

**(Re)integration of Cambodian trafficked men:  
Trends in trafficking and available aftercare services**



# **(Re)integration of Cambodian trafficked men: Trends in trafficking and available aftercare services**

By Kate Day for Hagar Cambodia  
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*“I want my experience and others’ experiences to be heard by organisations and the government so that they will be able to assist us some day. Please deliver my message to all organisations and the governments within the country and outside the country to help [trafficked] Cambodians”<sup>1</sup>*

–Survivor of trafficking to a fishing vessel

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<sup>1</sup> Survivor quoted in Rebecca Surtees, *In African waters. The trafficking of Cambodian fishers in South Africa* (Geneva; Washington D.C.: IOM/NEXUS Institute, 2014): 155.

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Views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of Hagar.



# Executive Summary

Men constitute a significant proportion of the identified victims of trafficking in Cambodia. While there is no coordinated database of victim numbers, between 2011 and 2014, males comprised 59 percent of trafficking victims assisted by the Counter Trafficking in Persons Program Phase II (CTIP II), and more than 88 percent of those assisted by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Cambodia.<sup>2</sup> On average since 2012, CTIP II has assisted 160 male victims of trafficking per year. It is likely that thousands more go unidentified. Yet there remain limited (re)integration services for males, particularly for adult men. A 2013 study of 78 male victims of trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (including 27 Cambodians) found that only 10 received comprehensive assistance.<sup>3</sup> A recent study of Cambodian trafficked fishers found that most received legal aid but little other assistance, despite survivors actively seeking support.<sup>4</sup>

The aim of this research is to inform service providers who seek to fill the gap in aftercare for men. The research is based on analysis of existing literature and data from service providers, plus interviews with 33 key informants and interviews or focus groups with eighteen survivors of trafficking. The report covers the following topics:

- Trends in trafficking of Cambodian males, with a focus on trafficking to fishing vessels
- The (re)integration needs of survivors
- (Re)integration of males and existing services in Cambodia.

This research fills a gap in research on trends in trafficking of Cambodian men. In addition, it is one of only a few studies exploring (re)integration for survivors of trafficking to fishing vessels.

## Key findings

### Trends in trafficking of males

Cambodian males are trafficked to a variety of sectors, most commonly fishing, construction, agriculture, factory work and begging. Most identified survivors return from Thailand, followed by Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia. Most survivors come from remote, rural areas. They have seldom been educated beyond primary school. Almost all are breadwinners, and as a result are highly transient because of their need to travel to find work.

The most common provinces of origin are Banteay Meanchey, Kampong Cham, Battambang, Kampong Thom, Oddar Meanchey, Siem Reap and Svay Rieng provinces. Very few victims have been identified from northeast provinces. While overall, survivors are widely dispersed, as many as half are 'clumped' in the same village as at least one other victim.

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<sup>2</sup>Data supplied to author. CTIP II data is for the period 16 October 2011- 30 December 2014, in which the programme assisted 814 victims of trafficking, 479 of them male. IOM Cambodia data is for the period 2011-2014.

<sup>3</sup> Rebecca Surtees, *After trafficking: Experiences and challenges in (re)integration in the Greater Mekong Sub-region* (Bangkok: UNIAP/NEXUS Institute, 2013), 110. Data on Cambodians supplied by the author.

<sup>4</sup>Rebecca Surtees, *In African waters. The trafficking of Cambodian fishers in South Africa* (Geneva, Washington D.C.: IOM/NEXUS Institute, 2014).

## Trafficking to fishing vessels

Trafficking to the regional fishing industry accounts for more than half of male victims identified. For this reason, trafficking to fishing vessels is particularly highlighted in this report. More than 300 trafficked Cambodian fishers returned between 2010 and 2014, although it is likely that many more victims were not identified. In one study of Thailand's fishing industry, nine percent of Cambodian fishers reported being subject to forced labour.<sup>5</sup> Rates among long-haul fishers alone were even higher. A study of Cambodians deported from Thailand found that one in five deported fishers was potentially trafficked.<sup>6</sup>

There are likely to be tens of thousands of Cambodians working on Thai fishing vessels. More than 22,000 Cambodians have formally registered,<sup>7</sup> but the actual number is likely to be higher. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has estimated that Cambodians make up 40 percent of fishers across four major Thai ports.<sup>8</sup> Estimates of the total population of fishers on Thai vessels range from 100,000 to 143,000.<sup>9</sup> Given the findings of the studies above, it is likely that a significant number of Cambodian fishers are victims of trafficking.

Most trafficking occurs when men migrate willingly through irregular channels without travel documents, and are later deceived by informal brokers who deliver them to a fishing vessel or 'sell' them to a captain. One exception to this trend is the case of Giant Ocean International Fishery Co. Ltd (Giant Ocean), a licensed recruitment agency that trafficked an estimated 700 Cambodian men to fishing vessels in numerous countries.<sup>10</sup> Assistance providers estimate that around 200 of these victims have returned; several hundred remain unaccounted for.

Cambodian trafficked fishers commonly experience severe physical and psychological abuse, exposure to the elements, hazardous work, insufficient nutrition and medical care and unsafe living conditions. The majority are unpaid or severely under paid. A recent study by IOM and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine on health and human trafficking found that a sample of 219 trafficked Cambodian fishers worked on average 19.5 hours per day.<sup>11</sup> Two thirds suffered physical violence. Sixteen victims were forced to take drugs, and four reported sexual violence.<sup>12</sup> A report on the experiences of 49 trafficked fishers found that 59 percent had witnessed a murder by the boat captain.<sup>13</sup> Men often spend years trapped aboard the vessels: the above study of 219 fishers found that nearly 50 percent had spent longer than two years in the trafficking situation.<sup>14</sup> Some had been trafficked for longer than 10 years.

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<sup>5</sup>International Labour Organisation (ILO) and Asian Research Centre for Migration, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, *Employment practices and working conditions in Thailand's fishing sector*, (Bangkok: ILO, 2013), 68.

<sup>6</sup>United Nations Action for Cooperation Against Trafficking in Persons (UN-ACT), *Migration experiences of Cambodian workers deported from Thailand in 2009, 2010 & 2012 Poipet, Cambodia*, (Bangkok: UN-ACT, 2015), 49.

<sup>7</sup> Data from ILO, Bangkok.

<sup>8</sup> "The workers were sampled in proportion to size of the total population by nationality in the occupation." ILO and Asian Research Centre for Migration, 2013, 5.

<sup>9</sup> See discussion in ILO and Asian Research Centre for Migration, 2013, p. 4-5.

<sup>10</sup>Police estimated that more than 700 men were sent abroad by Giant Ocean. Surtees, 2014, 17.

<sup>11</sup> Cathy Zimmerman et al., "Health and human trafficking in the Greater Mekong Subregion. Findings from a survey of men women and children in Cambodia, Thailand and Viet Nam, International Organization for Migration and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Cambodia results," (presentation at STEAM launch held by London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and IOM Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 18 November 2014).

<sup>12</sup> Data provided by London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and IOM Cambodia, 2014.

<sup>13</sup> UNIAP, *Exploitation of Cambodian men at sea: Facts about the trafficking of Cambodian men onto Thai fishing boats*, SIREN series CB-03, (Bangkok: UNIAP, 2009).

<sup>14</sup>Zimmerman et al, 2014.

After escape, it is common that victims spend time in detention. Others suffer further exploitation or re-trafficking before they eventually return home.

## Needs of survivors

**Economic needs** are paramount for most survivors. Many are unskilled and return to remote rural areas where generating stable, year-round income is extremely challenging. Re-migration is common. Trafficking has often further exacerbated survivors' financial problems. Some have household debts of up to US\$1000. These burdens create stress and hinder survivors' ability to access support.

Cambodian survivors frequently have ongoing **health** needs resulting from trafficking. Survivors have reported suffering chronic headaches, malnourishment, back pain, lung conditions and digestion problems, among other ailments. A survey of survivors found that physical health was a common concern. Roughly two thirds of male respondents wished to see a medical practitioner.<sup>15</sup>

Extremely **poor mental health** is common among survivors. In the study on health and human trafficking conducted by IOM and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 62 percent of adult trafficked males showed symptoms of depression, 54 percent of anxiety and 46 percent of PTSD.<sup>16</sup> Service providers recalled cases of survivors suffering trauma, aggression, substance abuse and memory problems.

Survivors' **access to social support** can be complicated by a range of factors. Returnees often feel guilt or shame, fear discrimination or struggle to adjust to a changed environment and relationships.

Victims' family members can be considered '**secondary victims**' when they have problems resulting from the victim's trafficking experience. Family members can be indirectly affected by the victim's health or economic problems, or directly impacted by any anti-social behaviors the survivor has adopted to cope. Family members also have their own economic, health and other needs which should be addressed for the family member's own sake, and to enable them to support the survivor.

Many victims need **temporary accommodation** on return. Only a few need assistance with **long-term accommodation**. Many need **legal aid** to pursue compensation or cases against their trafficker. Victims in some cases have fears for their safety or prefer not to disclose their trafficking experience, and therefore have needs for **security and privacy**.

## Successful (re)integration and existing services in Cambodia

As defined by Surtees, (re)integration is "the process of recovery and economic and social inclusion following a trafficking experience. It includes settlement in a safe and secure environment, access to a reasonable standard of living, mental and physical well-being, opportunities for personal, social and economic development, and access to social and emotional support."<sup>17</sup> Trafficked persons may choose to settle in their home community (reintegration) or a new community (integration).

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Surtees, 2013, 38.

Successful (re)integration involves many factors that depend not only on the survivor, but also their external environment. The process is therefore highly complex and prone to setbacks, often taking several years or more. A key factor in successful (re)integration is removing the vulnerability factors that made the victim susceptible to trafficking in the first place.

Issues of gender should also be considered in (re)integration. Perceptions about gender have potential to affect survivors' vulnerability to trafficking; their post-trafficking needs; the availability of services and survivors' willingness to accept these services.

## Current services, challenges and opportunities

**Overview of current services-** While the Cambodian Government has a mandate to provide support for trafficked men, gross under-funding means that the bulk of (re)integration assistance is left to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international organisations (IOs). Currently, the role of the Ministry of Social Affairs Veteran and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) and the Department of Social Affairs Veteran and Youth Rehabilitation (DoSVY) in (re)integration appears limited to referrals, paperwork, and visiting clients if an NGO pays the associated costs.

At least twelve NGOs and IOs provide some form of (re)integration assistance to trafficked men. This is almost exclusively community-based, there is only one shelter in the country that accommodates trafficked men. The majority of assistance takes place in the survivor's former community. Few are supported to integrate elsewhere.

**Funding-** Funding for (re)integration assistance comes primarily from the USAID CTIP II program, plus some additional donors. Funding is usually in the region of US\$800-1000 per client for all (re)integration assistance. Some service providers estimated that US\$2000 would be required to enable comprehensive support.

**Identification-** A few organisations search or screen for victims at Poipet and Koh Kong, though screening remains largely *ad hoc*. There is next to no active searching for victims in destination countries, despite sightings of Cambodians who may be stranded on overseas islands or at ports. There is no publicised list of missing persons, despite hundreds of victims of Giant Ocean potentially unaccounted for. As a result, the number of identified victims is very low compared to the scale of the problem.

**Basic assistance-** At least seven organisations provide basic assistance (such as a medical check, food package and transport grant), to victims who are identified when they return. Some pay for a few days guesthouse accommodation. There is only one shelter in Cambodia that accommodates trafficked men - the Cambodian Centre for the Protection Children's Rights (CCPCR) shelter in Svay Rieng. IOM is soon to open a temporary shelter in Phnom Penh.

**Referrals-** There is currently no formal referral system. Some victims are never referred for any (re)integration assistance, perhaps due to first responders not knowing the importance of support or the referral options available. Other survivors are referred only to organisations providing one type of assistance (such as legal aid or vocational training); these survivors are seldom referred for support with other needs. Survivors who are referred for long-term case management receive the most comprehensive support. Training all first responders and assistance providers to refer survivors to organisations providing case management may resolve some of the current gaps.

**Coordination of assistance-** There is minimal coordination of services for trafficked men. In 2014 IOM initiated meetings of service providers to discuss assistance for survivors due to return. There are no regular gatherings to discuss ongoing support for trafficked men. There is no coordinated data collection.

**Legal aid-** At least four organisations provide legal aid. These organisations represented more than 150 victims in a case against Giant Ocean that led to six Taiwanese defendants being convicted. These organisations have also taken cases against Cambodian brokers who have trafficked males. However, court cases can be extremely slow. Even when perpetrators are convicted, victims seldom if ever receive compensation. Legal cases outside Cambodia are extremely rare, despite the fact that most perpetrators fall into this category.

**Health** checks are usually available for victims when they are first identified. However, service providers recalled very few cases in which survivors had received ongoing health assistance. This seems unusual in light of case studies and academic research that suggests many victims have ongoing health problems. Several survivors described long-term health problems from trafficking, for which they did not receive assistance.

**Mental health** support for survivors is extremely limited. Case managers are usually trained in basic counseling only, and refer severe cases. Service providers did recall instances in which referring survivors had been beneficial. However, case managers do not always recognise mental health needs or make referrals. Furthermore, Cambodia has very few mental health professionals, and survivors usually have to be able and willing to travel to urban centres for treatment. Few survivors have the knowledge or resources to do this without support from a service provider. Some survivors are invited to attend retreats with other victims, however not all have this opportunity. There are no existing support groups for male victims.

**Long-term case-management and support for economic empowerment-** The survivors that receive most comprehensive assistance are those referred to one of four organisations that provide long-term case management. These organisations assign each survivor a case manager (often called a reintegration officer) who takes responsibility for facilitating the support the survivor needs. These case managers are usually trained to assist with basic counseling and to refer to other services. A large part of their role is facilitating support for economic empowerment. This involves referrals to vocational training, support to establish a small business, or very occasionally job placements. Assistance can last up to two years, or longer. Long-term case management has helped some survivors become economically stable, gain confidence or overcome mental health problems.

