MIGRATION IN CAMBODIA

I. Introduction

Cambodia remains a predominantly rural country, but has recently experienced large population growth. It now has the largest cohort of young people in its history. Youth are the driving force of a wave of international and internal migration, and consequently, urbanization. There are now enormous numbers of people moving to Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia. As of 2012, about 1,400,000 Cambodians live in Phnom Penh. Both men and women moved to the capital for better jobs and education, with 56.9% of women and 43% of men migrating to Phnom Penh to look for work. This factsheet looks specifically at the movement of people in Cambodia from rural to urban areas, responding to various push and pull factors. The data come from the latest report on migration in Cambodia, the Cambodia Rural Urban Migration Project (CRUMP) from 2012, which surveyed recent Phnom Penh migrants, rural households, and village chiefs. Additional analyses of the CRUMP on Women & Migration and Ageing & Migration from 2013 were also used in this fact sheet.

II. Migrant characteristics

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-24</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>35+</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary (1-6 years)</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary (7-12 years)</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>44.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Higher (13+ years)</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not married</td>
<td>52.3%</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

III. Reasons for and places of migration

Motivations for urban migration:

Migration occurs as result of push factors at the place of origin and pull factors at the place of destination. In Cambodia, there are three main factors for moving: to look for work, for education, and for marriage. The reasons for migration are different by sex and age and vary individually.

![Motivations for migration to Phnom Penh by sex and age](image)


Destinations of rural and urban migrants: Where are migrants going?

- Rural to urban migration comprises about 57% of all migration, rural to rural about 13%, and emigration makes up the additional 30%.
- Women are much more likely to migrate to Phnom Penh while men are more likely to migrate to other rural destinations and abroad.
- Those who have higher levels of education move to Phnom Penh and those with lower levels of education migrate internationally.
- For international migrants, 37% migrate to Thailand, followed by Malaysia (14%) and South Korea (3%).

Source: CRUMP Report, 2012
Remittances

- 70% of rural migrants remit money to their household of origin; monetary and non-monetary remittances account for 80.5%.
- 38.4% of migrants in Phnom Penh remit about 1.1 million riel per year.
- Women, those with children left behind, factory workers, labourers, drivers, and garment workers remit the most money.

Source: CRUMP Report, 2012

VI. Impacts of migration

On villages and migrant households

Positive:
- The 3 largest benefits of migration to villages of origin are: improvement of the standard of living (77.3%), increased money coming into the village (28.3%), increased employment of villagers (25.9%).
- On average, Phnom Penh migrant households have greater material wealth and durable items than Cambodian households.

Negative:
- The 3 largest harms of migration to villages of origin are: loss of labour (44.3%), decrease of food production (14.4%), loss of population (13.3%).
- 43.5% of migrant households have an elderly person present compared to 31.2% of non-migrant households.
- The poorest households in Cambodia are migrant households with elderly and children ‘left behind’ by migrants.


On urban migrants:

Positive:
- 63.6% of urban migrants are employed and 14.1% are studying while 2.7% are employed and studying at the same time.
- About 80% of urban migrants that listed labour as a motivation had received a job within their first month of living in Phnom Penh.

Negative:
- 17.8% of urban migrants are not optimistic about their future. Women are less optimistic (19%) than men (15.2%).
- 73.3% of women migrants report that it is difficult to make friends when first arriving in the city compared to 68.5% of men migrants.
- Women migrants have increased vulnerability to abuse and exploitation, in particular women with less education. Half of women migrants to Phnom Penh were illiterate.