabled her to pay for food for her family, cover part of her mother's medical treatment, and send her children to school: "the road construction work made me feel proud of myself for what I could do to independently improve our situation." According to Thoung Phally, bringing in an income brought about important household changes: "the most significant change from my new job is that my husband now helps me with housework and other tasks around our home while I am busy or working overtime on road construction."

^a A short film about the grant can be viewed at www.adb.org/features/cambodia-road-project-empowers-women

⁵² The data in this section are from a VSTP case study prepared by K. Schelzig (ADB) and N. Nikulin (GIZ) for inclusion in the GIZ toolkit on learning and working in the informal economy, available at www.giz.de/expertise/html/14273.html

relevant for women's economic empowerment, given the close links between TVET, school-to-work transition, and access to more decent work with potentially higher incomes. Skills enhancement and training are key to improving young women's chances of better employment. The Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training's nationwide Voucher Skills Training Program, or VSTP, grew out of a pilot in seven provinces first designed and implemented under the ADB-financed Second Education Sector Development Program (Annex 2). The VSTP is a nonformal training program that does not require grade 9 completion for enrollment, which is vital in a context of low educational attainment, particularly for women. The demand-driven program is offered through three modalities: community-based training that takes place in rural villages, enterprise-based training that is similar to internships or on-the-job training, and training courses at provincial training centers run by MLVT. Although most of the trainees choose agriculture and livestock-related training programs, the VSTP also offers nonagriculture skills development programs.

The pilot phase of the VSTP (2005–2010) reached nearly 161,400 participants. Selected communes received technical assistance to prepare commune training plans, followed by a voucher to fund training linked to the plans. The program's gender action plan aimed to ensure equitable benefits for men and women, and targets for women's participation were exceeded: in the pilot phase 58% of VSTP participants were women. One reason for the high level of women's participation was the delivery of short community-based training linked to daily productive activities. An effectiveness survey found that the training program delivered useful skills—between 65% and 76% of trainees, depending on delivery modality, were using their skills 6 months after training, resulting in higher family incomes. There were spillover benefits as well: more than one-third of VSTP trainees reported providing training to family members and neighbors after completing their courses.

Lessons derived from a survey of about 4,000 VSTP trainees and provincial training center directors show that there is still potential for improving the quality of the training and the distribution of training among the three modalities. In designing the pilot, it was anticipated that training would be 60% community-based, 30% enterprise-based, and 10% in provincial training centers. At project close in 2010, actual VSTP training output was 96% community-based, slightly under 2% enterprise-based, and slightly more than 2% center-based. The shift toward significantly more community-based training and away from enterprise- and center-based training was the result of (i) challenges in accommodating trainees for enterprise- and center-based training, a problem especially for women; (ii) the much higher cost per trainee; and (iii) the fact that engaging with local small businesses was a new and challenging concept for the provincial training centers. While women's participation in the pilot VSTP was 58% overall, women represented 59% of community-based trainees, 46% of enterprise-based trainees, and 40% of center-based trainees.

Expanded to all 24 provinces under the follow-on project Strengthening TVET (2010–2015), the VSTP aims to reach 210,000 trainees by 2015. The program will be further strengthened under the new TVET Sector Development Program (2015–2020). Plans to revise the VSTP included reducing the group size in community-based training, and placing a greater emphasis on enterprise attachments and center-based training. MLVT will also pilot an urban VSTP. The program will be adjusted to reduce costs while increasing the number of trainees in the enterprise-based modality. MLVT has introduced

basic skills standards and competencies to link training to entry level certificate standards in the new enterprise-endorsed curricula. New courses, curricula, and standards will be introduced to systematize nonformal training, and trainees will earn a new certificate of competency. The idea is to create more flexible pathways to formal TVET courses and allow accumulation of credit toward vocational skills certificates. Under the new phase of ADB support, a greater emphasis will be placed on increasing women's access to formal TVET courses.