However, several problems compromise the quality of long-term assistance. Resource constraints limit the support case managers can provide, particularly in light of the geographic spread of survivors. Delayed assistance has left survivors forced to re-migrate. Retaining contact with highly mobile survivors is immensely challenging. Furthermore, case managers' training does not equip them to identify the range of complex needs they may encounter. Funding is also limited, with few donors willing to fund the high cost of long-term (re)integration.

Support for economic empowerment itself also has a number of challenges:

- Assistance is sometimes poorly matched to the survivor's context or a lack of follow up has undermined support.
- Survivors face obstacles to accessing skills training, particularly the inability to forego income while training.

- Even ‘successful’ self-employment seldom generates high incomes. Survivors remain vulnerable to market changes, and are still likely to re-migrate.
- Assistance is almost always focused in the home community, even if generating income is unrealistic in that context. There is little consideration of integration alternatives, such as job placements or self-employment in a new community.

Numerous survivors have re-migrated because economic support has failed. There are opportunities for creativity in economic support, particularly to explore a broader range of self-employment and training options; job placements in the home community or elsewhere; and other integration options- supporting survivors to migrate safely to a community with better employment prospects.

## Recommendations

### For the Royal Government of Cambodia

- Increase the operational budget of MoSVY so the Ministry can play a greater role in (re)integration assistance.
- Improve screening at borders. Introduce targeted screening for deportees who report they previously worked on fishing vessels.
- Update the training curricula of Cambodian immigration officials and police so they are equipped to (i) refer all identified survivors to assistance providers who provide case management and (ii) challenge misperceptions that males are not victims of trafficking.
- Better resource embassies and consulates – perhaps in the form of dedicated labour attachés - to speed up repatriations, and to play a role in identifying victims. Prioritise Malaysia and Indonesia.
- Improve access to safe migration channels, for instance by making travel documents quicker and cheaper to obtain.

### For assistance providers

#### Identification

- Coordinate data collection across organisations in order to accurately monitor identification trends.
- Initiate Khmer language outreach in overseas ports to identify victims and connect them with assistance.
- Develop a list of Cambodian missing persons.
- Advocate for destination-country governments to improve screening for victims among deportees, detainees and migrants in general, particularly those working on fishing vessels.

#### Repatriation assistance

- Advocate for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to urgently increase resourcing of embassies and consulates, in order to speed up returns of identified victims.
- Refund families who have self-funded the victim’s return travel, in order to free their families from debt.

#### Reception in Cambodia

- As standard practice, refer every survivor who wishes to receive assistance to an organisation providing long-term case management. If the survivor has no obvious needs on arrival, encourage them to connect anyway, in case of future needs.



- b. Improve privacy during receptions in Phnom Penh. Shield victims from media. Challenge misperceptions that male victims do not have security fears.
- c. Consider the opportunities of having survivors briefly gathered to share information about mental health, safe migration or work opportunities.

#### **Access to justice and compensation**

- a. Strengthen partnerships to pursue legal cases in Thailand.
- b. Continue to provide advocacy and avenues of legal redress so that victims' right to compensation is realised.

#### **Long-term case management**

- a. Improve the referral system by prioritising referral of every survivor to an organisation that provides long-term case management. Train first responders and service providers to refer all survivors for case management support. Update training curricula accordingly.
- b. Increase resourcing for case management, to ensure case managers can deliver comprehensive and timely support. Strictly limit caseloads.
- c. Build capacity of case managers to identify needs and refer appropriately; to work with families; and to select economic empowerment support best suited to the context.
- d. Explore new options for retaining contact with survivors, for instance conditional cash grants or other incentives for survivors to stay in contact with service providers.
- e. Prepare for the eventuality that survivors re-migrate, by building a network of referral partners country-wide and in Thailand.
- f. Explore ways to coordinate long-term assistance among service providers. Consider restarting regular meetings of service providers.

#### **Health support**

- a. Investigate the apparently low level of ongoing health support offered, compared to health problems documented in academic literature.
- b. Broaden the scope of initial health assessments.

#### **Mental health support**

- a. Explore ways to reduce barriers to men accessing mental health support, such as incorporating a mental health component into vocational training; offering phone counseling; sharing basic mental health education on arrival; or showing testimonies of survivors who have valued assistance.
- b. Update training curricula for case managers to equip them to identify mental health needs, and to understand effective approaches when working with men.
- c. Explore the potential of self-help groups or other group support. Offer group retreats to a larger number of survivors.
- d. Advocate for the overall development of mental health services in Cambodia.

#### **Support for families**

- a. Throughout all assistance to the survivor, consider ways to support family members with their needs as secondary victims.
- b. Consider ways to educate family members about mental health. Offer family counseling, health and mental health support to family members. Consider extending survivor retreats to include family members.
- c. Include family members in economic empowerment.

#### **Support for economic empowerment**

- a. Consider income-generation options both inside and outside the survivor's community. If the survivor wishes to migrate, support them to do so safely. Follow up in the new location.

- b. Establish a job placement programme in partnership with the private sector.
- c. If the survivor chooses to be self-employed, ensure their business plan meets demand in the local market.
- d. Match vocational training with skills shortages, and offer a more diverse range of skills in emerging sectors. Reduce barriers to training by offering accommodation, transport and a stipend for trainees.
- e. Explore options to support on a commune and village level, or to support multiple survivors who are clustered near each other.
- f. Prepare back-up plans in case planned income-earning methods fail.

### **Funding**

- a. Increase the budget per survivor to US\$2000 or more. Ensure funding is flexible enough to be used to support family members.
- b. Encourage donors to fund men as well as women and children.
- c. Advocate for MoSVY to increase its operational budget so the Ministry can play a greater role in reintegration assistance.

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## Abbreviations

ADHOC	Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association
CCPCR	Cambodian Centre for the Protection Children's Rights
CLEC	Community Legal Education Centre
CTIP II	Counter Trafficking in Persons Program Phase II
CWCC	Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre
DoSVY	Department of Social Affairs Veteran and Youth Rehabilitation
GMS	Greater Mekong sub-region
HCC	Healthcare Centre for Children
IJM	International Justice Mission
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IO	International organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ITF	International Transport Federation
LSCW	Legal Support for Children and Women
LSHTM	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
MoLVT	Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training
MoSVY	Ministry of Social Affairs Veteran and Youth Rehabilitation
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
NGO	Non-government organisation
TPO	Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation
UN-ACT	United Nations Action for Cooperation Against Trafficking in Persons
UNIAP	United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking
VSAs	Victim service agencies

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## Introduction

Globally, male victims of trafficking have been a neglected population. The counter-trafficking movement has overwhelmingly focused on female and child victims: indeed, the seminal document of the movement, the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children*, arguably has set the agenda. The movement's success in attracting publicity and resources towards women and child victims has further diverted attention away from male survivors. The disparity in services has been described as “neglect”, “a glaring omission”,<sup>18</sup> and “discrimination on the basis of sex”.<sup>19</sup>

In Cambodia, as elsewhere, the disparity persists. In recent years, males have constituted a significant proportion of the trafficking victims identified. Hundreds of Cambodian men have been trafficked into the labour forces of various industries abroad, such as construction and manufacturing, although the majority of identified victims has been exploited on fishing vessels. These men return to Cambodia with severe health, mental health and financial needs. According to one study, 62 percent of trafficked men showed symptoms of depression and 46 per cent of PTSD.<sup>20</sup>

Yet in Cambodia there has been “a near-total absence of social and mental health services available for men”.<sup>21</sup> For instance, a 2013 study of 78 male victims of trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (including 27 Cambodians), found that only 10 received comprehensive assistance.<sup>22</sup> Existing services for Cambodian men are relatively young: a 2012 assessment noted that some organisations were “starting” to provide aftercare for men.<sup>23</sup> The lack of (re)integration services has grave consequences for the wellbeing of trafficked men and their families and communities.

The aim of this research is to inform service providers who seek to fill the gap in aftercare for men. The report is in three parts. The first part collates existing knowledge about trends in trafficking of Cambodian men, with a focus on men trafficked to fishing vessels. Part two focuses on the needs of survivors. The third part discusses (re)integration: what successful (re)integration looks like for trafficked men, the existing services in Cambodia and the challenges and opportunities of improving services. The report concludes by putting forward recommendations to the sector as a whole.

## Methodology

The information in this report has been gathered using two methods. The first method was detailed desk analysis of existing literature and commentary, as well as data provided by IOM Cambodia and CTIP II. The second method was interviews with key informants who were selected based on their expertise (interviewees are listed in the Acknowledgements). Respondents included assistance providers, non-government and international organisations,

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<sup>18</sup>Samuel Vincent Jones, “The invisible man: The conscious neglect of men and boys in the war on human trafficking,” *Utah Law Review* 4 (2010):1143, 1144.

<sup>19</sup> Anne Gallagher and Elaine Pearson, “The high cost of freedom: A legal and policy analysis of shelter detention for victims of trafficking,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 32 (2010): 95.

<sup>20</sup>Zimmerman et al., 2014.

<sup>21</sup>Community Legal Education Centre, LICADHO, Legal Support for Children and Women and Human Rights Watch, “Universal Periodic Review, Cambodia, joint submission on human trafficking for labour exploitation,” 2013.

<sup>22</sup> Surtees, 2013, 110.

<sup>23</sup> Robin Mauney and Rachana Srun, *Assessment of shelter versus community services for survivors of trafficking in persons in Cambodia* (Phnom Penh: Winrock International, 2012).

academics, psychologists, and government staff. Interviews covered topics such as trends in trafficking of men, post-trafficking needs, gender dynamics, existing (re)integration services and opportunities to improve services. The author conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 33 respondents between October 2014 and February 2015, in Phnom Penh, Battambang and Bangkok.

In addition, eight survivors of trafficking were interviewed for case studies and invited to share their opinions about types of services that would benefit them. A further ten were interviewed in focus groups. Seventeen had been trafficked to fishing vessels; one had been trafficked to a boat carrying rice. The researcher conducted the interviews and focus groups with the help of an interpreter, either at the survivor's home, or in the nearest city centre. All men interviewed had been receiving assistance from World Vision or Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre (CWCC), almost all for one year or more. These interviews were not intended to be representative of all trafficked men- indeed, having received long periods of follow up, these victims have enjoyed relatively comprehensive assistance. The purpose of the interviews was to reveal themes in victims' (re)integration experience, and to seek their feedback on what other assistance may be useful. The interviews were conducted in Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, Siem Reap and Oddar Meanchey provinces.

## **Ethics**

Key respondents have not been quoted by name in this report, and the author has taken efforts to ensure quotes cannot be linked to any one respondent. Key respondents were given the option to have their name or the name of their organization omitted from the report.

The process for interviewing survivors for case studies was drawn from UNIAP's Ethical Standards for Counter-trafficking Research and Programming, 2008. In this case, survivors were given two opportunities to consent to interview, first by the service provider when the interview was proposed. At the time of the interview, the researcher again sought their consent. This involved informing the survivor about the purpose of the interview, the interview process, the questions that would be covered, the anonymity of their response, and their right to decline to answer any questions or stop the interview. The researcher carried referral information. Survivors were given a small gift (phone top-up cards) to acknowledge their time and potential lost earnings. Those who traveled for the interview were reimbursed for travel costs. All names have been changed in the case studies included in this report.

## **Limitations**

The information in this report has several limitations. First, data on trafficking victims is severely limited in Cambodia. There is no collated database of identified victims, and available figures overlap, making analysis difficult. Second, potential sources of information may have been overlooked. The literature review included only English sources. Although effort was made to interview all relevant stakeholders, not all responded to requests for interviews and others may have been missed.

Responses from key informants could not be properly verified. While the researcher took efforts to probe responses and triangulate findings, service providers may have spoken in a way that showed their organisation in a good light. Despite this potential limitation, respondents did acknowledge a number of challenges and shortcomings, even of their own services. Further, some respondents chose to conduct the interview in the presence of colleagues or family members, which may have limited their willingness to respond honestly.

Finally, this study has regrettably omitted a discussion of survivors' strengths. Many trafficked men demonstrate remarkable resilience and ingenuity in the ways they survive exploitation, support each other and ultimately escape. These character traits may significantly affect (re)integration, and their influence should be considered alongside discussion of survivors' needs. It is the author's oversight that these dynamics have not been explored here.

## Definitions of human trafficking and forced labour

The definition of human trafficking used here is that from the Palermo Protocol:

*"The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs."*<sup>24</sup>

This definition includes three key elements that must be present for a situation to constitute trafficking in persons: (1) action (recruitment, ...); (2) means (threat, ...); and (3) a purpose of exploitation.<sup>25</sup> In the case of child victims, the "means" element is not required.<sup>26</sup> For the following discussion it is worth noting that trafficking does not always require movement, the victim may also be harboured or received. Further, trafficking does not always require the use or threat of physical force, victims may also be deceived, defrauded or controlled as a result of giving or receiving of payments.

Forced labour is a concept closely related to trafficking. The ILO and Asian Research Center for Migration have defined forced labour as:

*"Work for which the person has not entered of his or her own free will and that is exacted under the threat of penalty. This threat of penalty, or coercion, may occur during recruitment and result in the individual being forced to accept a job. Or, it can occur once the person is working as a means of forcing a worker to perform tasks that were not initially agreed upon."*<sup>27</sup>

Some cases of forced labour also constitute trafficking, if the "action" and "means" elements of the trafficking definition are also met. However, forced labour is not always trafficking, for instance if a person works willingly for a time, but later is forced by threat of a penalty to conduct other tasks against their will.

## Definitions of other key terms

**Assistance/(Re)integration assistance-** any support that helps a trafficked person reintegrate into their former community or integrate into a new community.

**Assistance provider/service provider-** organisations that provide one or more services to trafficking victims to help them in their (re)integration. Assistance/service providers may include

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<sup>24</sup>United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, 2000, Article 3a.

<sup>25</sup>UNHCR, *Human rights and trafficking, fact sheet no. 36* (New York, Geneva: United Nations), 3.

<sup>26</sup>United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, 2000, Article 3b, c.

<sup>27</sup> ILO and Asian Research Centre for Migration, 2013, 8.

NGOs, IOs or government, whether specialised to trafficking victims or general. Informal supporters, such as family, may also provide assistance.

