

RESEARCH STUDY

Internal Migration for Low-Skilled and Unskilled Work in Cambodia: Preliminary Qualitative Results



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Research Report

Internal Migration for Low-skilled or Unskilled Work in Cambodia: Preliminary Qualitative Results¹

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The study is part of the research effort on worker migration being coordinated by the National Committee for Counter Trafficking in Persons of the Cambodian Ministry of Interior.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

With a population of over 15 million, Cambodia's labor force participation rate for ages 15 to 64 is 71.6% and for ages 15 to 24 is 71.6% (NIS, 2014). "An estimated 250,000 to 300,000 new young workers are entering the labor force each year" (Tunon & Rim, 2013). This data indicates that there is a tremendous number of young Cambodians searching for employment. When these potential workers do not have access to land for farming, cannot find or have limited access to information about domestic jobs, or are offered more attractive wages abroad, they tend to consider leaving the country and seeking a job overseas instead. In Cambodia the estimated average monthly income of employees is insufficient, and therefore is a likely factor in their willingness to migrate. The reported average monthly earnings of paid employees within Cambodia in 2012 was 477,517 Riels, or US\$119 (MoP, NIS, & IOM, 2013). Cambodian legal migrant workers, however, could receive a minimum wage of 9,000 Thai Baht per month (US\$260), 900 Malaysian Ringgits per month (US\$295) (Tunon & Rim, 2013), or 860,220 Korean Won per month (US\$734)². Unfortunately, only legal migrant workers would get these minimum wages, and irregular migration methods (movement to another country without authorization to work) are currently more popular among migrants seeking jobs abroad.

The irregular migration method is more convenient, faster, and cheaper than legal recruitment; the process takes less time for workers because they are not required to acquire as many documents or complete complicated recruitment procedures. However, when they move to another country as illegal migrants their vulnerability increases dramatically. Some of them suffer abuse and exploitation, including sexual and physical harassment, or become indebted to their employers and receive threats from locals or local authorities at their work destination. They are unable to take action because they lack access to legal protection. A study conducted by ADHOC in 2012 analyzed 141 cases of complaints received by ADHOC from Cambodian migrant workers during the first four months of the year. In these complaints ADHOC found that the general challenges faced by the migrants (both legal and illegal) included: forced overwork, little or no resting time, untreated illness, torture, severe physical assault, underpayment, threats, jailing, being forced to continue working illegally, and an inability to maintain a relationship with their family. In Thailand alone, there are now over one million estimated Cambodian migrant workers living in the country. Although there seems to be no solid data to back this number, around 200,000 illegal migrants were deported by Thailand in 2014³

2 <http://www.moel.go.kr/english/pas/pasMajor.jsp>

3 <http://www.voacambodia.com/content/high-number-of-migrant-workers-create-political-economic-challenges/2667562.html>
200,000 workers crossed the border to Cambodia, but not all of them were officially deported, many returned in fear of being deported.

A way to tackle this issue is to create decent domestic employment opportunities and to improve information/communication channels that allow employers to communicate these employment opportunities to Cambodian local unskilled and low-skilled workers. To this end, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has developed the Rectangular Strategy Phase III, which will contribute to the improvement of the communication process, as well as attempt to generate a domestic labor market in order to promote economic growth and reduce Cambodia's poverty level. The RGC also established the National Employment Agency (NEA) in 2009 to provide Cambodians with employment and labor market services within the country. The NEA plays a very important role in promoting effectiveness of the labor market, enhancing participation within this market, decreasing unemployment, boosting growth and opportunity, and eventually reducing poverty⁴. According to NEA's labor bulletin⁵, from March 2010 to May 2015 there were 3,633 job seekers registered with NEA to find jobs in the garment sector, while there were 102,546 job vacancies in total. It also stated that there were 1,747 job seekers registered with NEA to find jobs in hospitality, while there were 16,643 job vacancies in this sector. Another research study conducted by ILO in 2012 surveyed 500 establishments in 6 different sectors (including garments, construction and hospitality among them) and found that employers were seeking over 17,500 workers to fill vacancies (14% of their total employment). Vacancies on elementary positions were considered hard to fill in 75% of cases. Two-thirds of the establishments stated that recruitment problems delayed the development of new products, 52% said that it increased the workload of other staff, and 43% noted that it caused them lose business to competitors. This indicates that there are still many jobs available for unskilled and low-skilled workers in the garment, hospitality, and tourism sectors.

1.2 Research Problems/Significance

The main problem targeted by this study is the disconnection between national demand for unskilled or low-skilled employment and the potential national workers who could cover those positions. In Cambodia, a notable expansion in demand for labor is being countered by an insufficient supply of both skilled and (mainly) unskilled workers. (Bruni, Luch, & Kuoch, 2012).

A correlation might exist between the lack of information about available national jobs and the number of workers who seek employment in other countries, but the high number of cross-border migrants might also be related to other factors, such as the level of trust in the person who proposes a given job, or the expectations of potential migrants. Other possible factors are not discarded.

Cross-border migration leads to a much higher risk of migrants being driven into employment situations that are clearly considered human trafficking, or to very difficult employment conditions that do not correspond to the description given to them at the time of recruitment. *"Migrants working abroad report continuing difficulties, such as non-payment and underpayment of wages, substitution of contracts, harassment by government authorities, long work hours, confinement to the workplace, physical violence, sexual abuse, and problems of communications due to differences in language*

⁴ http://www.nea.gov.kh/nweb/en/home_page/home/aboutnea

⁵ *Labor bulletin of year 5, number 46, published in June 2015.*

and culture. Those who enter through irregular channels or lose their legal status in foreign countries are vulnerable to exploitation. Some are cheated, robbed and killed. Many become victims of trafficking for forced labor and sex work.” (Morris, 2007)

An increase in internal mobility would not only reduce the risk of human trafficking, but it would also help the economy and the development of Cambodia by reducing the gap between the demand for unskilled or low-skilled workers and the number of workers available to cover that demand.

Tunon & Rim [2013] note that: “Cambodians should be able to migrate safely and undertake decent work in the country of destination, and they should be able to find decent work upon their return to Cambodia. Significant attention has been paid to the former and less to the latter.”

Job seekers who are under educated and reside in rural areas might encounter many difficulties in accessing announcements of job opportunities offered by Cambodian employers and vice versa.

There are no in-depth studies on the unskilled or low-skilled employment markets in Cambodia, on the mechanisms of internal migration, or on the knowledge and attitude of potential internal migrants within Cambodia. Such information is sorely needed in order to be able to tackle the problem and propose evidence-based solutions that will realistically help Cambodian workers find work in their country and reduce their vulnerability, stay closer to their family, to trafficking in persons. The information will also be useful for generating awareness for governmental and non-governmental agents working in Cambodia on this issue.

The goal of this study is therefore to fill this information gap and produce information that can be used to better match national employment with low-skilled and unskilled Cambodian workers.