ADB's planned support for women's economic empowerment 2014–2018. As of mid-2014, there were 19 projects classified as having a gender theme or effective gender mainstreaming under implementation with specific gender action plans and targets, and another 18 in the indicative assistance pipeline for 2014–2016. In addition to the new TVET Sector Development Program, another significant intervention for women's economic empowerment will come from the Third Education Sector Development Program, approved under the last country partnership strategy but under implementation for the duration of the new strategy period. The program was specifically designed to address the barriers to girls' enrollment, retention, and completion of basic education (to grade 9) and to promote girls' attainment of math and science skills and workplace readiness. The gender action plan will ensure (i) school improvement grants with earmarked funds for improving girls' access, achievement, and completion of lower secondary school; (ii) implementation of gender-specific school-based dropout intervention strategies; (iii) selection of women provincial trainers for in-service teacher training for mathematics and science; (iv) girls' participation in employability skills programs; and (v) development of a communication and outreach campaign to build public awareness of the positive benefits of girls completing basic education and studying math and science.

ADB contributions to Cambodian women's economic empowerment will be substantial over the coming years. Table 6 highlights selected proposed projects for approval in 2014–2015 and how they will contribute to Cambodian women's economic empowerment. The interventions are in the agriculture and natural resources, education and TVET, transport, infrastructure, water supply and sanitation, and governance and public sector management sectors. The executing agencies' project implementation units (which will include gender consultants) will report on progress against the gender action plan on a quarterly basis, and in greater depth during midterm reviews. This will be monitored by the ADB Cambodia Resident Mission gender specialist, who will also provide support and capacity development for implementation of gender action plans.

Table 6: Proposed ADB Projects with Gender Action Plans for Approval in 2014–2015

Proposed Sector, Project, and Classification	Planned Contributions to Women's Economic Empowerment
2014	
Education and TVET: Technical and Vocational Education and Training Sector Development Program (GEN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address women's enrollment, retention, and completion of formal TVET and promote workplace readiness. • Ensure women's access to stipends for TVET Level 2–4 training courses. • Promote women's participation in courses in nontraditional areas. • Provide access for women to dormitories and career mentorship. • Ensure that women participate in a pilot program for competency assessment.
Agriculture and natural resource management: Greater Mekong Subregion Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Project Additional Financing (EGM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote women's access to economic and financial resources and opportunities through land with security of land tenure and off-farm employment opportunities. • Enhance voices and rights through representation in project decision-making bodies. • Provide women with improved infrastructure to enable increased productivity and incomes; reduce work burdens; and improve access to educational, health, and social services. • Provide preferential cash-based opportunities for employment for vulnerable groups (primarily households headed by women).
Transport: Second Rural Roads Improvement Project (EGM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure women's access to jobs created by the construction and maintenance of 1,000 kilometers of rural roads (using the Ready for Roads suite of materials) • Facilitate faster, year-round access to markets and services through upgraded and paved all-weather rural roads.
Water supply and sanitation: Urban Water Supply Project (EGM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate access for women in provincial towns to safe water, saving time and promoting better hygiene and health for increased productivity. • Ensure women's participation in consultations and training.
Infrastructure: Greater Mekong Subregion Tourism Infrastructure for Inclusive Growth (EGM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand tourism markets. • Promote women's access to tourism-related jobs created by the project and encourage women's participation in community consultations and in training. • Ensure substantial representation of women in leadership positions of destination management organizations. • Assign women to project management and technical positions.
Disaster risk reduction: Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction (EGM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve preparedness at district and commune levels to respond to natural disasters. • Reduce women's risks and vulnerabilities associated with climate change and natural disasters. • Promote women's leadership at the community level.

continued on next page

Table 6 continued

Proposed Sector, Project, and Classification	Planned Contributions to Women's Economic Empowerment
2015	
Water supply and sanitation: Second Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project Additional Financing (GEN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver direct benefits to women through time savings and improved health and hygiene. • Promote women's participation in village water and sanitation user groups and as peer-to-peer facilitators. • Reduce risks of harassment and assault through convenient access to water and sanitation facilities. • Promote women's participation in capacity development activities.
Governance and public sector management: Decentralized Public Service and Financial Management Program (Subprogram 2) (EGM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote women's participation in planning and administrative functions in district and municipal structures. • Ensure greater integration of women's needs and priorities in the development of legislation, policies, and programs related to subnational democratic development. • Strengthen gender awareness and capacities of male and female civil servants. • Promote gender-sensitive development planning and resource allocation to support the delivery of services that address the specific needs and interests of community women and men.
Agriculture and natural resource management: Uplands Irrigation and Water Resources Management Sector Project (EGM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address productivity constraints in agriculture, the sector in which most Cambodian women work. • Increase women's farming income through enhanced efficiency and climate resilience of irrigation systems and improved water resource management. • Promote women's participation in decision-making positions in water resource management.