**Basic assistance** (also called direct or short-term assistance)- services that address victims' immediate needs immediately following release from trafficking, such as temporary accommodation, travel grants and basic or emergency healthcare.

**Broker-** a person who recruits another person for work, in exchange for a fee from the worker and/or employer.

**Case management-** the process of assessment, planning, facilitation and advocacy for options and services to meet a survivor's individual (re)integration needs. This involves maintaining regular contact with the survivor, routinely monitoring his or her wellbeing, and referring to the appropriate services as and when needed.

**Child-** a person under the age of 18 years.

**Debt bondage-** a situation where a person works to pay off a debt, in which the person's labour does not reduce the debt by a fairly-assessed value of that labour, or when the scale or undefined conditions of the debt prevents the worker from leaving the employment situation.<sup>28</sup>

**Economic empowerment-** trafficked persons equipping themselves with the skills, resources and confidence to economically support themselves and their families and, in the longer term, contribute to the economic well-being of their communities.<sup>29</sup> This may be through self-employment or working for others.

**Fisher-** a person employed or engaged in any capacity or carrying out an occupation on board any fishing vessel, including persons working on board who are paid on the basis of a share of the catch but excluding pilots, naval personnel, other persons in the permanent service of a government, shore-based persons carrying out work aboard a fishing vessel and fisheries observers.<sup>30</sup>

**Long-haul vessels-** any vessel that remains at sea for months or years. In comparison, short-haul vessels are away for shorter periods and fish mainly nearer the coast.

**Identification-** the process of formally determining that someone is a victim of trafficking.

**Irregular migrant-** an individual who migrates from one country to another without the required legal authorisation; or, one who has migrated with legal authorisation but remained after that legal authorisation expired or was terminated.<sup>31</sup>

**Pre-departure recovery assistance-** support services at the trafficking destination, such as counseling, medical assistance, family tracing and help with documentation and travel arrangements in the destination country.

**Recruitment agency-** a company that recruits and places workers in employment.

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<sup>28</sup>Based on definition in ILO and Asian Research Centre for Migration, 2013, 8.

<sup>29</sup>Rebecca Surtees, *Re/Integration of trafficked persons: supporting economic empowerment* (Washington: Nexus Institute, 2012), 11.

<sup>30</sup>ILO, *Work in Fishing Convention*, 2007 (No. 188).

<sup>31</sup>UN-ACT, 2015, xii.

**(Re)integration-** the process of recovery and socio-economic inclusion following a trafficking experience. This may include integration in a new community, or (re)integration in a former community. See discussion on this definition in Part Three below.

**Return/repatriation-** movement from the trafficking destination back to the victim's country of origin.

**Return/repatriation assistance-** support services to help the victim go back to his or her country of origin, such as facilitating documentation, travel, or providing an escort if needed.

**Re-trafficking-** when a trafficked person, after exiting a trafficking situation, is trafficked for an additional time.

**Secondary victims of trafficking-** family members of a trafficked person who have suffered problems that are related to, and caused directly by, the person's trafficking experience.<sup>32</sup>

**Transshipment-** the transfer of supplies or catch between vessels at sea.

**'Victim' versus 'survivor'**– alternative terms to “trafficked person” that are both commonly used in trafficking literature. ‘Victim’ often emphasises a trafficked person's past experience. The term can denote powerlessness but also highlights their right to assistance. ‘Survivor’ emphasises that the trafficked person has made it through their exploitation. Both terms will be used in this report, as well as the term “trafficked person”.

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<sup>32</sup> Surtees, 2013, 16.

## Part One: Trends in trafficking of Cambodian men

Cambodian men are trafficked to a variety of destinations and sectors. However, data to quantify these trends is extremely limited. There is no collated database on the numbers of victims identified, and limited government data. Service providers' datasets do provide an indication of victim numbers, however these datasets provide an incomplete picture, and record many of the same victims. What is clear from available figures is that victims are likely to number in the thousands, but only a few hundred are identified per year.

Previous research on trafficked Cambodian men has focused overwhelmingly on trafficking to fishing vessels, but none of these studies explore the numbers of men affected. Numerous reports describe trafficking of Cambodians to Thai vessels,<sup>33</sup> and two outline trafficking to fishing vessels by Giant Ocean recruitment agency.<sup>34</sup> While a handful of case studies on other sectors are available, there have been no in-depth studies of trafficking of Cambodian males to non-fishing sectors.

Only one study sheds light on prevalence in trafficking of Cambodian men. UNIAP/UN-ACT investigated 'potential trafficking'<sup>35</sup> among Cambodian migrants deported from Thailand between 2009 and 2012.<sup>36</sup> Among the 912 males surveyed, the prevalence of potential trafficking declined from 22.2 per cent in 2009 to 4.4 per cent by 2012.<sup>37</sup> While this decline is encouraging, in 2012, there were over 67,000 males deported through Poipet.<sup>38</sup> Based on the rate identified by UN-ACT, it is possible nearly 3,000 deportees may have been trafficked. This research is only a small window into the extent of trafficking of men. There has been no research into prevalence more recently, or in any other regions to which Cambodian men are trafficked.

In the absence of any collated data on identified victims, the datasets from two key assistance providers give an indication of numbers and profile of the victims they assist.<sup>39</sup> The USAID Counter Trafficking in Persons Program Phase II (CTIP II) assists victims of trafficking and labour exploitation via a number of partners. IOM Cambodia assists with voluntary returns and provides direct assistance upon return to Cambodia. The datasets of these two organisations overlap, as IOM refers many clients to CTIP II partners for subsequent assistance. CTIP II data also includes victims who do not receive IOM's return assistance, for instance males (mostly boys) trafficked for begging in Vietnam who return overland.

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<sup>33</sup> Annuska Derks, "Migrant labour and the politics of immobilisation: Cambodian fishermen in Thailand", *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 38 (2010); LICADHO, LSCW and UNIAP, *Exploitation of Cambodian men at sea, SIREN Series, CB-02* (Bangkok: UNIAP, 2007); UNIAP, 2009. Case studies of Cambodian trafficked fishers are included in Melissa Brennan, *Out of sight, out of mind: Human trafficking and exploitation of migrant fishing boat workers in Thailand* (Washington and Bangkok: Solidarity Centre, 2009), 20; ILO and Asian Research Centre for Migration, 2013, 28-29, 76; André Olivie, *Identifying Cambodian victims of human trafficking among deportees from Thailand* (Bangkok: UNIAP, 2008), p. 11, 18, 23, 31, 41; UNIAP 2010, p. 93. Trafficking of Cambodians is also mentioned in research that focuses on Burmese workers. Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF), *All at Sea. The abuse of human rights aboard illegal fishing vessels* (London: EJF, 2011); EJF, *Sold to the sea – Human trafficking in Thailand's fishing industry* (London: EJF, 2013); EJF, *Slavery at sea: The continued plight of trafficked migrants in Thailand's fishing industry* (London: EJF, 2014); EJF, *Pirates and slaves: How overfishing fuels human trafficking and the plundering of our oceans* (London: EJF, 2015); Phillip Robertson, *Trafficking of fishermen in Thailand*, (Bangkok: IOM, 2011).

<sup>34</sup> LSCW and CTIP II, *Where is the horizon* (Phnom Penh: CTIP II, 2014); Surtees, 2014.

<sup>35</sup> The study defined 'potential trafficking' cases as those respondents who reported to have experienced exploitative working conditions, and who felt cheated and/or deceived. UN-ACT, 2015, 47.

<sup>36</sup> UN-ACT, 2015.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, 48.

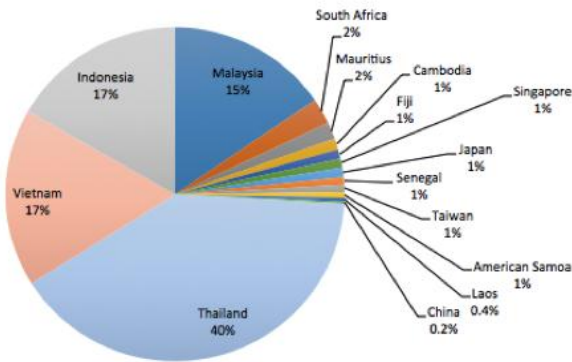
<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, 9.

<sup>39</sup> Note that this data does not government-to-government returns, victims assisted by different NGOs, or victims who return themselves and are never identified, so the actual number of victims is higher.

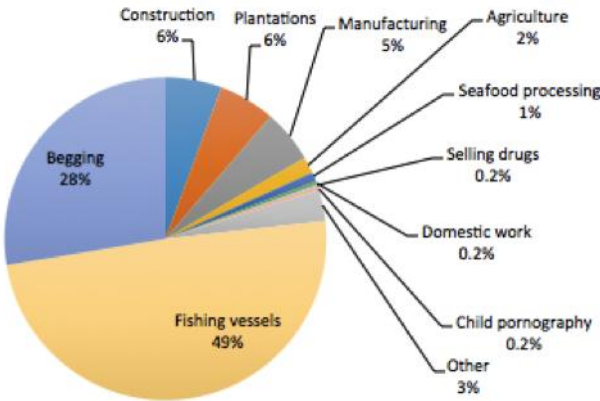


CTIP II assisted 479 trafficked males between 16 October 2011 and 30 December 2014.<sup>40</sup> At least 317 were adults, an average of 99 per year.<sup>41</sup> Males constituted 59 percent of all trafficking victims CTIP II assisted during this time. The programme also supported 78 male victims of labour exploitation. In total, these 557 men and boys were exploited in a variety of countries, as shown in Figure 1, most commonly Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia. Only six were exploited within Cambodia. Figure 2 shows the sectors in which they were exploited, most commonly fishing vessels, begging, or less commonly in construction, plantations, manufacturing or other sectors. Sexual exploitation of male victims was rare, with only two male minors trafficked for sex work.

**Figure 1: Destination countries**  
Victims of trafficking and labour exploitation assisted by CTIP II, Jan 2012-Dec 2014 (n=557)



**Figure 2- Sector of exploitation**  
Victims of trafficking and labour exploitation assisted by CTIP II, Jan 2012-Dec 2014 (n=557)



Data from IOM Cambodia sheds light on identified victims who received voluntary return assistance. Between 2011 and 2014, IOM assisted more than 450 males with voluntary return and direct assistance upon arrival in Cambodia.<sup>42</sup> The vast majority were adults. IOM directly assisted 241 males in 2013 and 2014 alone, of which 58.5 per cent were trafficked to fishing vessels, 12 per cent to agriculture; 17.4 per cent construction, 7.1 percent to factories and 5 per cent to other sectors, for instance begging (Figure 3).<sup>43</sup> Between 2011 and 2014, men aged between 20 and 39 years comprised nearly 90 percent of all victims assisted by IOM.<sup>44</sup>

The above data shows that fishing vessels was the most common destination of trafficked Cambodian males who are identified. Based on CTIP II and IOM data, among men trafficked to fishing vessels specifically, most common destination countries include Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia. Victims have also been rescued from South Africa, Mauritius, Singapore, Senegal, Taiwan, India, Brunei, American Samoa and Fiji. Figure 4 shows destinations of victims trafficked to fishing vessels assisted by CTIP II partners.

<sup>40</sup> Data provided by Winrock International. The programme assisted a total of 814 victims of trafficking, 479 of them males.

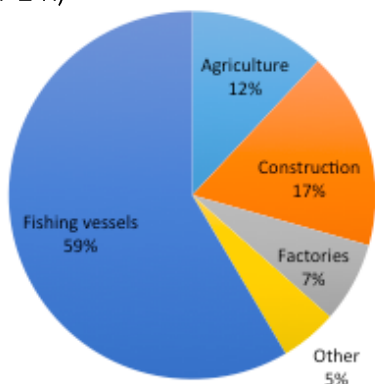
<sup>41</sup> Age is not specified for eight survivors.

<sup>42</sup> Brett Dickson, "Overview of the trafficking situation and IOM direct assistance to victims of trafficking in Cambodia," (presentation at the launch of the Study on Trafficking, Exploitation and Abuse in the Mekong Sub-Region by London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and IOM Cambodia, Intercontinental Hotel, Phnom Penh, 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2014).

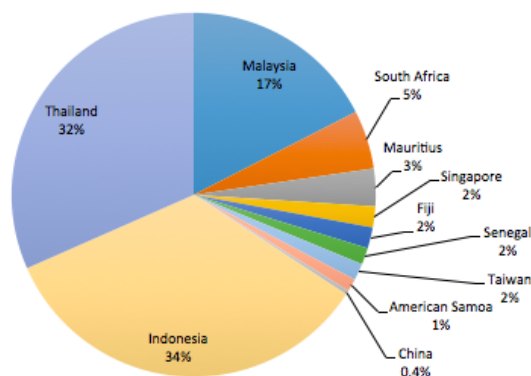
<sup>43</sup> Project data on victims returned and directly assisted by IOM Cambodia.

<sup>44</sup> Dickson, 2014.

**Figure 3- Sector of exploitation** Victims assisted with voluntary return and direct assistance by IOM, 2013 and 2014 (n=241)



**Figure 4- Destination countries of fishers** Victims trafficked to fishing vessels assisted by CTIP II, Jan 2012-Dec 2014 (n=269)



### Box 1: Case studies of trafficking to non-fishing sectors

#### Trafficking to a rice supply boat

Vicheth migrated to Thailand with his cousin's nephew because his family was poor. A broker they met in Poipet trafficked them onto a rice boat carrying rice. On the boat he worked shifting bags of rice, which was taken to the Philippines or India. They took the rice bags from smaller boats. Each bag weighed 25-50kg. Viceth's pay depended on how much he lifted, but when he asked for money the boss said he had not yet worked enough. With a group of workers and a crane, they would lift several tonnes of rice per day. They had breaks during the day but sometimes worked until 2 am, so he didn't have enough time to sleep. He worked in the Thai sea and was transferred several times to other boats that also carried rice.