1.3 Research Objectives

In order to propose solutions to reduce the disconnect between the national demand for unskilled and low-skilled employment and potential national workers, it is first necessary to undertake qualitative research with the following objectives:

- i. To have a preliminary understanding of the structure of the main sectors that absorb national migration: garment, construction, hospitality and security⁶.
- ii. To have a preliminary understanding of the present hiring process of local Cambodian employers in the targeted sectors.
- iii. To have a preliminary understanding of internal migration paths and practices.

⁶As “Garment production has dominated industrial employment and export production for the past decade. Construction jobs have also been considerable. Handicraft production has potential for creating significant employment. The tourism sector is another growing source of employment in trade, hotels and restaurants.” [Morris, 2007]. “The service and industrial sector are both more productive and have further rates of job creation than agriculture” (Williams, Huynh, & Tun, 2012). Therefore, agriculture is not included in this study.

This qualitative research will have to be followed by a quantitative stage that provides information on how widespread are the types of behavior detected in this first qualitative stage. In order to prepare this second stage, the first stage will also:

- iv. To define the micro-hypotheses which will be confirmed by the follow-up quantitative survey on internal migration in Cambodia.
- v. To develop the questionnaire tools for the survey on internal migration in Cambodia.

2 MEANS AND METHODS

As the goal of this first preliminary study is to understand the structure of the target sectors - as well as to list knowledge, attitudes, and practices of migrant workers - the techniques used are qualitative. They produce data that will be used in a second stage to quantify knowledge, attitude and practices in internal migration.

This study employed **in-depth interviews** with clear and systematic question guides as the tool to interview workers and human resource managers (or employer representatives). This technique enabled the study to better understand the structure of positions and required skills within the targeted sectors, the hiring procedure followed by HR managers or employer representatives, and the migration path of the low-skilled and unskilled workers. In this study HR Managers and any other company representative in charge of finding or selecting new employees will be collectively referred as "HR Managers".

2.1 Target Participants

Most Cambodian workers have low-skill jobs, mainly in agriculture but also in the country's other growing sectors: garment, construction, and tourism (hospitality)" (D'Amico, 2009). Professional security guard companies have also emerged as an important source of employment for unskilled workers.

This qualitative study targeted two types of participants: a) HR managers in companies or factories within the sectors of garment, hospitality, construction, and security, and b) Workers currently employed in these sectors.

This study focused on these four sectors because they provide a high number of job vacancies for low-skilled and unskilled workers. The manufacturing sector is the most complex in terms of having a wider variety of companies, followed by the hospitality sector, the construction sector and finally the security sector. Far from being an assumption, this is consistent with the findings of previous reports.

2.2 Sample Size

In-depth interviews were conducted with 14 HR managers and 50 workers in the four above-mentioned sectors (all in Phnom Penh city). This sample size allowed the study to get sufficient information from a qualitative study perspective.

| Number of Respondents/sector | Workers | HR managers or company reps. |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Manufacturing workers | 20 | 5 |
| Hospitality workers | 15 | 5 |
| Construction workers | 10 | 3 |
| Security workers | 5 | 1 |

2.3 Participants Recruitment

Research team members played the role of participant recruiters. The participants were selected based on the criteria set by the research team. The selection of companies or factories was made in advance and the in-depth interviews were made after having permission from each company or factory to interview their HR manager or employer representatives. The number of staff (at all levels) in each company or factory had to be five or greater and interview participants had to be HR managers or employer representatives who knew the hiring procedure within the company or factory. Worker participants had to be migrants who had previously moved to live and work in Phnom Penh and their age had to be between 16 and 45 years.

2.4 Data Collection

The data collection was conducted from the 22nd of February to the 8th of April. For HR managers or employer representatives in the four sectors, and workers in the sectors of hospitality, construction and security, the interviews were conducted at their factories, hotels, guesthouses, restaurants, construction sites, or working offices. Interviews with workers in manufacturing sector were conducted at their dormitories (rented rooms). Question guide and voice recorder were used as data collection tools during the interview.

2.5 Data Management and Analysis

The sound tracks were transcribed and imported to QSR NVivo version 11 for analysis. Content and textual analysis were applied to determine (i) the hiring procedure, (ii) the map of positions and skills in the selected factories/companies in four different sectors, and (iii) the migration path followed by current workers.

2.6 Research Ethics

All interviewers and fieldwork team members were trained in ethical data collection behavior, including confidentiality and anonymity. All selected participants were informed about the study and asked for their consent to participate and their permission to record the interviews with a voice recorder. Participants were allowed to skip questions or withdraw from the study at any time.

No identifying information of respondents was used in the analysis. Only those responsible for data analysis had access to the data.

2.7 Scope and Limitation of Research

This study is limited to factories/companies located in Phnom Penh in the sectors of garment, hospitality, construction, and security services; therefore, it is not possible to generalize its findings to factories/companies in other sectors across the country.

3 RESULTS

Some 64 in-depth interviews in total were conducted in this qualitative study: 14 with HR managers or employer representatives and 50 with current workers who had migrated.

3.1 Information from HR Managers

The in-depth interviews included five HR Managers or employer representatives in the sector of manufacturing, five in hospitality (two in hotels, one in a guest house, and two in restaurants), three in construction, and one in security.