EGM = effective gender mainstreaming, GEN = gender theme, TVET = technical and vocational education and training.

Sources: ADB. 2014. *Cambodia Country Operations Business Plan 2014–2016*. Manila; and project design documents.

Annex 1

Gender and Development Cooperation Fund

Case Study: Public–Private Partnerships at the Siem Reap Women’s Development Center

Cambodia’s Rural Women Beat Poverty with Partnerships⁵³

Tep Roeung’s husband abandoned her and their three young children in 1999. She was just 21 years old. Uneducated and with few skills, Roeung farmed a small rice field in rural Siem Reap province to support her family. When her children got sick she went into debt and was forced to sell part of her land to pay the bills. She migrated to the city for construction work, leaving the children with her elderly mother, but the jobs were low-paid and temporary, and she and her family slid into poverty.

Roeung is sadly far from alone. Despite being home to Cambodia’s main tourist attraction of Angkor Wat and its surrounding temples, Siem Reap is among the country’s poorest provinces. More than two-thirds of all Cambodian women over the age of 25 have not completed primary school. Socioeconomic surveys clearly show an inverse relationship between years of schooling and poverty rates. What opportunities are there for poor rural women?

We know that skills are essential for women’s economic empowerment, but the various livelihood training programs delivered by the government, development partners, and civil society are often short-term, and budgets are limited. What’s more, simply developing women’s skills doesn’t ensure access to markets, jobs, or a stable income. Could public-private partnerships be the answer?

In 2008, Roeung signed up for a weaving initiative at the Siem Reap Women’s Development Center, or WDC, which had just been established by the Ministry of Women’s Affairs with support from ADB’s Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction. Lasting 3 months, it was the longest course Roeung had completed since leaving school after the fourth grade. The WDC invited her to join a producer group and become a trainer, but when the project ended in 2010, so did Roeung’s income.

Roeung used her savings to buy a loom and launch a business making silk scarves. But running a business brought challenges in design, quality control, and market information.

⁵³ This piece first appeared on the ADB Gender Blog on 5 August 2013. Available at <http://blogs.adb.org/blog/cambodia-s-rural-women-beating-poverty-partnerships>

Without technical support, Roeung abandoned her new vocational skills and again turned to poorly paid, irregular construction work.

In 2011, with new funding from the German Agency for International Cooperation, Roeung took part in more training at the WDC, this time learning product design, dyeing and coloring techniques. She wanted guidance in marketing her skills, but none was forthcoming. So she accepted a weaving job in a neighboring commune earning just \$60 per month.

A year later, she found new work with Artisans d'Angkor, a Siem Reap-based social enterprise. Artisans offered on-the-job training at a production facility near her home. In a new collaboration with the WDC, Artisans selected Roeung—now 34—to become a trainer and develop new Ikat designs and knotting techniques with raw silk.

The collaboration of Artisans d'Angkor and the WDC came about with grant assistance from ADB's Gender and Development Cooperation Fund in 2012. The grant helped the Ministry of Women's Affairs explore options and create favorable conditions for public-private partnerships with local businesses. The Ministry selected Artisans d'Angkor for their shared vision of economic empowerment for local women through the development of traditional handicrafts. Details of the formal partnership are still being worked out, but this collaboration will only further improve skills, market access and livelihoods for women like Tep Roeung.

Today, Roeung earns up to \$225 per month. She's debt-free and has saved nearly \$500. She plans to install solar panels at home so she can weave at night to further boost her income. Where once she was fearful of facing the community after her husband abandoned her, she's now an active member of an all-women producers' group and helps women in her village improve their skills and even start their own businesses.

"No one or two training courses can change your life immediately," she says. "We need the combination that I have had—or even more than I have had—for all women. Both vocational and social training is vital for rural women to change their lives."

Annex 2

Asian Development Fund Case Study: The Second Education Sector Development Program

Education and Skills Training in Cambodia⁵⁴

Battambang, Cambodia—Born to a very poor family in northern Cambodia, Long Borin left home in 2003 at the age of 14. She traveled across the border into Thailand to work in construction. Moving from one job site to another with other migrant workers, she earned a miniscule wage—the equivalent of about \$3 per day—with no hope of improving her situation.