*"When I went there, I believed I would be working on the land. I was shocked when I saw the big boat and was asked to carry rice. On boat, I got a fever several times. I lied to them that my wife was dead, and so eventually they gave us some money and let us go... They paid us 2300 baht (US\$70) between us for eight months work."*<sup>45</sup>

#### Trafficking to a construction site

"A 49-year old man from Banteay Meanchey migrated to Thailand to work in construction to provide for seven dependents back at home. He left with one broker and another villager. At his work place he was promised a monthly salary of 6,000 baht, but was paid nothing for his three months of work. He was too scared to quit because the employer said he would call the police and put him in jail... He rated his working condition as very poor, but he was free to move around."<sup>46</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Interview with survivor.

<sup>46</sup> UNIAP, 2010, 93.

**Box 2: Case studies of trafficking to non-fishing sectors, continued**

**Trafficking for begging**

A Cambodian male crossed into Thailand with the help of a broker. The individual was told that he would be doing construction work however the broker ordered him to work as a beggar to pay off his recruitment fee. The broker/employer took all the earnings of the individual and would not let him use any of the money to purchase food. The individual lived at the house of the broker/employer, and did not feel free to leave this "job", though he was allowed to take one or two days off a month. After one month he was not given any salary and turned himself into the Thai Police.<sup>47</sup>

**Trafficking for organ removal**

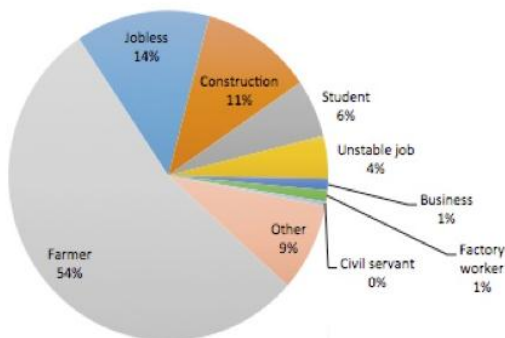
The first known case of trafficking of Cambodians for organ removal came to light in 2014. Over the previous few years, Cambodian brokers persuaded at least five males from Phnom Penh to travel to Bangkok to donate a kidney. The brokers falsified identification documents to enable the transaction. The victims went voluntarily, expecting several thousand dollars payment. However, the victims received less payment than promised. At least one 18-year old victim had health issues after the operation, to the extent he could not work hard and felt exhausted after walking. Three victims filed complaints, and two Cambodian brokers were charged.<sup>48</sup>

**Profile of victims**

Prior to migration, the majority of adult trafficked men were farmers, construction workers, unemployed or in unstable employment. Figure 5 shows former employment for the 265 fishers assisted by CTIP II.<sup>49</sup> Figure 6 shows former employment of all exploited males assisted by this programme.

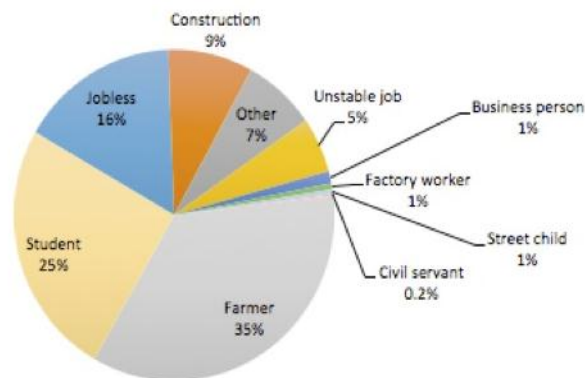
**Figure 5- Job before migration**

Victims exploited on fishing vessels assisted by CTIP II, Jan 2012-Dec 2014 (n=265)



**Figure 6- Job before migration**

Victims assisted by CTIP II (all sectors) Jan 2012-Dec 2014 (n=503)



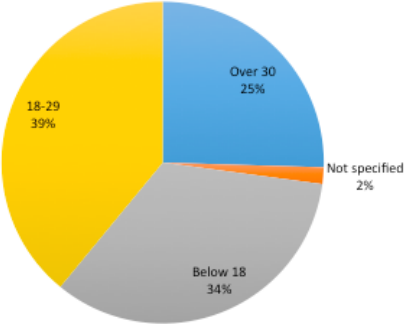
<sup>47</sup> Olivie, 2008, 41.

<sup>48</sup> Jon Fernquest, "Cambodia-Thai kidney trafficking sparks fears of new organ market," *Bangkok Post*, 27 October 2014; Kim Sarom and Alice Cuddy, "Organ traffickers' busted," *Phnom Penh Post*, 3 July 2014; DPA, "Cambodian denies trafficking organs to Thailand," *Bangkok Post*, 11 March, 2015. Note: Trafficking for organ removal has distinct differences from trafficking for labour exploitation. Further analysis of this phenomenon is outside the scope of this study.

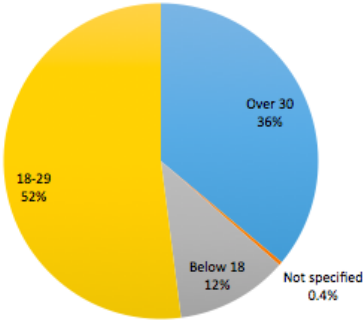
<sup>49</sup> Data on previous employment was not available for all victims.

Most victims identified are aged in their 20s or 30s, but a large number of minors and some older victims are also trafficked. Figures 7 to 9 show the ages of male victims when they are connected to these organisations. Of all 479 victims assisted by CTIP II, roughly two thirds were adults. Of victims trafficked to fishing vessels specifically, the majority identified are between 20 and 39. Minors and victims in their 50s and 60s have also been identified.

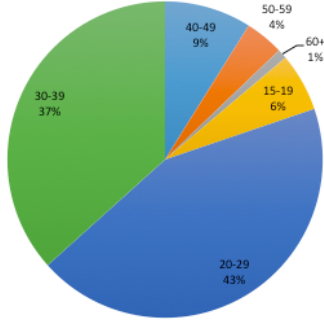
**Figure 7- Age profile**  
Victims of trafficking (all sectors) assisted by CTIP II, Jan 2012-Dec 2014 (n=479)



**Figure 8- Age profile**  
Victims trafficked to fishing vessels assisted by CTIP II, Jan 2012-Dec 2014 (n=269)



**Figure 9- Age profile**, victims trafficked to fishing vessels assisted by IOM 2011-2014



The majority of trafficked men have not passed primary school education. Of 219 adult male victims interviewed by LSHTM and IOM, three quarters or more had received primary education, or no schooling.<sup>50</sup> Many are illiterate. Some adult victims are single and some married, but they invariably have responsibility to provide financially for other family members. Of particular note is that victims are highly transient, commonly migrating to other provinces or across the border to find work. Some have migrated and returned multiple times. Some have even been trafficked multiple times.

### Provinces of origin

The following maps and tables show victims provinces of origin based on available data. Interestingly, many victims are geographically ‘clumped’ near other victims. For instance, of the 93 trafficked fishermen assisted by IOM in 2014, more than 50 are in the same village as at least one other victim returned in 2014.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup>Zimmerman et al., 2014.

<sup>51</sup> Author’s analysis of data provided by IOM Cambodia.

Table 1: Origin provinces of male victims			
	Victims of trafficking and labour exploitation assisted by CTIP II, Jan 2012-Dec 2014 (n=550)	Victims trafficked to fishing vessels, assisted by CTIP II, Jan 2012-Dec 2014 (n=269)	Victims trafficked to fishing vessels assisted by IOM in 2014 (n=93)
Banteay Meanchey	44	8	12
Battambang	36	21	11
Kampong Cham	70	48	7
Kampong Chhnang	10	5	0
Kampong Speu	20	15	10
Kampong Thom	45	33	2
Kampot	27	14	0
Kandal	9	1	2
Kep	0	0	0
Koh Kong	4	1	0
Kratie	7	7	0
Mondul Kiri	0	0	0
Oddar Meanchey	30	24	1
Pailin	0	0	0
Phnom Penh	17	10	1
Preah Sihanouk	3	0	1
Preah Vihear	6	6	0
Prey Veng	29	18	6
Pursat	32	4	3
Ratanak Kiri	1	1	0
Siem Reap	43	35	20
Stung Treng	0	0	1
Svay Rieng	101	5	11
Takeo	16	13	4
Thboung Khmom (part of Kampong Cham until 31 December 2013)	-	-	1









## Context of trafficking: Labour migration and vulnerability factors

Trafficking of Cambodian men usually occurs when workers migrate willingly, and become deceived or coerced at some later point in their journey. Each year several hundred thousand Cambodians migrate for work, most commonly to Thailand. Between July and October 2014, more than 700,000 Cambodians registered with the Thai authorities, and many more work unregistered.<sup>52</sup> The majority of migration occurs between April and August, between the end of rice planting and the beginning of the harvest.<sup>53</sup>

Most Cambodians migrate due to the wage differential between Cambodia and destination countries or the lack of employment opportunities in Cambodia.<sup>54</sup> A 2012 survey found that male agriculture workers in Cambodia's rural areas earned on average nearly 460,000 riel (US\$115) per month.<sup>55</sup> In contrast, Thailand's minimum wage is approximately US\$279 per month, although many migrants do not receive this minimum.<sup>56</sup> In 2012, males deported from Thailand earned on average 3,606 baht per month (US\$110),<sup>57</sup> or 5,643 baht (US\$174) for work on fishing vessels.<sup>58</sup> Men trafficked to fishing vessels have migrated for promised salaries of US\$130-200 per month.<sup>59</sup>

Migration is a viable livelihood option used to increase or diversify family incomes. However, migrants can become vulnerable to trafficking for a number of reasons. First, while some workers migrate simply to improve their financial situation, many are driven to escape desperate economic situations.<sup>60</sup> A rapid assessment of 667 returned migrants by IOM Cambodia in 2014 found that migrants' average pre-migration income was US\$2.50 per day.<sup>61</sup> Forty per cent had migrated to pay off debt for basic needs and healthcare, and two-thirds due to lack of a job or income.<sup>62</sup> There is no social security system in Cambodia, and job opportunities have not kept pace with entrants to the workforce.<sup>63</sup> Land confiscations or environmental factors also contribute to poverty and unemployment, for instance as one assistance provider observed:

*"This year there was a drought. Most rice crops failed and some families were down to two days food stock. Undocumented migration is likely to spike this year: villages that usually have a population of 250 already have a population of twelve."*

Given these dire financial circumstances, migrants often have no choice other than to 'gamble' their own wellbeing and accept risky or exploitative employment. As one survivor described: *"I wanted to make more money to support my family, as result I was cheated. We did not have*

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<sup>52</sup>Data from Thailand Office of Foreign Workers Administration, Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour, in IOM, "Migrant information note," Issue 25, December 2014, 4.

<sup>53</sup>UN-ACT, 2015, 19.

<sup>54</sup>ILO and Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT), *Labour migration policy and action plan for Cambodia, 2015-2018. Draft version*, November 14, 2014, 12; Community Legal Education Centre, *The risk of movement: migration in Cambodia 2013*, (Phnom Penh: CLEC, 2014), 4; Mekong Migration Network, *The precarious status of migrants in Thailand: Reflections on the exodus of Cambodian migrants and lessons learnt*, (Phnom Penh: Mekong Migration Network, 2014), 4.

<sup>55</sup>Ministry of Planning, National Institute of Statistics and International Labour Organisation, *Cambodia labour force and child labour survey 2012: Labour force report* (Phnom Penh: ILO, 2013), 60.

<sup>56</sup>ILO and MoLVT, 2014, 13.

<sup>57</sup>UN-ACT, 2015, 28.

<sup>58</sup>*ibid*, 29.

<sup>59</sup>Interviews with returnees from Thailand, and documentation of Giant Ocean cases. LSCW and CTIP II, 2014; Surtees, 2014, 70. Some have migrated for promised salaries of less than US\$100 per month. UNIAP 2009, 4.

<sup>60</sup>In 2012 survey of deportees from Thailand, 46 percent of males reported that their life in Cambodia had been fine or good before migrating. UN-ACT, 2015, 16.

<sup>61</sup>Dickson, 2014.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid*.

<sup>63</sup>UNACT, 2015, 4.

*enough food to eat every day.*<sup>64</sup> Poverty is therefore a leading factor that renders men susceptible to trafficking.

Secondly, migrants are vulnerable to trafficking because of a lack of access to safe and regular migration channels. Service providers describe Cambodia's migration system as "broken": migrants cannot easily obtain travel documents and recruitment and travel is largely unregulated. As a result, migrants travel unprotected. The Cambodian system for obtaining a passport has been one of the most costly, complicated and slow processes in the region.<sup>65</sup> Until 2014, obtaining a Cambodian passport cost US\$135, took 52 days and required the applicant to travel to Phnom Penh.<sup>66</sup> Even after changes in 2014, the process remains difficult, and other travel documents are also hard to obtain.<sup>67</sup> Meanwhile, Thailand has offered periods of a 'one stop' registration service for undocumented migrants already in the country. Up to 80 percent of Cambodians therefore migrate without documentation.<sup>68</sup> These migrants may register after arrival in Thailand, or not at all.

The lack of access to regular migration channels means that many migrants use brokers to help them cross the border or to obtain employment. In one 2012 study of Cambodian migrants, 62 percent of males used a broker to get to the Thai border, and 64 percent to get to their employment.<sup>69</sup> The role brokers play can be positive, for instance assisting migrants to find higher paying employment.<sup>70</sup> However, migrants using brokers may also be deceived, or take on debt that can later bond them to an employer. Workers' lack of documentation also puts them at risk of arrest and deportation. This limits their ability to seek help from authorities, for fear of arrest.

There are also a number of miscellaneous reasons why migrants may be vulnerable to trafficking. These reasons include a lack of education, lack of knowledge about the destination, or a disability. Gender factors may also contribute, as discussed below. All these vulnerability factors must be addressed in the (re)integration process.

*"I told the other villagers: 'Do not go to Thailand'. But those people didn't listen. ...they said they are illiterate and there are no jobs for us here, so they still moved to Thailand."*

*-Survivor*

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<sup>64</sup> Survivor interviewed by Surtees, 2014, 58.