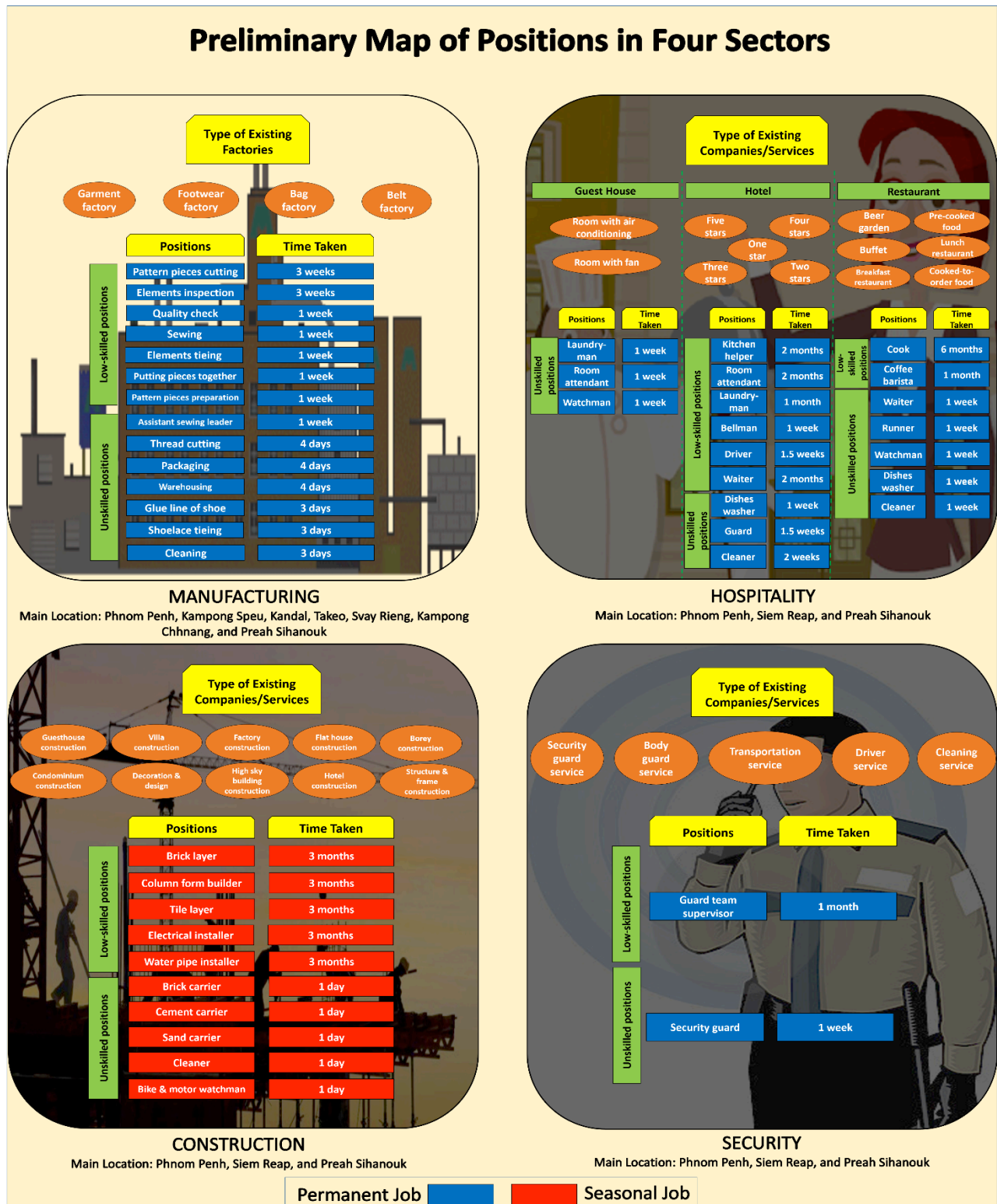
These 14 companies/factories employed over 1,200 workers (20% to 40% of which did not have previous experience). The majority of the workers in these companies were migrants from Kandal, Prey Veng, Kampong Speu, Takeo, or Svay Rieng.

3.1.1 Job Structure

HR managers and employer representatives were asked how many types of existing companies/factories or services there were in each sector. In these responses, participants gave common answers concerning the type of existing factories (garment, footwear, accessories) in the manufacturing sector and the types of hotels (five, four, three, two and one star) within the hospitality sector. In contrast, there were no common answers in the construction sector or in the hospitality sub-sector restaurants. There might be more types of existing guesthouses (sub-sector of hospitality) and security companies, however, in this study the type of existing guest houses and security companies were only answered from one participant in each. (See figure 1 for more details).

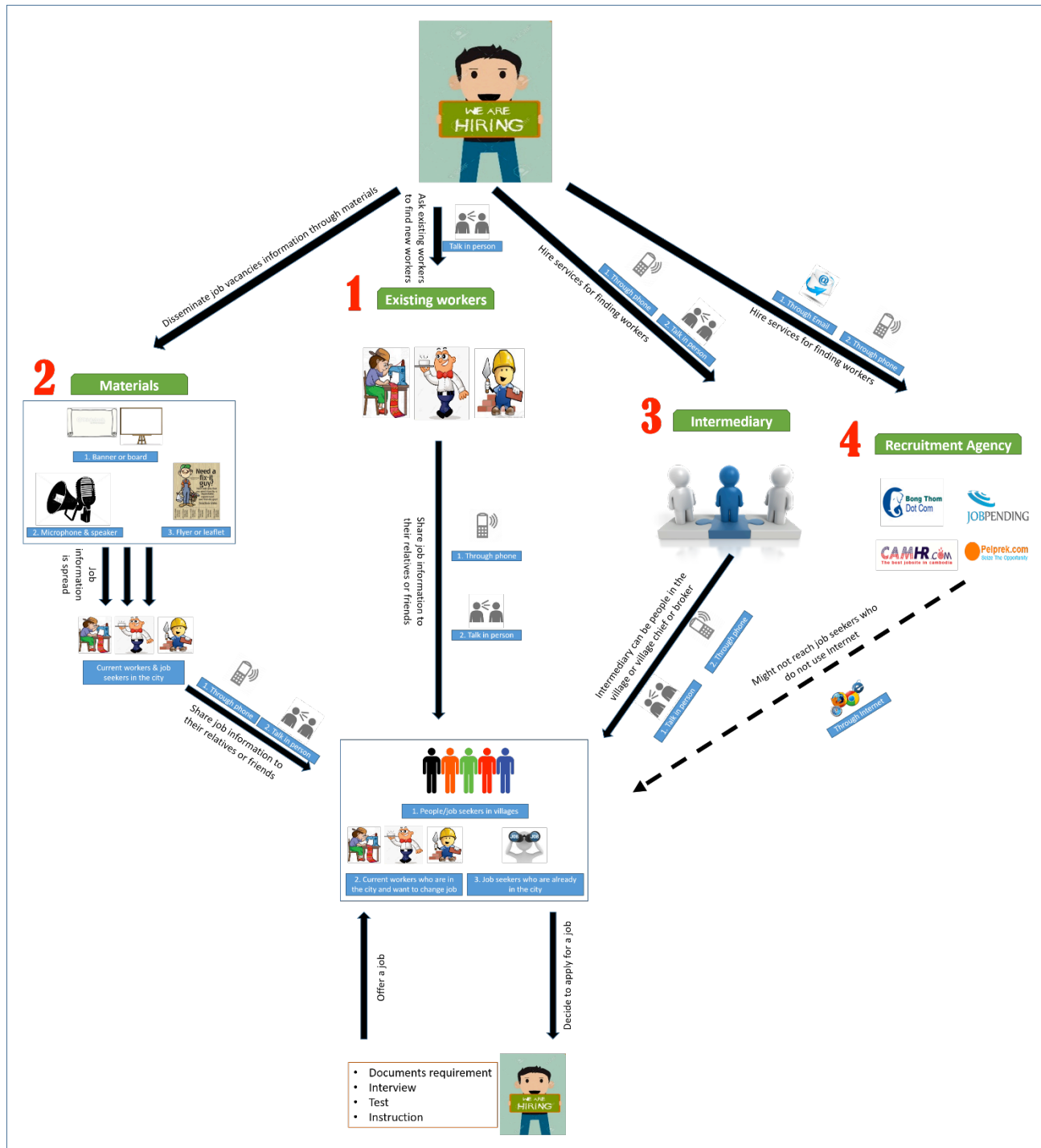
The HR Managers were also asked about the different existing low-skilled and unskilled positions in their companies or factories and the length of training for each position. It was found that the level and length of training in any position (skilled, low-skilled or unskilled) was not standardized within sectors, which means that the same position could have a different level and length of training in two different companies or factories of the same sector. In figure 1 each position was defined by the research team (as per the complexity of work and length of training) in order to standardize the levels and calculate the average required length of training for each position. The size and standard of the company or factory, the length of training, and if the level of education of the worker had an effect on the determining the needed training in each position. The responses indicated that only the positions in construction sector were seasonal (See figure 1 for more details). However, we can assume that the hospitality sector might also have a seasonal component in some positions, especially in places like Siem Reap or Sihanoukville (not included in this study), since this sector is influenced by high and low tourism seasons. Some subsectors of garment can also be seasonal, as they work for specific seasons (winter, summer...).