In 2008, Long received a fateful telephone call from her family in Cambodia. Her mother told her that, during a village meeting, local officials said there were scholarships available for women in vocational training. Seeing her chance, Long returned to her home country and enrolled in a cosmetics and hairstyling program.

After graduating from the program, she was offered a job teaching other students at her own school, as well as at another school. Today, at the age of 29, she earns the equivalent of about \$230 a month—more than four times the average wage in that part of Cambodia—and is saving money to start her own hairstyling and cosmetics business.

“Without this training, I would still be a construction laborer,” she says. “There was no training or learning new skills for me there. It was only labor. Now, I am closer to my family and I am earning enough to save for my future.”

Long benefited from the Second Education Sector Development Program, supported by a \$45 million loan from ADB’s Asian Development Fund and administered by Cambodia’s Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports and the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training. The loan was designed to improve equity and access to general education and deliver nonformal skills training in poor communities. It also aimed to improve the efficiency and decentralization efforts of Cambodia’s education system.

The project developed and tested the Voucher Skills Training Program, the nonformal skills training component that Long benefited from, in poor communities in seven provinces.

⁵⁴ A version of this story first appeared on the ADB website on 30 November 2011. Available at www.adb.org/features/skills-succeed

Surmounting the Education Barrier

“The project was designed to assist some of the most educationally disadvantaged people in Cambodia, with a particular focus on girls and women,” says Karin Schelzig, a senior social sector specialist in ADB’s Cambodia Resident Mission. “Cambodian girls and women face many barriers to obtaining an education and skills training. A lower secondary (grade 9) completion certificate is required to enter formal skills training programs, for example, but fewer than one-third of all Cambodian women aged 25 and over have completed even primary schooling. The Voucher Skills Training Program provided nonformal skills training to tens of thousands of school dropouts.”

Part of the project’s gender-inclusive design was to target information, education, and scholarships to women and girls in some of Cambodia’s poorest communities.

Specialists with expertise in gender issues in Cambodia were involved in many levels of the preparation and implementation of the project. The project specifically sought to increase the number of girls in secondary schools, the number of women receiving skills training, the number and expertise of women teachers, and the representation of women role models in Cambodian textbooks and learning materials.

Hands-on Lessons

The impact of this project was felt directly by Ley Leup, a 58-year-old farmer living near the northern Cambodian city of Battambang. A rice farmer all her life, she attended a community training program supported by the ADB project that taught her about growing vegetables.

The training taught her how to select good quality vegetable seed and how to prevent crop diseases. She also learned about using organic fertilizer from the waste of pigs and chickens, and from leaves around her farm. Before the training, she used more expensive chemical fertilizers that damaged her soil over the long term. The organic fertilizer not only lowered her costs but was preferred by the brokers who bought her vegetables.

When her costs went down, her profits and volume increased. The new techniques and diversification of her crop to vegetables have allowed her to invest her profits into a bicycle, a motorcycle, a generator, and an additional 2.5 hectares of farmland.

Success stories like those of Long Borin and Ley Leup have led to the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training expanding the Voucher Skills Training Program to all 24 provinces of Cambodia.

“The whole community has changed ...” says Ley. “With everyone growing vegetables, not just rice, we are learning from each other and increasing our profit.”

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Promoting Women’s Economic Empowerment in Cambodia

Women’s economic empowerment is essential for more inclusive growth in Cambodia. This study takes stock of major gender issues in the Cambodian economy seen through the lens of women’s participation, benefit, and agency—the three prerequisites for a fairer distribution of growth benefits. It examines labor market trends and obstacles to women’s economic empowerment—particularly in agriculture, business development, and wage employment. Labor migration and vulnerability to shocks are highlighted as special themes. The study makes a series of policy recommendations, identifies areas for further research, and highlights how Asian Development Bank investments can promote women’s economic empowerment.

About the Asian Development Bank

ADB’s vision is an Asia and Pacific region free of poverty. Its mission is to help its developing member countries reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of their people. Despite the region’s many successes, it remains home to approximately two-thirds of the world’s poor: 1.6 billion people who live on less than \$2 a day, with 733 million struggling on less than \$1.25 a day. ADB is committed to reducing poverty through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration.

Based in Manila, ADB is owned by 67 members, including 48 from the region. Its main instruments for helping its developing member countries are policy dialogue, loans, equity investments, guarantees, grants, and technical assistance.



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