<sup>65</sup> CLEC, 2013, 25.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>67</sup> The vast majority of migrants choose to migrate to Thailand undocumented and register on arrival. Between June and October 2014, 739,000 Cambodians had registered with Thai authorities; in contrast only 91,000 had come through the formal MOU process with a valid work permit. Thailand Office of Foreign Workers Administration, in IOM, 2014, 4.

<sup>68</sup> Dickson, 2014; Mekong Migration Network, 2014, 40.

<sup>69</sup> UN-ACT, 2015, 20.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 29, 52.

## Trafficking to fishing vessels

### Box 3: High profile cases of Cambodians trafficked via Thailand

- In 2007, a group of 11 migrants from Kandal were recruited via Songkhla to a Thai vessel where they worked 22 hour days, suffered physical and verbal abuse and were denied medical treatment. They escaped by sabotaging the vessel's engine to return to shore.
- Between June 2007 and Dec 2008 various agencies repatriated 49 Cambodians who had endured inhumane working conditions and physical abuse aboard "virtual prisons".
- In May 2010, high profile trafficking victim Prum Vannak was finally repatriated after boarding a fishing vessel in 2006. He escaped in Malaysia, and was then forced to work on a palm oil plantation and imprisoned.
- In June 2011, seven Cambodians were rescued in Malaysia. They had escaped horrific conditions aboard a Thai vessel by swimming to shore, only to be used as cheap labour at a factory on land.
- In September 2014, seven Cambodians were released from prison in Brunei after illegally entering Brunei waters at the request of their Thai captain.<sup>71</sup>

Among the Cambodian trafficked men identified to date, the majority has been trafficked to the regional fishing industry. These trends are therefore given particular attention in this report. The largest trend is via Thailand, where the fishing industry has suffered a labour shortage and is mostly staffed by migrant workers. While Cambodian migrants work aboard both short- and long-haul vessels, most trafficking occurs on long-haul vessels going to foreign waters, as these boats are offshore for longer periods, providing fewer opportunities for escape.<sup>72</sup>

One exception to this trend is the case of Giant Ocean International Fishery Co. Ltd (Giant Ocean), a Cambodian and Taiwanese-owned private recruitment agency that sent an estimated 700 Cambodians to vessels all over the world.<sup>73</sup> Giant Ocean was licensed in Cambodia in July 2010 to recruit to non-fishing sectors. However, acting in violation of this license, the agency (and two other agencies acting as fronts for Giant Ocean)<sup>74</sup> sent Cambodians to numerous countries to work on fishing vessels, flying the recruits from Phnom Penh airport to various port cities.<sup>75</sup>

By early 2012 there were a growing number of Giant Ocean victims and their families contacting Cambodian NGOs from ports as far away as South Africa, Senegal, Fiji and Mauritius.<sup>76</sup> They men reported working unpaid or underpaid in highly abusive conditions, some for up to 22 months. Service providers estimate that by 2013, more than 200 had returned. A coalition of NGOs represented over one hundred victims to bring a legal case.<sup>77</sup> The court delivered the verdict in April 2014, and six people were sentenced to 10 years imprisonment and ordered to pay unpaid

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<sup>71</sup>In the order listed, these cases are outlined in: LICADHO, LSCW and UNIAP, 2007; UNIAP, 2009; LICADHO, *Human Rights 2012: The year in review* (Phnom Penh: LICADHO, 2013), 15; David Boyle and Buth Reaksmeay Kongkea, "Hell on the high seas", *Phnom Penh Post*, 20 June 2011; Sen David, "Trapped fishermen returned," *Phnom Penh Post*, 9 September 2014.

<sup>72</sup>Robertson, 2011, 9.

<sup>73</sup>700 is a police estimate. This case is documented in Surtees, 2014 and LSCW and CTIP II, 2014.

<sup>74</sup>Phoenix International Co. Ltd and Hao Yuen International Co. Ltd. LSCW and CTIP II, 2014, 2.

<sup>75</sup> LSCW and CTIP II, 2014; Surtees, 2014.

<sup>76</sup> LSCW and CTIP II, 2.

<sup>77</sup> Khuon Narim, "Court charges woman with trafficking Cambodians to Africa," *Cambodia Daily*, 13 May 2013.

wages plus compensation to the victims. As of January 2015, this verdict is being appealed. Victims have yet to receive compensation. As recently as February 2014, one further victim contacted a Cambodian NGO, seeking assistance to return from South Africa.<sup>78</sup> No participants interviewed for this study knew of anyone actively searching for the hundreds of persons that remain unaccounted for.

## Estimating prevalence of trafficking of Cambodians to fishing vessels

Based on IOM and CTIP II data, between 2010 and 2014, more than 300 trafficked Cambodian fishers were identified (including Giant Ocean victims). Many more are never identified. There are no studies that reliably estimate the extent of trafficking to the fishing industry at large. However, two studies that do shed light on this topic suggest that victims are likely to number in the thousands.

First, the study by UN-ACT that investigated rates of ‘potential trafficking’ among Cambodian deportees from Thailand provides information about the trends among fishers.<sup>79</sup> While overall, the prevalence of potential trafficking declined over the survey period,<sup>80</sup> among deportees who had worked on fishing boats, the rate did not decline. In each year of the survey, the deported fishers who were potential victims of trafficking numbered more than one in five.<sup>81</sup>

Second, a study by the International Labour Organisation and Asian Research Center for Migration estimated the rate of forced labour on Thai fishing vessels.<sup>82</sup> In 2012, researchers surveyed 241 Cambodians working on Thai fishing vessels. Only one Cambodian initially entered the industry against his will, however 22 (nine percent) eventually found themselves working against their will.<sup>83</sup> This estimate of forced labour is conservative, as most respondents worked on short-haul vessels. Among long-haul fishers of all nationalities, nearly 25 per cent were subject to forced labour.<sup>84</sup>

The findings from the above studies cannot be extrapolated to the industry as a whole. However, to gauge the possible extent of trafficking it is useful to estimate the total population of Cambodian fishers. Between June and October 2014, 22,355 Cambodian fishers formally registered in Thailand,<sup>85</sup> though it is likely thousands more work unregistered.<sup>86</sup> In 2013, the ILO estimated that Cambodians comprised 40 per cent of fishers across four selected Thai ports.<sup>87</sup> Estimates of the total population of fishers on Thai vessels range from 100,000 to 143,000.<sup>88</sup> Given there are tens of thousands of Cambodian fishers, and the findings of the above studies, it is likely that several thousand may be victims of trafficking.

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<sup>78</sup> Discussion with service provider, 25 February 2015.

<sup>79</sup> UN-ACT, 2015. The study defined ‘potential trafficking’ cases as those respondents who reported to have experienced exploitative working conditions, and who felt cheated and/or deceived (p. 47).

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, 48.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, 49.

<sup>82</sup> ILO and Asian Research Centre for Migration, 2013. There is a close relationship between forced labour and trafficking. See Definitions section above.

<sup>83</sup> This compared with 26 per cent of respondents from Myanmar, and 17 per cent of respondents overall. ILO and Asian Research Centre for Migration, 2013, 68.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, 71.

<sup>85</sup> Data from ILO, Bangkok. A total of 53,594 migrant fishers registered in that period.

<sup>86</sup> See the estimates of registered versus unregistered populations in Table 1.2, ILO, 2013, 5.

<sup>87</sup> “The workers were sampled in proportion to size of the total population by nationality in the occupation.” ILO and Asian Research Centre for Migration, 2013, 5.

<sup>88</sup> See discussion in ILO and Asian Research Centre for Migration, 2013, p. 4-5.

There are also an unknown number of Cambodian fishers working on non-Thai vessels, a trend which has not been explored in this study.

## Trafficking of minors to fishing vessels

While this study focuses on adults, minors are also trafficked to fishing vessels. Between 2012 and 2014, CTIP II assisted 31 minors who had been trafficked to the fishing industry, 12 percent of all trafficked fishers they assisted. Identified victims have been as young as 14 or 15 when trafficked.<sup>89</sup>

Two studies have explored child labour on fishing vessels in Thailand (though not necessarily trafficking). In a 2012 survey of vessel operators and owners, nearly two thirds considered child labour to be a problem.<sup>90</sup> In the ILO and Asian Research Centre for Migration survey of 241 Cambodian fishers, nine (3.7 per cent) were aged below 18 years. Of these, two were below 15 years, constituting child labour under Thai Law.<sup>91</sup>

## Recruitment

Recruitment of Cambodians to fishing vessels occurs through irregular channels. The vast majority of Cambodian fishers in Thailand therefore work without documentation, as many as 98 per cent.<sup>92</sup> While the Cambodian Government has not officially banned private recruitment agencies from recruiting for fishing vessels, various ministries, such as the Ministry of Labour,<sup>93</sup> have issued various statements saying that it will not license agencies to do so.<sup>94</sup> To date, Giant Ocean and two other agencies believed to have recruited on its behalf<sup>95</sup> are the only agencies known to have recruited to fishing vessels.

Recruitment for vessels in Thailand occurs in three ways:<sup>96</sup>

- 1) via one or more brokers in Cambodia and/or Thailand, who charge workers a fee, paid upfront or out of wages;
- 2) via brokers with *employers* bearing the recruitment costs; or
- 3) workers migrate and/or find work by themselves, or by friends or acquaintances.

Among the general population of Cambodian fishers in Thailand, most are recruited *without* the use of brokers.<sup>97</sup> More than half migrate alone or with friends. In contrast, cases of *trafficking* to Thai fishing vessels usually involve recruitment by brokers.<sup>98</sup> While some victims make their own way to the vessel, or are physically abducted (discussed below), these cases are less common.

*“No one ever told me that if you go to work on a boat with a broker, you will be there for months or years. They just told me: ‘Now you are on the boat you will regret it’.” -Survivor*

<sup>89</sup> In September 2014, a 16-year-old victim of trafficking was repatriated, apparently after two years at sea. David, 2014. UNIAP, 2009, also documents cases of 15 year olds trafficked to fishing vessels.

<sup>90</sup> Key findings of this survey are summarised in ILO and Asian Research Centre for Migration, 2013, 105.

<sup>91</sup> ILO and Asian Research Centre for Migration, 2013, 38-39.

<sup>92</sup> *ibid*, 36.

<sup>93</sup> Conversation with service provider.

<sup>94</sup> LSCW and CTIP II, 2014, 2.

<sup>95</sup> Phoenix International Co., Ltd. and Hao Yuen International Co., Ltd are believed to have also recruited Cambodians to fishing vessels as agents for Giant Ocean. LSCW and CTIP II, 2.

<sup>96</sup> ILO and Asian Research Centre for Migration, 2013, 49.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid*, 48.

<sup>98</sup> Based on observations of service providers, conversations with survivors and the survivor case studies publically available.



The recruitment of Cambodians typically follows the pattern outlined in various studies focused on Burmese trafficked fishers.<sup>99</sup> Typically, the migrant will be recruited by the broker in his home village, on route to the Thai border, or after crossing onto the Thai side. The broker pays some or all of the migration costs, and charges a fee ranging from 2000-20,000 baht, with the migrant usually becoming indebted to the broker in this process. The broker may pass the migrant on to another broker, or deliver them to an employer, who pays the broker a ‘finder’s fee’. Finder’s fees range from less than 1,000 baht (US\$34) to up to 50,000 baht (US\$1,700) per worker.<sup>100</sup> Interpreting this transaction is complex, as fees for finding employees or down payments for labour are a regular part of the recruitment business. However, some survivors perceive this transaction differently. Survivors interviewed for this study described being ‘sold’ for 10,000 and 20,000 baht (US\$306 and \$612).

According to a survey of employers, as many as half of employers charge some or all of the finder’s fee to the worker, which the worker may have to pay off slowly out of their wages, along with any other debts passed on from their fees to the broker.<sup>101</sup> This situation constitutes debt bondage if the debt prevents the worker being able to leave an exploitative situation. Debt bondage is therefore extremely common among trafficked migrants and others recruited via brokers.<sup>102</sup>

*“One day in Thailand I met a broker who persuaded me to work on a boat, he said I could earn 10,000 baht. ... When I arrived at the port I saw 26 Khmer people on board, so I felt ok about it. However, when we were in the middle of the sea, the Thai people told us we had each been sold for 10,000 baht. If we had been near the port I would have jumped overboard to escape. But we were already in the sea, so I could not escape... They told me that if I worked slowly it wouldn’t be enough to repay the debt that they paid to the seller. They had paid the broker 10,000 baht for my labour for three years.”*

*“In Maha Chai [province] I was cheated. I was sold for 20,000 baht (approx. US\$613), along with my brother and cousin. We worked on a fishing vessel for more than one and a half years.”*

There are exceptions to the pattern described above. For instance, one survivor described making his own way to a fishing vessel, which he chose because Cambodians told him it paid better than other boats. Only after the captain refused to pay him did he realize he had been

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<sup>99</sup> See for instance Robertson, 2011, 19-20; Labour Rights Promotion Network and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, *Estimating labour trafficking: A study of Burmese migrant workers in Samut Sakhon, Thailand* (Bangkok: UNIAP, 2011), 6; Environmental Justice Foundation, *All at sea. The abuse of human rights aboard illegal fishing vessels* (London: EJF, 2010).