Figure 1: Preliminary Map of Positions in Four Sectors



3.1.2 Hiring Process

Figure 2: Diagram of Hiring Process



The study suggests that the main way for HR managers or employer representatives (in all sectors) to find low-skilled and unskilled workers is by asking their existing workers in person to call their relatives or friends in the village or in the city who might be

looking for jobs. They are then contacted and offered a job via phone or in person. For all sectors this is the most convenient method, since it has no cost and is reliable.

The second main method is by using advertising materials to announce vacancies. Variants of this method methods can span from banners or boards displayed in front of companies or factories (used by all sectors), to microphones or speakers advertising openings (used by manufacturing sector), and even flyers or leaflets stuck on the wall or disseminated to nearby people (used mainly in the manufacturing sector). Employers use these materials to disseminate available job information to (i) workers in their company or factory, (ii) workers who are working nearby, and (iii) unemployed people who visit the site looking for jobs. After receiving this information, people can start applying for the available jobs. However, job information flow does not stop here. Job openings are shared with relatives or friends who live in the village or in the city who might be interested. This communication takes place through phone or in person.

The third way to find workers is to hire an intermediary (used mainly by construction and security sectors). This intermediary can be a village chief, village residents, or a broker. Intermediaries who are village chiefs or villagers are usually aware of who might be looking for a job in the city or town and can therefore find workers quickly by meeting them in person (rather than over the phone). Brokers are generally hired if there is a need for more experienced workers; communication of brokers with potential workers is then either in person or over the phone. The fee charged is often reasonable and HR managers find these intermediaries trustworthy.

Finally, the fourth way to find workers is to hire a recruitment agency (used by hospitality and manufacturing sectors). However, this method was somewhat unpopular among HR managers in our target sectors due to a low effectiveness rate in finding low-skilled and unskilled workers. Most of the profiles available through recruitment agencies are skilled workers, and most of the job vacancies are advertised through the Internet. Therefore, those who do not have access or do not use the Internet (most of low-skilled and unskilled job seekers) cannot access this job information.

More often than not, intermediaries from the village are commonly used to fill low-skilled and unskilled positions, while recruitment agencies are usually used to hire skilled workers or for urgent employment.

Once job seekers (whether villagers, current workers who want a job change, or job seekers who are already in the city) know about the vacancy, they then decide whether or not to apply. Should they decide to pursue the job, they will likely need to submit their resume and complete an interview, take a test, and possibly even be instructed before being officially offered the position.

Besides the hiring process, participants have been asked about what job information should be included in an employment announcement. By order of importance, participants suggested the announcement should include:

1. Salary
2. Job position

3. Benefits (bonuses, allowances, insurance, overtime payment, accommodation etc....)
4. Age requirements
5. Language and Experience requirements
6. Gender requirements
7. Working hours

3.1.3 Employment

Salary

On average, the total salary of the lowest job for entry-level employment (for a fully unskilled worker) was \$125 per month. This salary increases to \$162 after just one year. When looking at these numbers in the individual sectors, there were differences in the average salary for a first employment and the average salary after one year. The construction sector provided the greatest average salary for a low-skilled entry-level job (\$170), followed by manufacturing (\$147), security (\$130), and hospitality (\$102). After one year, the construction sector still seems to provide the greatest average salary (\$225), followed by manufacturing (\$154), security (\$140), and hospitality (\$123).

In the manufacturing sector the above-mentioned salary is the present minimum wage (other benefits were not included). The average salary including benefits (punctuality, housing, food, or transportation allowances, premium rate, etc.) was higher. For unskilled workers working on a fixed salary there is not much difference between the starting salary and the salary for one year, because the minimum salary remains the same. For workers whose pay depends on productivity, the increase in salary will be related to their increase of productivity due to their experience.

Table 1: Average salary of the lowest job for first started and after one year by sectors

| | Average salary by sectors | | | |
|----------------|---------------------------|---------------|----------|-------------|
| | Construction | Manufacturing | Security | Hospitality |
| First started | \$170 | \$147 | \$130 | \$102 |
| After one year | \$225 | \$154 | \$140 | \$123 |

Job Rotation

Besides the salary, participants were asked about job rotation. The minimum length of time that workers stay at a company or factory is around 2 years. For less than 30% of workers rotation is considered normal and is supposed to take place mainly in the rainy season (especially from September to December), or around Khmer New Year. After workers left their job positions, 12 participants out of 14 claimed they faced difficulties finding low-skilled or unskilled work.

What workers value from their Companies or Factories

The study suggests that, by order of frequency, the most valued attitudes and benefits provided by companies or factories to the workers are:

1. Regular salary payment
2. Gifts provided during big festivals
3. Benefits (overtime pay, bonus, allowance, insurance etc.)
4. Respecting the agreed working hours
5. Equal treatment of workers
6. Good relationship between employers and workers

By order of frequency, the main benefits provided by companies or factories are the following:

1. Accommodation
2. Bonuses
3. Overtime pay
4. Premium allowance
5. Free water and electricity
6. Transportation allowance
7. Free meals
8. Paid maternity leave

Difficulties when hiring unskilled workers

Three companies or factories responded that they did not face any difficulties hiring unskilled workers. However, the other 11 companies or factories interviewed faced several problems:

1. Spending too much time teaching them how to do the work.
2. Unskilled workers could not perform their work properly because they did not understand their duties clearly.
3. They worked slowly.
4. They damaged products.
5. They often left to change jobs.

3.1.4 Employers interest on Technology-Based Mechanisms

The study found that 13 participants (HR Managers) among 14 used smart-phones and surfed the Internet. All 14 participants used Facebook.

Participants were asked if they had any interest in simple and innovative technology-based mechanisms to find low-skilled or unskilled workers. Most of them (13 out of 14) responded that they were interested on it. A phone-based mechanism was the most enticing option, followed by Facebook-based and website-based mechanisms.

Ten participants said they would use this kind of mechanism whenever they needed to recruit workers and the remaining three participants stated they would only use it to recruit large numbers of workers.

Some 13 participants responded that they would be interested in sending job announcements to a recruitment service and that they could update job information frequently, possibly on a monthly basis. Their preferred way to send and update job information was by phone, followed by email, Facebook, the Internet, and in-person communication.

3.2 Information from Migrant Workers

3.2.1 Demographic Information

The in-depth interviews were conducted with 50 current workers who were working in the manufacturing (20 workers), hospitality (15), construction (10), and security (5) sectors.

Over half of the participants (28) were female: seventeen were working in the manufacturing sector, eight in hospitality, two in construction and one in security. Of the twenty-two male participants: three were working in manufacturing, seven in hospitality, eight in construction and four in security.

Table 2: Gender of migrant workers by sectors

| Gender\Sector | Manufacturing | Hospitality | Construction | Security | Total |
|---------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|----------|-------|
| Female | 17 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 28 |
| Male | 3 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 22 |
| Total | 20 | 15 | 10 | 5 | 50 |

Nearly half of the participants (23) were 25 years old or younger. The minimum age of participants was 16 and the maximum 46. The majority of participants came from Prey Veng province, followed by Kampong Thom, Kampong Cham, Kandal, Svay Rieng, Takeo, Pursat, Siem Reap, Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Speu, Kratie and Battambang. Regarding their level of education, 21 participants had started or completed primary school, 19 lower secondary, 8 had high-school level education, and one had studied in university. One participant had never received any formal education.

Participants were asked about when they migrated. Twenty-nine of them had been working away from their villages for 5 years or more. However, the majority of participants visited their villages during big festivals such as Khmer New Year, Pchum Ben and Water Festival.

3.2.2 The Past in Village

Reasons behind migration

There were two types of migrants found in this study: migrants who left their village with prospective job information (38 participants) and the migrants who left without having any job information (12 participants). The below table shows the reasons of migration disaggregated by these two types of migrants.

Table 3: Reasons of migration by type of migrants

| REASONS OF MIGRATION | WITH JOB INFORMATION (# OF WORKERS) | WITHOUT JOB INFORMATION (# OF WORKERS) |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| Earn money to support family | 24 | 6 |
| Poor family | 17 | 9 |
| Lack of job opportunities in hometown | 14 | 5 |
| Wanted to be financially independent | 8 | 2 |
| Most of their neighbors had left to work in Phnom Penh (i.e. they followed in their neighbor's path) | 4 | --- |
| There were a lot of jobs available in Phnom Penh | 3 | --- |
| Make money to continue studying | 3 | --- |
| Could not continue to study | 2 | 1 |
| Left to live with their partners | 1 | 1 |
| Wanted to get work experience | 1 | --- |

There is a notable difference in the reasons for migration within the two types of migrants. Both had some common reasons to migrate: financial needs, poor family situations and lack of job opportunities in their hometown. However, it is interesting to highlight that 63% of villagers with job information said they migrated because they wanted to earn money to support their families, whereas only 50% of migrants without job information cited this reason.

"... I had to stop studying in grade 8 because my family could not support me and I had some diseases. Our farming could not afford our daily living. Then I tried to find a local job but I could not. Finally, I decided to migrate and found a job here (Phnom Penh) because my neighbors and relatives had already migrated here (Phnom Penh) before me..." (Roun, 24, Garment worker, Kompong Thom)

First Migration Destination

Participants were asked about their first migration destination, whether it was inside or outside the country. It was found that 46 among 50 participants decided to move within Cambodia for their first migration with the remaining four had deciding to move externally.

The following were found to be the main reasons to migrate internally for the first time, by order of frequency:

1. It was easy to visit family at hometown
2. Could work and stay with relatives who already worked there (internal destination)
3. Worried about safety due to rumors of difficulties living and working abroad
4. It would be easy to find good jobs inside the country
5. Most of the jobs inside the country were easy
6. Worried about human trafficking outside the country
7. Family did not allow them to go abroad
8. Did not know anyone who was working abroad
9. Did not trust anyone who tried to help them get a job abroad
10. Income for jobs inside the country was acceptable

For those who decided to migrate externally for their first migration, by order of frequency, the reasons that convinced them were:

1. They already had relatives or friends who were working abroad
2. There was a lack of job opportunities inside the country
3. Income for jobs abroad was perceived higher than income for jobs inside the country
4. Working conditions abroad were better than working conditions inside the country

However, the expectations of external migrants were not fulfilled. When things did not go as planned, the migrants eventually decided to return to Cambodia. The pushing factors that made them return, by frequency, were the following:

1. Working and living conditions abroad were bad
2. Received low wage
3. Missed home
4. Mistreatment
5. Relatives asked them to come back
6. There were available jobs inside country

For example, one returning migrant had a bad experience in Thailand, where he was arrested by Thai authorities and put into jail because he was an illegal migrant.

3.2.3 Job Seeking Process during First Migration

As mentioned above, the study differentiates two different types of migrants according to their access to information in their first migration: (1) migrants who left their villages

with job information (38 participants) and (2) migrants who left their villages without job information (12). The process of job seeking during their first migration was different for these two types of migrants.

3.2.4 Migrants with job information

The study found that job seekers who left the village with job information followed five important steps before having a job.

- 1.** As showed in the below "Job Seeking Diagram" job information for first migration came through communication between job seekers in the village and their relatives or friends (sources of job information) who already had jobs and were living in the destination town (in the provinces), city (Phnom Penh) or country. In most of the cases communication commenced when job seekers asked their friends or relatives (through phone calls and/or in person) for information. However, in a few cases potential migrants in the village were not actively looking for work, and were told about a job by their friends or relatives without having asked in advance. The study also found that one of the participants received job information through an intermediary.
- 2.** Job information received by the job seekers. After learning about a job, seekers had interest or received information about the following common points: (1) job sectors, (2) job destinations and (3) other information⁷. The information received contained job opportunities in sectors such as manufacturing, construction, restaurants, security, agriculture, guesthouses, hotels, kitchen suppliers and entertainment. Urban areas were the main job destinations; Phnom Penh being number one destination, followed by other provinces, Siem Reap, Preah Sihanouk and Kampong Thom inside the country and Thailand and Malaysia abroad. The other information received refers to the salary, job difficulty, experience and education requirements, accommodation, food and etc., of the available jobs.

⁷ Please note that the priorities for first-job seekers are different from the priorities for workers stated earlier in this section, where salary is the priority.