<sup>100</sup> Key findings of a 2012 survey of members of the National Fisheries Association of Thailand, summarised in ILO and Asian Research Centre for Migration, 2013, 103.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Several studies document rates of debt bondage among Cambodian fishers in Thailand. Of the 241 Cambodians surveyed by ILO, 15.3 percent took a loan to pay broker fees, half of which loaned from their employer which potentially exposes them to debt bondage. ILO and Asian Research Centre for Migration, 2013, 49. In a survey of deportees, 15 out of 48 fishers (31.3 percent) reported deductions from their wages for broker fees. UNIAP, 2010, 92.

trafficked. Cases of kidnapping have also occurred.<sup>103</sup> There have also been at least two cases of workers being drugged unconscious and waking up on fishing vessels.<sup>104</sup>

## Conditions for trafficked men aboard fishing vessels

*“Living on the boat was like facing death. Work was irregular; sometimes we worked non-stop three days in a row. If we could have just one hour off we would be happy. Some people were so weak they fainted. The Cambodians helped each other by coining (a practice of rubbing coins along the skin which is believed to have health benefits). There was only paracetamol for any kind of illness, for dizziness or anything else! There were no days off. Sometimes they would let you do light work, but that was not that different from heavy work, you were still outside under the rain. If we didn’t work well, they cursed and swore at us, sometimes beat us.”*

*“Some people are beaten until they lose consciousness and until they have mental problems. The equipment on the boat is dangerous; some were injured and lost hands or legs. One of my co-workers died so they burned the body on an Indonesian island. I suspect the man was beaten and drowned. The Thai captain had a gun, that’s how they could guard the people. No one could leave the boat.”*

There are a number of reports that outline the conditions faced by trafficked Cambodian fishers.<sup>105</sup> Returned Cambodian fishers commonly describe working up to 20-hour days, seven days a week.<sup>106</sup> Some reported sometimes working up to three days and nights straight.<sup>107</sup> The 219 fishers interviewed by LSHTM and IOM worked on average 19.5 hours per day.<sup>108</sup> Sixteen fishers reported having been force-fed drugs in order to work harder. Fatigue causes accidents, as fishers are exposed to severe occupational hazards. LSHTM and IOM found that injuries occur frequently, most commonly cuts or back or neck injuries, and medical care is seldom provided. Thirty per cent of fishermen reported needing medical care during trafficking. Six fishers had lost body parts, and received no medical attention.

*“I was the one who got sick often. I had stomachache and asked to go home, but they did not let me. I had stomachache most of the time. The only medications they had were paracetamol and antacil (a Thai stomach medicine). These did not work on my stomach. When I was sick they accused me of being lazy.”*

*“Everyone was sick on the boat, because of the lack of sanitation, and because we didn’t eat enough cooked food. Our food was mostly raw, including crabs, shrimp and prawns.”*

Fishers also describe harsh living conditions. In one case, fishers reported they had only one small barrel of water for five to ten workers and it was not sufficient.<sup>109</sup> Most fishers experience

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<sup>103</sup>For instance, one Cambodian was abducted from a karaoke bar in Thailand and forced to work on a fishing vessel (email correspondence with a service provider).

<sup>104</sup>In one case, migrants were fed food laced with some form of drug (conversation with a survivor). In another case, migrants went out drinking with a broker, blacked out and awoke on a fishing vessel. Sek Odom, “Indonesia rescues 17 Cambodians from Thai boats,” *Cambodia Daily*, 19 February 2015.

<sup>105</sup>See footnotes 33-34 above.

<sup>106</sup>Surtees, 2014, 20. Giant Ocean victims generally worked a minimum of 18 hours a day. Many worked longer than 20 hours per day.

<sup>107</sup>ILO and Asian Research Centre for Migration, 2013.

<sup>108</sup>Zimmerman et al., 2014.

<sup>109</sup>ILO and Asian Research Centre for Migration, 2013, 76.



overexposure to sunlight or rain, sleeping in overcrowded rooms, no clean clothing, poor hygiene and inadequate food and water.<sup>110</sup> Fishers also commonly experience psychological abuse,<sup>111</sup> for instance threats to themselves or their families and withheld wages. Freedom of movement is restricted by virtue of being on a vessel.

Physical abuse is common, having been reported by 65.3 per cent of fishers interviewed by LSHTM and IOM.<sup>112</sup> Sexual violence is less common, reported by four fishermen (1.8 per cent) in that study. According to NGOs, it is common for captains to have a gun and threaten violence or other punishment. Some fishers report being tortured or electrocuted for trying to escape. One fisher described the boat owner shooting at crew members just for fun: *“If somebody got hit, there was no medicine to treat them and he’d just throw them in the water.”*<sup>113</sup> In a 2009 report based on testimonies of 49 survivors, 59 per cent reported witnessing a murder by the boat captain.<sup>114</sup>

*“The captain was in charge of beating people. People had to do whatever he told them. For the first three days I wasn’t allowed to sleep. They didn’t give us food, so I stole rice. The Khmer people helped each other by stealing food.” –Survivor*

Fishers are prevented from leaving their vessel by violence, threats, debt or withheld wages, confiscated documents and prolonged distance from shore. Vessels can avoid returning to shore by transshipping<sup>115</sup> catch and supplies at sea, minimizing escape opportunities. Vessels may also transfer crew between boats.<sup>116</sup> As survivors described:

*“We seldom went back to land, sometimes every three months or six months. The captains were worried that if we docked the workers would run away. If they caught [workers trying to escape], they would break their leg or arms or sometimes kill them, or, they would... sell them to a new boat.”*

*“We never went to shore, not in two years and five months at sea. We transshipped supplies every three to five months... After more than one year we started to pray for help, for the boat to be arrested by the police. We also threw rice bags into the water so we would run out of food and be forced to go to the port.”<sup>117</sup>*

Victims are usually grossly under paid, if paid at all, but may forego opportunities to escape in the hope of receiving wages. *“My boss did not give me my salary and he asked me to wait for next month, again and again...”*<sup>118</sup> Others remain trapped due to debt, or fear of arrest on land.

Fishers may endure these conditions for months or even years. According to LSHTM and IOM, the median number of days that Cambodian fishers spent in the trafficking situation was 639.8 (one year and nine months).<sup>119</sup> Nearly fifty per cent (109 fishers) had been in the trafficking

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<sup>110</sup>Zimmerman et al., 2014.

<sup>111</sup>“Psychological abuse might include threats of violence against the individual or their family, humiliation, threat of non-payment or the threat of arrest (for illegal status and/or work in the country).” Rebecca Surtees, *Trafficking of men, a trend less considered. The case of Belarus and Ukraine* (Geneva: IOM, 2008): 70.

<sup>112</sup>Zimmerman et al., 2014.

<sup>113</sup>David Boyle and Buth Reaksmeay Kongkea, “Hell on the High Seas”, *Phnom Penh Post*, 20 June 2011.

<sup>114</sup>UNIAP, 2009.

<sup>115</sup> Transshipment refers to the transfer of supplies or catch between vessels at sea.

<sup>116</sup> For instance three of 241 Cambodian fishers reported they had been sold or transferred against their will. ILO and Asian Research Centre for Migration, 2013, 61.

<sup>117</sup> This boat was eventually arrested in Mauritius.

<sup>118</sup> A 21 year old victim from Prey Veng, quoted in UNIAP 2009, p. 3.

<sup>119</sup>Zimmerman et al., 2014.

situation longer than two years. In that study, the longest reported time in the trafficking situation was more than ten years.

## Escape and repatriation

Victims escape in a variety of ways. Some swim to shore or escape when the vessel docks. Others have sabotaged their vessel to return to shore,<sup>120</sup> or escaped when docked due to a tsunami warning.<sup>121</sup> Very few trafficked fishers are rescued directly from the vessels, although this occasionally occurs.<sup>122</sup> Some vessels are intercepted for fishing illegally, which provides an opportunity for escape.

Escape is not the end of challenges for victims. Some who are not identified or assisted risk further exploitation in the destination country (see Box 5 below), or on route home. For instance, victims who escaped in Malaysia have been forced to work in factories,<sup>123</sup> or on plantations.<sup>124</sup> One victim in Thailand had to beg on the streets until he found help.<sup>125</sup>

It is extremely common for victims to spend time in detention, whether or not they are identified. Forty-five per cent of Cambodian fishers interviewed by LSHTM and IOM spent some time in detention.<sup>126</sup> Child victims have also been detained in Malaysia.<sup>127</sup> Victims may be detained because they are not identified as victims, and mistaken for illegal immigrants. Alternatively, they may be detained while waiting for consulates to process their paperwork. In Malaysia or Indonesia, processing can take months or in some cases over a year. Conditions can be extremely poor in detention centres, with survivors describing insufficient food, crowded conditions, and beatings from guards (see Box 4 below).<sup>128</sup> Time spent in detention may therefore exacerbate health and mental health problems.

Victims may also face ongoing threats from their traffickers. One victim of Giant Ocean received some assistance from authorities, but had to remain on the vessel on which he was trafficked for 40 days, awaiting return home.<sup>129</sup> One victim who escaped in Indonesia was accommodated by an NGO for several months, during which time the boat owner came to find him “many times”.<sup>130</sup>

While the present study does not focus on assistance in the destination country, it is clear that there is an urgent need to help victims avoid detention and return home quickly, to minimise their exposure to potentially traumatic situations.

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<sup>120</sup> LICADHO, LSCW and UNIAP, 2007.

<sup>121</sup> Olivie, 2008, 31.

<sup>122</sup> An exception to this is a group who managed to contact a Cambodian NGO when their vessel docked in a Malaysian port; authorities then rescued them. Laignee Barron and Sen David, “Fishermen repatriated after ordeal,” *Phnom Penh Post*, 19 January 2015.

<sup>123</sup> Boyle and Kongkea, 2011.

<sup>124</sup> LICADHO, 2013, 15.

<sup>125</sup> ILO and Asian Research Centre for Migration, 2013, 28-29.

<sup>126</sup> Zimmerman et al., 2014.

<sup>127</sup> Data provided by London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and IOM Cambodia.

<sup>128</sup> These experiences are consistent with research into detention centres in Malaysia. See Amnesty International, *There is a way out: Stop the abuse of migrants detained in Malaysia* (London: Amnesty International, 2010); Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants, *Prisoners in a foreign land: Migrant workers in jail* (Hong Kong: Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants, APMM Company Limited, 2012).

<sup>129</sup> Surtees, 2014, 120.

<sup>130</sup> Conversation with a survivor.

#### **Box 4: Eight months in a Malaysian detention centre**

After being forced to work nine months on a fishing vessel Sophal ended up in Malaysia. He escaped when authorities arrested the boat for fishing illegally. After working for some time in Malaysia, he met a Cambodian who lent him his phone to call his family. The family contacted an assistance organisation. However once the Malaysian authorities found out he had immigrated illegally, he was put in a detention centre. He stayed there eight months.

During this time he went to court several times. He believes the court process was corrupt, that if the organization had paid money, he would be released sooner. In the detention centre there was not enough food. There was no mosquito net or blanket, and he had only one set of clothes. He stayed in a room twelve by four metres, shared with 40 other people. He was with four other Cambodians, and many people of different nationalities. On one occasion, prison guards beat their group. *“It was not our fault, it was another group being loud, but they beat us anyway.”*

*“I was told I would be treated well at this centre, but when I arrived it was different. I always asked the guard ‘When will the letter from Cambodia arrive?’ I felt hopeless in the prison and thought I would never get out. I thought, did the organization forget about me? Because why did it take so long? Why eight months?”*

Finally, the documentation arrived and he was allowed to return home. Altogether he was away roughly two years: nine months on the boat, about six months working in Malaysia and then eight months in detention.

*“I want to say to NGOs: Consider possibilities for those who are detained. Please free them as soon as you can so they do not suffer like I experienced.”*

#### **Box 5: Exploitation after escape**

Reach spent eight months trapped on a fishing vessel, then escaped when the boat docked on a Malaysian island. He and two co-workers hid in the jungle for five days. When he found his way back to the port area, he met a Malaysian broker. Although the men felt like the broker would cheat them, they had no other options but to accept his work offer.

Reach and one co-worker worked at a farm that made cooking oil. At this job he was not paid. One time the police visited, and the boss asked all the workers to hide in the jungle. After running away from this boss, he went to a new workplace where he cleared grass, then to a wood farm, then to a different boss who organized collecting rubbish. Altogether he worked in Malaysia three or four months. He didn't know how to return home to Cambodia, and had to work or he would have nothing to eat.

Eventually he met Cambodians who gave him the number of the Cambodian embassy. The embassy asked him to wait. He waited for seven or eight months, but had no contact back from the embassy. So he went to the police station, who called the embassy, and this time they sent him details of a NGO. A Malaysian person took him by bus to this NGO. He stayed in a house with about ten other Cambodians. The NGO staff promised to him they would find a flight ticket, but the embassy said they had to wait.

He stayed in the house seven or eight months more. As he describes, during that time: “It was just sleep, eat, doing nothing”. The NGO accompanied them to the market each week and bought food for them. After the time was up, IOM paid for his flights and he returned to Cambodia. Altogether he was away from home about two years.

## Summary Part One

Cambodian men are trafficked to a range of destinations and work sectors, the vast majority for forced labour. Most identified victims were trafficked to fishing vessels via Thailand. The following key points are particularly relevant to (re)integration.

- 1) Men become vulnerable to trafficking due to poverty, unemployment and due to a broken migration system that does not provide and incentivise safe migration channels. Among trafficked males who have been identified, prior to migration, most worked as low-earning farmers, construction workers or were unemployed or in unstable employment.
- 2) Most victims have low levels of education. They are almost all breadwinners, and are therefore highly transient as they migrate to find work.
- 3) Most victims are aged in their twenties or thirties but a significant number of minors are also trafficked.
- 4) Victims come from a wide range of provinces. Many are 'clustered' near other victims. There are few identified victims from the northeast.
- 5) Recruitment through brokers, and pre-existing poverty, means that many victims return to situations of debt.
- 6) Conditions suffered can be extremely severe. After escape, many victims suffer further exploitation, or have returns delayed by months due to detention or delayed assistance.

## Part Two: Needs of survivors

Two studies analyse the (re)integration needs of Cambodian trafficked men. The quantitative study by LSHTM and IOM explored the prevalence of health and mental health outcomes with a Cambodia sample of 269 participants.<sup>131</sup> Of the sample, 238 (88 percent) were males, including 19 minors. 219 were fishermen. Surtees, 2014, also devotes attention to survivors' (re)integration experiences.<sup>132</sup> The findings of these studies are supplemented below with observations of service providers and survivors.

As some original figures from the LSHTM/IOM study refer to both males and females, minimum figures for males only have been calculated by subtracting the maximum possible number of females (31) from the total who gave a particular response. This result was then converted to a percentage of the total male respondents in the survey.

### Economic concerns

Economic problems are paramount for most male trafficking victims. LSHTM and IOM found that the most frequent post-trafficking concern was “money-related problems in the family”, reported by at least 60 percent of male respondents.<sup>133</sup> Second most common was “earning money/having a job/paying debt” which was a concern for at least 49 percent of male respondents.<sup>134</sup> Surtees noted that victims returned to “fragile economic situations”.<sup>135</sup> Service providers commented that many victims return penniless, and often to economic problems exacerbated by their trafficking experience.