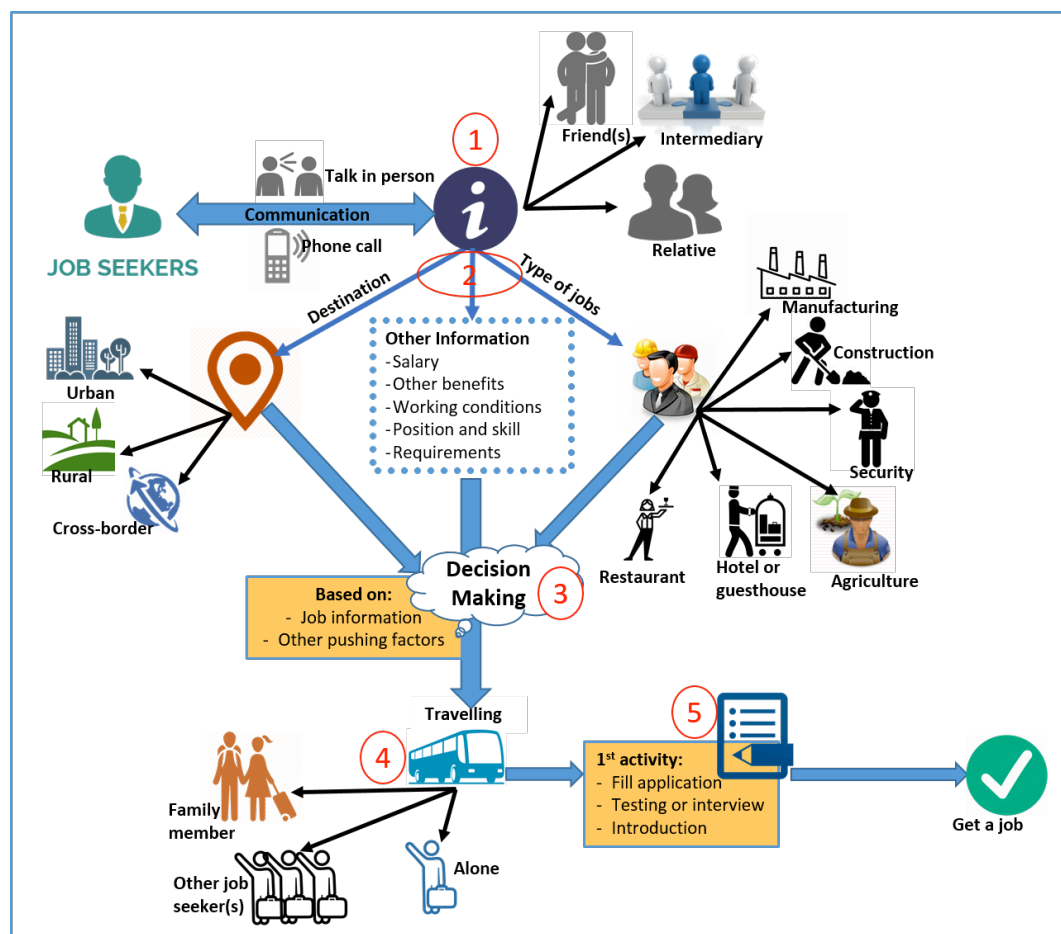


Figure 3: Diagram of job seeking process of migrants with information

- Once they obtained all of the necessary information, over half of them were guaranteed a job (before they left) upon arrival to their destination. However, the decision to leave the village still had to be made. Before deciding to migrate, workers first evaluated the received job information (destination, type of job, salary, working conditions, working benefits and living conditions) and weighed other pushing factors (no choice, decent job, can live with relatives or friends). In some cases, being able to live or work with their relatives or friends in the working destinations was a more important factor than having a higher salary.
- Once they decided to apply for a job, the next step they took was to arrange the trip. This study found that among the 38 migrants who left their village with job information 21 travelled to the working destination with the job informers (who were their friends or relatives), 14 decided to travel alone and 3 traveled with other job seekers.

5. When they arrived at their destination, some of the migrants just received instructions and could start the job right away, others had to submit a formal application form to the employers before getting a job, and the rest had to pass a test after submitting an application in order to get a job.

3.2.5 Migrants without previous job information

Job seekers who left the village without job information also followed five important steps before obtaining a job.

6. Even though they could not access any job information, they set up destination goals for their migration and potential jobs that they wished to have.
7. Five out of twelve migrants who left the village without information travelled alone to their chosen destination (expecting that it was a good place to find the job they were seeking), three travelled with other job seekers, two were accompanied by their relatives and one travelled with a person who already had a job in the destination city. They all reached the destination as planned and started searching for jobs. All destinations were inside the country; eleven went to Phnom Penh and one to Preah Vihear.
8. These migrants were interested in working in the following sectors: manufacturing, construction, restaurants, guesthouses, hotels and transportation. The majority of them went to factories or establishments and looked at banners or job announcement boards, while a few migrants tried to ask other people about available jobs (such as motorbike-taxi drivers and people with friends in common).
9. Once they were aware of an available job, and before they decided to apply, they first had to evaluate the conditions (type of job, salary and working conditions and benefits), as well as other pushing factors (no choice and no experience), before deciding what their best option was. Once they decided to apply for a specific job, their situation was similar to that of the other migrants: some of them just received instructions and could start the job, others had to submit an application form to employers before getting the job, and the rest had to pass a test or an interview in order to get the job after submitting their application.

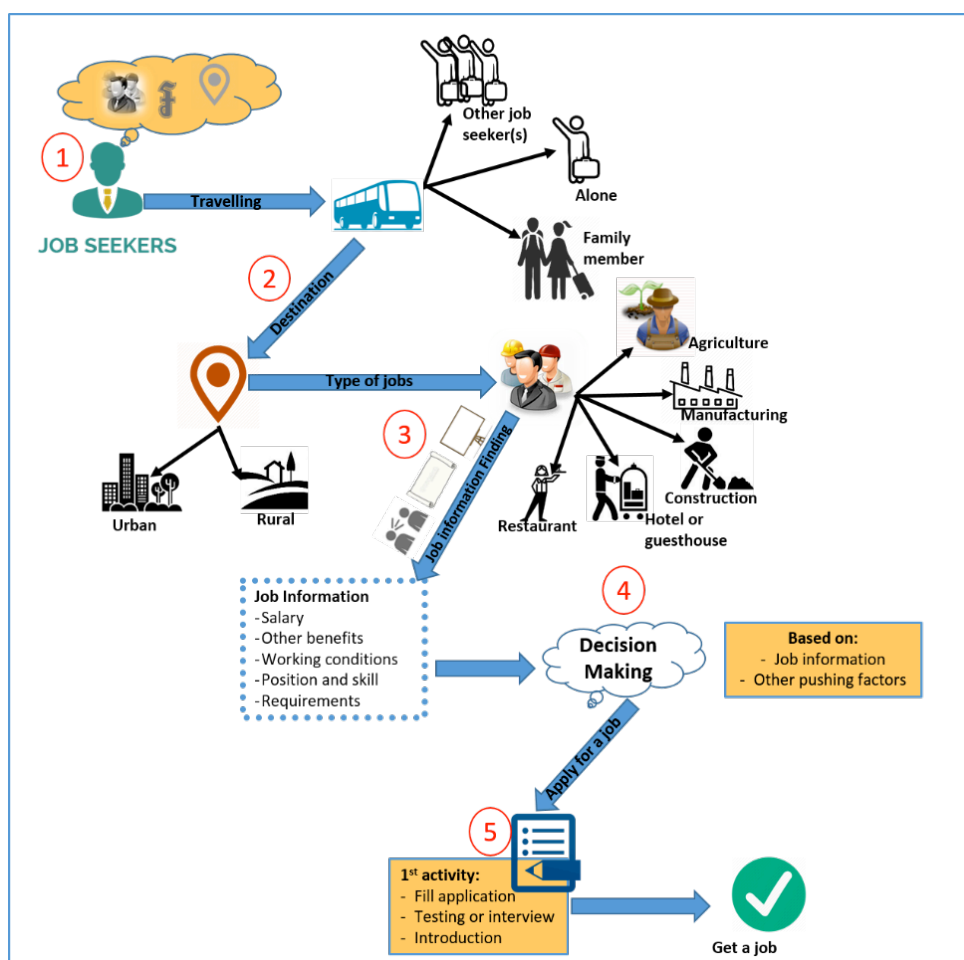


Figure 4: Diagram of job seeking process of migrants without information

3.2.6 First Job as Internal Migrant

Expectations vs. Reality

Participants were asked about their expectations before migrating and the realities they experienced in terms of working conditions, living conditions, and salary for their first job as internal migrants.

- **Living conditions:** 34 participants responded that their situation was as they were expecting, 5 claimed that the situation only partially met their expectations, and 10 responded that their real living situations were worse than their expectations. Only one participant claimed that reality was better than their expectation.
- **Working conditions:** 31 participants were satisfied with their first job's conditions claiming it was what they were expecting, 7 said working conditions partially met their expectations, and 12 claimed that the working conditions were worse than what they were expecting.

- **Salary:** 34 participants claimed to receive the expected salary, 13 did not receive what they were expecting, and one received a higher salary than expected. Two participants did not respond whether their salary matched their expectations.

Benefits of First Jobs for Internal Migrants

Migrant workers who had their first jobs as internal migrants in the sectors of manufacturing, hotel, guesthouse, restaurant, entertainment, or security received monthly salaries or wages. For migrants who worked in transportation, construction and agriculture, wages were paid daily.

Besides their salary or wage, participants were asked about other benefits received. In all sectors the main benefits were: bonuses including those for big festivals, overtime pay, accommodation, food, transportation, seniority rate, medical care, tips and premium rate. When looking at each sector separately, the data showed that workers in the manufacturing sector received a higher number of benefits than any other sector including overtime pay, premium rate, food allowance, transportation allowance, accommodation allowance, medical care, bonus rate, seniority rate, and other rewards. Workers in construction received benefits such as accommodation, overtime pay, food, bonuses (including those for big festivals), and seniority rate. In the hotel, guesthouse, restaurant, security, and entertainment companies, workers were receiving tips, accommodation, food, and big festival bonuses. Workers who started in the transportation or agriculture sectors did not receive anything from their employers besides their salaries or wages.

3.2.7 Job Changes and Current Job

From the First Job to the Current Job

Table 4: Number of time changing jobs by sectors and average of years worked

| | Sector | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|---------------|------------------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| | Manufacturing | | Hospitality | | Construction | | Security | | Total | |
| # of changes | # of Workers | Avg. # of Years Worked | # of Workers | Avg. # of Years Worked | # of Workers | Avg. # of Years Worked | # of Workers | Avg. # of Years Worked | # of Workers | Avg. # of Years Worked |
| None | 9 | 6 years | 4 | 2.1 years | 2 | 8.5 years | 2 | 2 years | 17 | 4.9 years |
| Once | 5 | 9 years | 8 | 7 years | 1 | 1 year | 2 | 5.5 years | 16 | 7.1 years |
| Twice | 3 | 5.3 years | 1 | 5 years | 3 | 7 years | 0 | --- | 7 | 6 years |
| 3 times | 2 | 7 years | 0 | --- | 3 | 5.7 years | 1 | 3 years | 6 | 5.7 years |
| 4 times | 1 | 3 years | 0 | --- | 0 | --- | 0 | --- | 1 | 3 years |
| > 4 times | 0 | --- | 2 | 9.5 years | 1 | 4 years | 0 | --- | 3 | 7.7 years |
| Total | 20 | 6.6 years | 15 | 7.2 years | 10 | 6 years | 5 | 3.6 years | 50 | 6 years |

The undertaken interviews show that 33 out of 50 migrant workers have changed jobs at least once since they migrated, whereas 17 are still working at the first job they

found after migration. For those who have changed jobs, the majority of them changed only once, followed by two times and three times, only 4 respondents.

In regards to the average years worked in each sector, the hospitality sector has the largest average of worked years (7.2). Over 50% of hospitality workers who had only changed jobs once have an average of seven years working in the industry. The manufacturing and construction sectors also had a high average of years worked (6 or over). The lowest average was registered in the security sector (3.6 years), though there was also a lower number of interviewed workers (only 5). Nevertheless, we can conclude that workers seem to remain in the same position for long periods of time in all sectors.

Current Job

Participants were asked about the time taken to learn the skills needed to perform their current jobs, the source of current job information, and reasons they accepted their current job, benefits and contract.

- Time taken to learn the skills needed: three participants claimed that they needed more than a month to learn the skills necessary to perform their current job, three took from one week to a month, seven took around one week, eight took just a few days and twelve participants claimed they did not need to learn any new skills for their current jobs.
- Source of current job information: seventeen participants claimed that they learned of their current jobs from their relatives, six from their friends, and eight discovered the job on their own.
- Reasons to accept current job, by frequency:
 - Acceptable wage or salary
 - Easy job
 - Better working conditions
 - Ability to work or stay with relatives or friends
 - Free meals and accommodation
 - High job offer in the current job sector
 - Improve their capacity to open their own business later
- Benefits: besides the salary or wage of the current job, the following benefits were provided to workers in each sector:
 - Manufacturing: premium rate, overtime pay, transportation allowance, food allowance, accommodation allowance, bonus rate, seniority rate, and holiday or leave.
 - Hospitality: free accommodation, free meals, tips, big festival bonuses, and overtime pay.
 - Construction: overtime pay and big festival bonuses.

- Security: big festival bonuses, holiday or leave, and insurance.
- Contract: 25 participants had formal contracts in their current jobs, whereas the other 25 participants did not. It is interesting to note that though all workers in the manufacturing sector had a formal contract, none of the workers in the construction sector did.

3.2.8 Current Migrants as Intermediaries

“Current migrants as intermediaries” refers to how current migrants who are already working share job information with others or help them find employment.

Experience helping others with getting a job

The study found that 37 participants had helped others (at least one person) to find a job. The people they helped were their relatives (most common), friends and fellow villagers. In most cases, participants helped others find jobs in their own workplace and ended up sharing a room together or living nearby.

Experience in sharing job information with others

Thirty-eight participants shared job information with others even without being asked for it. Again, the people they shared job information with were their relatives, friends, and fellow villagers. In most cases, they claimed they had sufficient information to share with others, but mainly from their own workplaces.

Sharing job information with others in the future

The majority of participants were willing to share job information with others in the future (only two said they would not). Most of the interviewed workers would share job information with their friends and relatives, rather than with fellow villagers, and most of this shared job information would concern their own sectors and workplaces rather than in others.

As for accommodations, most would like to share a room together or live nearby. However, some participants also responded that they would share job information from other sectors around their homes if they knew they would be able to stay with or close to their friends and relatives.

All participants preferred to share job information with others in person, followed by over the phone and finally, through Facebook.

3.2.9 Current migrant workers as a job seekers

Although the current migrant workers had secured jobs by the time they were interviewed, they still could be looking for jobs and act as job seekers. They continued to receive job information from friends and relatives, talking in person and through the phone. They also received job information through television, radio, Facebook, the internet, and banners or leaflets.

Most of the job information they received was for jobs in Phnom Penh, followed by other provinces, and very little of the information they received concerned work abroad.