*“Economic needs, economic needs, economic needs. The more I visit the villages the more I think [the primary issue] is economic needs.” –Assistance provider*

#### Trafficking and debt

Some survivors return to situations of debt. The different types of debt may be any of the following:

**Pre-existing debts.** According to a survey of returned migrants by IOM Cambodia, 40 percent migrated due to debt.<sup>136</sup>

**Debts to cover migration costs** such as independent travel to the border, or upfront costs to brokers. However, broker fees are often not paid upfront, but passed on as debt to the employer. Victims often escape these debts when they leave the trafficking situation.

**Debts incurred by family during victim's absence.**

**Debts to enable the victim's return** if the family has no assistance with travel costs.<sup>137</sup>

Of the eight survivors interviewed for case studies, six reported household debts between

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<sup>131</sup>Zimmerman et al., 2014.

<sup>132</sup>Surtees, 2014.

<sup>133</sup>Zimmerman et al., 2014. This was a concern for 176 respondents, of whom at least 145 were male. 145 is 60.9 percent of male respondents in the study.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid. This was a concern for 147 respondents, of whom at least 116 were male.

<sup>135</sup>Surtees, 2014, 146.

<sup>136</sup>Dickson, 2014.

<sup>137</sup>In one case involving nine Cambodian victims, an overseas consulate contacted victims' families directly to ask them to pay for return flights. The families took out loans and paid US\$200 per survivor. One family collected the money and wired it to an unidentified person in Malaysia. The survivors then returned on flights costing US\$60 per person. The families struggled for the next six months to pay off the debt at high interest. (Conversation with a service provider.)

US\$180 and 1,000. Four had debt over US\$500. These arose from travel to Thailand, building houses, buying shop materials, and other costs:

*“I still owe money from my travel to Thailand.... I borrowed from relatives, so it doesn't have interest. But now I cannot pay it all back... It has been years, and still I have not paid it off. I owe about 6000 baht (US\$184).”*

*“After I returned my life was worse than before I left. Before I left, I used to be happy. I owed money, but I expected to earn some in Thailand. After my time in Thailand, my wife had to borrow still more money to help me return. Now I feel unhappy because we owe money to others, and people don't speak to me... I used to owe US\$500, but now because of interest I owe US\$1000. I try my best to pay...”*

While these debts are significant, Cambodian victims may be spared one burden experienced by victims in other countries. Because so few Cambodian men are trafficked by recruitment agencies, they do not suffer lost collateral or fines imposed by recruitment agencies, as seen in other countries such as Indonesia.<sup>138</sup> Even in the case of Giant Ocean, the agency paid migration fees so victims did not face migration costs.

Nevertheless, where debt is a factor, it is an obstacle to (re)integration. One service provider noted that victims often use assistance grants to cover debt. Another respondent noted that some victims need to borrow immediately on return:

*“I am always very worried that clients might get into debt when they arrive home, because they don't have money.... I always ask: “But how can they pay for food?”*

### **Challenges generating income**

Generating income is usually the first priority for returnees, even at the expense of considering other support. As one assistance provider noted: *“They want a way they can make money as fast as possible. When we discuss long-term support, it is difficult... until we provide for their basic needs.”* Generating income is both a psychological need and a practical necessity: *“It is fundamental need to find a job and get back to normal status. Being male, it is important to show they're still the breadwinner.”*

However, most victims return to contexts where generating year-round, stable income is immensely challenging. Most victims are unskilled, and live in remote, rural communities with few job or training opportunities. Some victims do have family land or work as labourers nearby. For instance, one respondent recalled visiting a village to meet twelve survivors who went unassisted. Most worked as casual construction workers earning US\$6 per day, but only worked ten days a month. Only one survivor was doing regular work.

Immense creativity is required to find secure income in remote, poor or economically-depressed areas, and victims often lack this business experience. Individual victims may also face additional barriers, such as health problems, that affect their ability to work. One survivor described political factors affecting his income:

*“A year ago the military grabbed our plantation- and gave this land to the family of military officials. The whole village was affected by this land grabbing. Our livelihood depended on that land. Now we owe a lot of money, and I have no job to do on the plantation.”*

In the event that local options for generating income fail, many survivors choose to migrate

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<sup>138</sup> See Christina Stringer, Glenn Simmons and Daren Coulston, *Not in New Zealand's waters, surely? Labour and human rights abuses aboard foreign fishing vessels* (Auckland, New Zealand: New Zealand Asia Institute, University of Auckland, 2011).

again, despite their past experiences. One respondent recalled: “[The survivors] have experienced severe abuse in another country and don’t want to go back any more. But if their situation is poor enough, they are forced to go back.”

Migration can be a viable means of escaping economic hardship, and families weigh up the risks. As one respondent recalled:

*“I saw that some families who had two or three sons trafficked by Giant Ocean, the next time they only let one migrate. Usually an older brother. They discussed as a family who they would put at risk.”*

This predicament is common. One respondent recalled a village in which more than 30 returned trafficking survivors had re-migrated, most returning to work on fishing vessels.

## Health needs

*“I can no longer work hard like before...” –Survivor*

Health needs are the second largest post-trafficking concern. In the study by LSHTM and IOM, at least 30 percent of male respondents reported “own physical health” among post-trafficking concerns.<sup>139</sup> Surtees found that victims of Giant Ocean suffered ongoing health problems, including chronic headaches and pain from broken bones that had not healed correctly, malnourishment, skin infections and lung conditions.<sup>140</sup>

LSHTM and IOM also found a high rate of health problems among participants. More than four fifths of participants reported at least one area of pain or injury at the time of interview.<sup>141</sup> Nearly two thirds of male participants wanted to see a medical practitioner, most commonly to examine their head, stomach or chest. At least a quarter of male participants reported feeling completely exhausted, having dizzy spells or headaches,<sup>142</sup> significant numbers also reported weight loss, persistent coughing or difficulty remembering things.<sup>143</sup>

Service providers recalled seeing survivors with cuts, broken bones and lost fingers; cases of tuberculosis and possible malnutrition; and cases of scabies after time in detention. One respondent met a returnee who could not walk due to a construction accident, and referred him to an organisation assisting people with disabilities. Several respondents recalled seeing injuries from work on fishing boats: *“I’ve seen men with... stabs in their legs, scars, a broken collarbone that has re-healed... One man had a hook lodged in the side of his head.”*

Some of these injuries are likely to need ongoing medical treatment. However, despite their observations, service providers did not highlight medical treatment as a common ongoing need. Collectively they recalled only a handful of cases in which survivors had received ongoing health assistance.

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<sup>139</sup>Zimmerman et al., 2014. 104 respondents had this concern, of whom at least 73 are male.

<sup>140</sup> Surtees, 2014, 151.

<sup>141</sup> IOM Cambodia, “Study on health consequences of human trafficking: exploitation and abuse in the Mekong sub-region (STEAM).” Handout at STEAM launch, Phnom Penh, November 18, 2014.

<sup>142</sup> Zimmerman et al. 2014.

<sup>143</sup> Some symptoms may be manifestations of psychological distress. For instance, ‘dizziness’ has been recognized as a common way in which Cambodians describe emotional distress. Devon E. Hinton and Michael W. Otto, “Symptom presentation and symptom meaning among traumatised Cambodian refugees: Relevance to a somatically focused cognitive-behavior therapy,” *Cognitive Behavioural Practice* 13.4 (2006).



## Mental health needs

*"I have forgotten many things, I am sometimes dizzy, sometimes have headaches, and I'm always worried..." -Survivor*

LSHTM and IOM found that extremely poor mental health was common among survivors.<sup>144</sup> Among adult males in the study, 62 per cent had symptoms of depression, 54 per cent had symptoms of anxiety and 46 per cent of PTSD. These rates exceed those in the Cambodian population at large.<sup>145</sup> Furthermore, at least one quarter of male participants reported frequent or severe 'dizzy spells',<sup>146</sup> which for Cambodians can be a description a mental health concern.<sup>147</sup> Suicidal ideation was also reported: thirteen adult males (six percent) reported having tried to commit suicide in the month before the interview.<sup>148</sup>

Service providers recalled seeing a variety of problems with mental health, including memory loss, aggression and substance abuse:

*"In one case, [the receiving organisation] was concerned with harm to self, harm to others... While some victims can just go home without problems, this guy...couldn't speak two words. He refused to cooperate with assessment, probably due to the style.... When you opened the door he stepped right back [as if frightened]. When given an instruction, he would run to do it. One time I found him sleeping underneath the bed, all curled up..."*

*"One of our clients was trafficked and stayed aboard fishing boats for 15 years.<sup>149</sup> During that time he was forced to use drugs. This seriously affected his psychological health. Now after returning, sometimes when he drinks he is violent, or runs around his house or village. Our social workers had to consult with him to address his drinking."*

One assistance provider noted that some returnees struggled to remember their birthplace and relatives, making it hard for police to investigate their case.

Mental health problems can be extremely difficult to bear unassisted. As one survivor described:

*"I want to be assisted very much, because I want my mental health to be like before I went to Thailand. I have forgotten many things, I am sometimes dizzy, sometimes have headaches, and I'm always worried. I have told the social worker about this, and also bought myself medication at a nearby Chinese medicine shop. Sometimes it helps. I also have dreams and nightmares, dreaming of the time on the boat. Every time I dream I am not well at all. Recently I haven't dreamt about this, yet I still have headaches."*

This survivor had not received support with mental health in over a year of being assisted.

## Supportive relationships

All victims need social support to successfully reintegrate. In some cases, survivors reported having highly supportive families and communities:

*"My wife tried to find an NGO to rescue me. She was very happy when I returned. Now she...works on the plantation and does everything to make sure I am safe."*

*"Everyone was so excited to see us return... When we called on the phone, they could not believe it. No one could speak- they were crying so much."*

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<sup>144</sup>Zimmerman et al., 2014.

<sup>145</sup>Tanja Schunert et. al, *Cambodian mental health survey* (Phnom Penh: Royal University of Phnom Penh Department of Psychology, 2012), xii, 72.

<sup>146</sup>95 of 269 respondents reported this problem, of whom at least 64 were male.

<sup>147</sup>Devon and Otto, 2006.

<sup>148</sup>Researchers acknowledged that males may under-report symptoms, for instance if not ready to disclose symptoms in an interview so soon after return, so actual rates may be even higher.

<sup>149</sup>The victim was not necessarily trafficked for the entirety of this period.



In some cases communities may gather around a victim:

*“We visited this man who had come home from fishing boats after 21 years. His wife had raised his three children. She thought he was dead. When we arrived, they had a very small hut. He had come back with no money and the woman was poor. But when he returned, there were some ducks there. The entire village had chipped in- they had bought ducks for him because he returned after 21 years.”*

However, for various reasons survivors may not have (or believe they do not have) community support. Supporting a victim may be highly challenging. The victim may not disclose his experience. Supporters may not understand the victim’s symptoms, and may not know how to respond: this is particularly likely given the low public knowledge of mental health issues in Cambodia. Some victims return with a new appearance, such as tattoos or long hair, or new behaviours such as substance abuse or aggression. Supporters may suffer indirectly given that some symptoms are distressing or hard to live with.

### **Discrimination, shame and guilt**

For some survivors, their homecoming is tarnished by shame or fear of discrimination. Most service providers believed male victims suffer less shame and discrimination than female victims. Nevertheless, in the study by LSHTM and IOM, at least one quarter of male respondents reported feeling ‘guilt or shame’ after trafficking.<sup>150</sup>

Service providers suggested various reasons for these feelings. Their reasons include:

- **Guilt/shame in being a “failed migrant” and/or letting others down.** In rural Cambodia, it is seen as a good strategy to migrate, and many migrants have a positive experience. Victims may fear that they will be seen as failures, or liars, if they do not come back with money.
- **Guilt/shame in abuse suffered, witnessed or perpetrated.** International examples suggest victims may feel shame or guilt due to abuse they have suffered, such as sexual abuse, or witnessed, such as abuse of colleagues they were powerless to stop.<sup>151</sup> Others may feel shame/guilt for perpetrating abuse, and be afraid to share what really happened.
- **Guilt/shame of falling victim to deception,** or being unable to protect oneself or escape.

Surtees’ interviews with Giant Ocean victims reveal these dynamics.<sup>152</sup> One victim felt deep regret and worry returning home without money. Victims described other colleagues who had chosen not to return, but instead opted to work elsewhere so they would not have to return penniless. Victims also described how it felt to have community members take pity on them: in some cases this made victims feel cared for, but in some cases victims felt ashamed and reluctant to tell their story. In some instances, community members openly blamed victims or called them stupid for falling victim to deception.

Some survivors interviewed for this study reported similar feelings:

*“I was ashamed to come back to Cambodia. I felt I would even rather stay in the detention centre forever! I was ashamed because first of all I had no money at all in prison. I was also ashamed for my family, because community members would say: ‘You are a poor family, and you have a son who is in prison.’”*

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<sup>150</sup>Zimmerman et al., 2014. 93 out of 269 respondents reported this concern, of whom at least 62 were male.

<sup>151</sup> See for instance Surtees, 2008a, 86-87.

<sup>152</sup>Surtees, 2014, 158-159.

*“My neighbours asked questions so I told them everything. I worried they would laugh at me for having no money. But they didn’t. They felt pity for me, that in my first trip to Thailand I was cheated.”*

*“I don’t think anyone looks down on us at all... It is only ourselves that feel ashamed because we came back and didn’t make any money.”*

Service providers also recalled cases of discrimination by family members:

*“I remember a case where the family blamed the victim for what happened. It was case of a 14-year old boy. The father said, ‘See I told you it was dangerous. This is all your fault.’”*

*“The migrants have lost contact and come back with nothing. If they don’t share the story of what happened, some families do show shunning or misunderstanding.”*

The reasons for discrimination or shame may be complex. One victim experienced discrimination because of his poverty, which was exacerbated by trafficking:

*“After I returned my life was worse than before I left... I moved house four months ago because at my old place people wouldn’t speak to me any more. They would walk past me without speaking. They do not talk to me because I am poor, and they worry that if they speak to me, one day I will borrow their money.”*

The social context can therefore have a profound impact on (re)integration.