3.2.10 Interest in job seeking technology-based tools

The study found that 43 participants were interested in job seeking using technology-based tools through both Facebook and over the phone, 5 were interested in using phone only, and 2 were not interested at all. The following terms are what participants wanted to see or hear in job announcements:

1. Salary
2. Working conditions
3. Position and skills necessary
4. Place of work
5. Meal and accommodation
6. Other benefits
7. Working environment
8. Requirements

3.2.11 Considering giving phone number to employers

Most of the participants (43/50) would give phone number of their relatives, friends, or acquaintances to employers who needed workers. Six would not give out these phone numbers because they did not trust their employers, and one participant would want to ask the owner of phone number for permission before sharing it with an employer.

4 CONCLUSION AND MICRO-HYPOTHESES

4.2 Conclusion

It was not a surprise to see that Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Preah Sihanouk are the main locations for establishments in the hospitality, construction and security sectors. Although only job positions in the construction sector were found to be seasonal, it is likely that the hospitality sector might have a seasonal job structure in tourist stops such as Sihanoukville or Siem Reap (however, this was not included in the qualitative stage of the study).

4.2.1 HR Managers

The most common **recruitment method** was found to be the same in all sectors. HR Managers simply ask their workers to contact their friends and relatives when they have new job openings. Talking through the phone and in person are the main ways used by existing workers to contact and inform their friends and relatives about job vacancies. After this method, HR managers prefer to produce job-advertising materials (such as banners or leaflets). Hiring through intermediaries was found to be the third most used method (most often in the construction and security sectors) to hire unskilled or low-skilled workers. Finally, hiring a recruitment agency is often the last option (most often used in the hospitality sector).

Most HR managers expressed experiencing **difficulties to find low-skilled and unskilled workers** in the rainy season and after Khmer New Year.

4.2.2 Working Migrants

The study suggests that the three most important **pushing factors for migration** are (i) coming from a poor family, (ii) needing to earn money to support a family and (iii) a lack of job opportunities in the village or the surrounding area.

The main reasons why people choose internal migration over migration abroad were (i) being close to the family or being able to easily visit their hometown, followed by (ii) living and working with relatives in the internal destination and finally, (iii) matters of safety. As for the top reasons behind choosing external migration first were (i) having relatives or friends who were working abroad, (ii) a lack of job opportunities within the country, and (iii) the idea of receiving better income working abroad.

When evaluating minimum **wages** in entry-level jobs, the study found that workers in construction received the highest starting salary. However, workers in the manufacturing sector received more benefits than workers in other sectors. Migrant workers in manufacturing also had contracts, which none of the workers in construction had. Construction workers also received daily wages and tended to have seasonal jobs.

The **same job position in different companies** may take differing periods of time to be learned. For example, becoming a room attendant in a guesthouse requires less training than the same position in a three-star hotel.

Job seekers follow their friends and relatives. Those who have friends and relatives working inside Cambodia tended to migrate internally, while those who have friends and relatives working abroad tended to migrate externally. Those who are living in Prey Veng, Kampong Thom, Kampong Cham, Kandal, Svay Rieng, Takeo, Pursat and Kampong Speu, often have friends and relatives working in Phnom Penh while those who are living in provinces near the Cambodian-Thai border, including Battambang, Pailin, Banteay Meanchey, Preah Vihear, Koh Kong and Oddar Meanchey, tended to have more friends and relatives working in Thailand.

We can differentiate **two types of working migrants via their access to job information**: migrants who left the village having job information and migrants who left the village without having any job information.

The first type of migrants had relatives and friends who already worked outside of the village, which is how they were able to easily access job information. The second type of migrants had an imperative reason to leave the village but, as they had no friends or relatives already working outside the village they could ask, they had no access to job information. Obviously, the latter group (with no information) is more vulnerable to human trafficking than the first. Most of the migrants who left the village with job information trusted their relatives and friends outside the village to find jobs for them, and travelled alone in a lower percentage than the second group.

Nearly one out of four (24%) interviewed workers left the village without having any information about jobs.

After migrating for the first time, **reality often did not live up to worker's expectations.** Living conditions were worse than expected for 20% of the participants, working conditions were worse for 24%, and salary was lower for 26%.

Workers like to help others to find jobs. Almost all participants in the study (74%) had helped others find jobs often in the same companies and were willing to share accommodation. Most of the people helped were relatives, friends and fellow villagers. This reflects the way that HR managers or employer representatives prefer to search for new workers - asking their existing workers to contact their network.

All participants were still receiving job information from friends and relatives despite their employment. Workers also received job information through television, radio, Facebook, the Internet, and banners or leaflets. This indicates that having a job in the city opens the door for them to access more job information as they have more access to other channels through which to receive job information.

The main reasons for workers to accept new jobs were (i) Acceptable wage or salary, (ii) Ease of the job, (iii) Better working conditions, and (iv) Being offered free meals and accommodation.

4.2.3 Use of technology

All interviewed HR Managers had Facebook accounts and only one out of 14 did not own a smart-phone. Furthermore, 13 out of 14 showed interest in the use of technology-based mechanisms to recruit unskilled or low-skilled workers.

Migrant workers were also interested in the use of technology-based tools to receive job information (through Facebook and phone).

Migrant workers were interested in job seeking technology-based tools, mainly through Facebook and phone. The information they would like to see or hear in a job announcement is, by order of importance: salary, working conditions, place of work, benefits, and requirements.

Remarkably, the study revealed that most of the participants were open to giving out the phone number of their relatives, friends or acquaintances so that employers could then contact them when they needed to hire new workers.

4.3 Micro-Hypotheses

The micro-hypotheses below have been developed based on the findings in this qualitative study. These will be confirmed statistically and significantly in the survey on internal migration.

About HR managers and demand for employees:

1. The most common method HR managers use for searching for new unskilled or low-skilled employees is to ask their present employees to find them.
2. HR Managers would use technology-based recruitment services if available, and the preferred access device would be a smartphone.
3. There is a relationship between hiring a recruitment agency and an establishment's urgent need of low and unskilled workers.
4. The demand for low-skilled and unskilled employees in all four sectors increases after Khmer New Year and during the rainy season.

About current workers:

5. Workers share employment information with friends and family in the village, and help them find work. They tend to share jobs available in their sector and/or location.
6. There is positive correlation between years of experience as a migrant and the number of people the migrant has helped to get a job.
7. There is already a critical mass of workers in the target who sectors use smartphones and have Facebook accounts, making the use of Facebook as a tool to find unskilled and low skilled work a reality.
8. Regardless of type of job (permanent or seasonal), current workers return to their village for the purpose of visiting and not for farming.

About potential workers:

9. There is a relationship between making the decision to migrate for the first time and having relatives or friends already working in migration destinations (same for both national or cross-border migration).

10. A significant enough number of potential workers do not have access to clear employment information, making it necessary to use other channels to reach them.
11. Migrants who have job information before completing migration travel safer than migrants who don't have job information prior to migration (including cross-border migration).

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