### **Adjusting to changed relationships**

It is also important to note survivors’ need to adjust to changed roles and relationships. Surtees’ interviews with Giant Ocean victims revealed that some families had moved on in the victim’s absence, even holding a funeral as they had lost contact for years. Victims had to rebuild relationships with partners and children who had changed, grown, or who felt resentment at the victim’s absence. One survivor interviewed for this study recalled a sad homecoming, as he learned of his mother’s death. These adjustments cause considerable stress and may also affect the extent of social support the survivors receive.

Service providers recalled cases in which wives had taken other partners:

*“For some [fewer than 10 survivors out of 169 assisted], their wife has taken another partner. So these survivors when they come back, can’t reunite... Most don’t want to stay in their village and face such hurt, so they move to new place.”*

*“One of the survivors came back to find the wife had a new husband. But when he returned, his wife came back to him. Really... sometimes I’m nearly burnt out because of this work!”*

These types of adjustments will be even more stressful for survivors and their families.

## **Needs of family members**

*“My biggest need is for my wife to get medical care. She needs to go to a female clinic but we don’t have the money.” -Survivor*

Family members can be considered “secondary victims of trafficking” when they suffer problems that are related to, and caused directly by, the person’s trafficking experience.<sup>153</sup> Families suffer in multiple ways during a victim’s absence, for instance additional economic burdens, distress and fear. Emotional stresses are particularly relevant:

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<sup>153</sup> Surtees, 2013, 16.

*"I thought he was going to Thailand for two months only. When he'd been away for eight months, he phoned and told me to re-marry, because he would never have a chance to come back."*

Some villagers have reported having no men left in their families, because all have gone to work on fishing vessels.<sup>154</sup>

After a victim's return, family members must also adjust to change, and to the challenging task of supporting the victim. Families also have their own challenges. Service providers noted that family members' needs usually relate to finances or health. In the study by LSHTM and IOM, at least 60 percent of male respondents were concerned about "money-related problems in the family".<sup>155</sup> Nearly half were concerned about "health-related problems in the family".<sup>156</sup> Given Cambodia's troubled history, and the impacts of poverty, family members may also struggle with their own mental health problems. As noted by one service provider:

*"[Older family members] are the children of Pol Pot times. There are generations of families with huge problems, in addition to the problems that the men we work with have. When we work with families, we uncover huge problems creating a difficult environment for people to live in."*

These needs of family members as "secondary victims" are important in their own right. The wellbeing of family members also affects the victim indirectly.

*"[One client went home to a] single mother with no husband. Unfortunately she was into playing cards and gambling, so she didn't support the child. Another client's family was extremely poor... We cannot really modify all the conditions that influence the living of these boys." -Assistance provider*

These factors highlight the challenge and necessity of supporting families for their own sake, and as a way to support victims.

## Accommodation

Victims need safe short-term and long-term accommodation on return. Service providers voiced the need for better short-term accommodation options, as without a temporary shelter in Phnom Penh, victims do not have the choice to stay more than a few days.

Long-term accommodation is a concern for only a minority of victims. In the LSHTM and IOM study, between 13 and 25 percent of male participants reported feeling concerned about having nowhere to live long-term.<sup>157</sup> However, service providers mentioned only isolated cases in which long-term accommodation was not available. These cases included broken marriages, and in one case, a young victim who migrated from a broken home. Most victims return to family homes or relatives. In some cases family accommodation is in need of repair. Two service providers mentioned cases in which they had helped to repair housing.

## Legal assistance

Many survivors need help with documentation to return to Cambodia. With the exception of Giant Ocean victims, only a minority of survivors chooses to lay a complaint about the abuse they suffered. Some victims file complaints against Cambodian brokers, though many cannot

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<sup>154</sup> LSCW and CTIP II, 23.

<sup>155</sup> Zimmerman et al., 2014. 176 out of 269 respondents shared this concern. At a minimum, 145 were males.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid. 125 out of 269 respondents shared this concern, of whom at least 94 were males.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid. 62 out of 269 respondents shared this concern, of whom between 31 and 62 are males. This is 13-26 percent of the male sample.

remember enough details to pursue the complaint. Almost none have pursued cases against brokers or exploiters outside of Cambodia. Nevertheless, survivors need access to information about their legal options. Some may also need help with replacing identity documents lost or stolen during trafficking.

## Security and privacy

Service providers did not consider security threats a significant problem. In most cases, victims first met traffickers in Thailand or on the border, far from their home community. However, in at least two cases, survivors were concerned about security:

*“I have heard that the broker was sent to prison for eight years. However I am afraid that when the broker is released, he might come and harm me because I live in a remote area far away from other people.” -Survivor*

*“[One of our clients] is still afraid of their trafficker, because the trafficker has a son-in-law on the local authorities there. [A legal aid organisation] is supporting them in Cambodian court. So the survivor is still afraid of the broker.” –Service provider.*

Service providers did note that some survivors wished for privacy:

*“Some men we work with say they don’t want their story to be public. In Cambodia, newspapers can publish pictures [of anybody]. Some survivors don’t want to file complaints because they are afraid someone will publish their picture. Confidentiality is important to them... some men don’t want their relatives to know they were trafficked..... Sometimes they are shy or sometimes they are afraid of their broker, if the broker has money or authority.”*

Victims’ fears may affect (re)integration, whether or not the risks are genuine. Ensuring victims feel safe should therefore be part of the (re)integration response.

## Summary Part Two

Survivors of trafficking may return with multiple needs relating to finances, physical and mental health, social support, legal assistance, accommodation and security. The needs of secondary victims must also be taken into account. The following points are foundational for considering (re)integration:

1. Economic challenges are paramount for many survivors. Some victims will re-migrate if economic challenges are not addressed. Economic assistance should take into account victims’ immediate needs; the need to avoid harmful debt and to generate year-round, stable income.
2. Victims suffer a range of health and mental health problems, some severe. Some victims require ongoing assistance.
3. A victim’s access to social support is affected by a number of factors. These include feelings of shame, fear of discrimination, and the challenges of adjusting to new or changed relationships.
4. Family members have needs that are important in their own right, and affect their ability to support the victim.
5. A small number of victims have concerns about security and privacy.

## Part three: Successful (re)integration and existing services in Cambodia

As highlighted in parts one and two, trafficked men experience numerous stressors before and during trafficking and after escape. After return, many survivors face ongoing challenges with finances, physical or mental health, access to social support and other issues. These challenges may be on top of pre-existing vulnerabilities. Secondary victims also have needs that may affect the survivor, and that are valid in their own right. (Re)integration is therefore highly challenging.

### What is (re)integration?

The definition of (re)integration has been developing for over a decade and there is not yet a universally-accepted definition.<sup>158</sup> Yet, how (re)integration is defined is fundamental in determining what “success” looks like and therefore what types of assistance are provided to survivors.

Common themes in definitions include the survivor gaining a sense of wellbeing, dignity and empowerment to improve his or her own situation; recovering autonomy over decisions about his or her life and resilience for the future; being included in and adjusting to social life and being active and productive members of the community; and being able to earn his or her own livelihood.<sup>159</sup> These themes all indicate the long-term and complex nature of (re)integration.

The following definition developed by Surtees will be used in this study:

*“(Re)integration is the process of recovery, and economic and social inclusion following a trafficking experience. It includes:*

- *settlement in a safe and secure environment,*
- *access to a reasonable standard of living,*
- *mental and physical well-being,*
- *opportunities for personal, social and economic development, and*
- *access to social and emotional support.*

*Central to success of (re)integration is the empowerment of trafficking victims, supporting them to develop skills toward independence, and to be actively involved in their recovery and (re)integration.”<sup>160</sup>*

Trafficked persons may choose to resettle in their home community (reintegration), or in a new community either in their home country or a new country (integration).

The definition above distinguishes (re)integration from “pre-departure recovery”, the immediate recuperation before return, for instance in a temporary shelter, and “return/repatriation”, the movement from the trafficking destination to the country the trafficked person will settle in.

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<sup>158</sup> Glenn Miles and Siobhan Miles, *The Butterfly Longitudinal Research Project. A Chab Dai study on (re-) integration: Researching the lifecycle of survivors of sexual exploitation and trafficking. End of Year Progress Report 2011* (Phnom Penh: Chab Dai Coalition, 2011), 27.

<sup>159</sup> See Miles and Miles, 2011, 27-28; Samantha Lyneham, “Recovery, return and reintegration of Indonesian victims of trafficking,” *Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice* 483 (2014): 2.

<sup>160</sup> Surtees, 2013, 38.

For the purpose of the following discussion, the (re)integration phase will be considered to begin after repatriation, although the return and pre-return experience is still highly relevant.

## “Successful” (re)integration

Surtees also identifies the following criteria for determining whether a trafficked person has been successfully (re)integrated:

- 1) safe, satisfactory and affordable accommodation,
- 2) physical wellbeing,
- 3) mental wellbeing, including self-esteem, confidence and self-acceptance
- 4) legal status (eg. as a citizen or permanent resident, having identity documents, in some cases guardianship of a child)
- 5) security and safety (from traffickers and other dangers)
- 6) economic wellbeing, including professional employment and economic opportunities
- 7) education and training opportunities,
- 8) healthy social environment (free from discrimination, marginalisation and stigma)
- 9) best interests in the legal process (for instance, informed participation in any relevant legal/judicial case)
- 10) wellbeing of secondary beneficiaries.

As the criteria above suggest, the (re)integration process is highly complex, depending not only on the victim but also the multiple “layers” of their external environment- family, community and society.<sup>161</sup> Progress is seldom linear and often involves failures and setbacks. (Re)integration is therefore very slow, taking several years or more.

It should be noted that successful (re)integration is not simply return to the trafficked person’s former state: if a victim achieves the above criteria, they may be considerably *better off* than they were prior to trafficking. Indeed, this is a critical aspect of successful (re)integration: *to remove the vulnerability factors* that made the victim susceptible to trafficking in the first place.<sup>162</sup>

## (Re)integration assistance

(Re)integration assistance is defined here as any support that helps trafficked persons (re)integrate into society. It may be provided by formal programmes run by NGOs, IOs or government, whether specialised to trafficking victims or general. Informal supporters, such as family, may also provide assistance.

(Re)integration assistance should be distinguished from ‘**pre-departure recovery assistance**’, such as counseling, medical assistance, family tracing and help with documentation and travel arrangements in the destination country.<sup>163</sup> It is also distinct from ‘**return/repatriation assistance**’, such as supported transportation or including escort if needed.

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<sup>161</sup>Annuska Derks, *Reintegration of victims of trafficking in Cambodia* (Phnom Penh, Cambodia: IOM/CAS, 1998), 15, quoted in Rebecca Surtees, *Listening to victims: experiences of identification, return and assistance in South-eastern Europe* (Vienna: International Centre for Migration Policy Development, 2007), 186.

<sup>162</sup>IOM highlight that (re)integration assistance is critical to making returns sustainable. IOM, “Assisted voluntary return and reintegration,” (2011): 3.

<sup>163</sup>Lyneham, 2014, 3.



(Re)integration assistance includes both short- and long-term support. It encompasses **direct/short-term/basic assistance**, which addresses immediate needs upon return, such as temporary accommodation, travel grants and basic or emergency healthcare. (Re)integration assistance also includes long-term support, and may involve any of the following:

accommodation; medical assistance; psychological assistance; education and professional/vocational training; economic opportunities; legal and administrative assistance; support with legal proceedings (or pursuing compensation outside the courts); family mediation, counseling and support; humanitarian support such as food or financial assistance; case management, monitoring and follow-up; assistance to secondary beneficiaries.<sup>164</sup>

Victims may need some or all of the types of assistance listed above. It is not possible to provide one package of services that fits every survivor's context and aspirations. Instead, victims' needs must be adequately assessed so that assistance is tailored to their unique situation.

## Gender dynamics in the (re)integration of men

*"We know it happens a lot but trafficking in men is not seen as a problem. ... . [Men's] vulnerability isn't seen [to be] as important as women's and children's."*<sup>165</sup>

A number of authors note that issues of gender are relevant in the (re)integration of men.<sup>166</sup> Gender dynamics may affect survivors' vulnerability to trafficking; their post-trafficking needs; identifications and the availability of services; and men's willingness to accept these services.

In many cultures, including Cambodia, men are generally perceived as invulnerable, strong and self-reliant. There is a greater tolerance for risk-taking by males, and an expectation that they will provide for their family.<sup>167</sup> Cambodians have a proverb that "women are like cloth, and men like gold". This implies that any 'dirt' on a man- whether sexual impurity, or more generally the effect of a traumatic experience- can easily be washed away.<sup>168</sup> As a respondent of another study elaborates:

*"Cambodians.... believe that boys are like the rice before it is threshed—if it falls into the water it can still grow. Girls are considered like the white rice—if you drop it, it will die. So Cambodians do not care so much if the boy has a problem."*<sup>169</sup>

Perceptions of men as invulnerable may ironically make males more vulnerable to unsafe migration and therefore trafficking, if men and their community members downplay their need for protection. These vulnerabilities persist on a survivor's return.

Gender may affect victims' post-trafficking needs. Generally, male and female victims suffer different patterns of abuse during trafficking. Analyses of large samples of Indonesian and south-

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<sup>164</sup>Surtees, 2013, 41-42.

<sup>165</sup>Service provider in Cambodia, quoted in Rebecca Surtees, "Trafficked men as unwilling victims," *Stair* 4, 1 (2008b): 19.

<sup>166</sup>Samantha Lyneham and Jacqueline Joudo Larsen, 2013, "Exploitation of Indonesian trafficked men, women and children and implications for support," *Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice*, 4, p. 4-5; Gayle Munro and Chloe Pritchard, *Support needs of male trafficking victims: research findings* (UK: Salvation Army, 2013) 18-19; Rebecca Surtees, 2007, "Listening to victims: experiences of identification, return and assistance in South-eastern Europe"; Surtees, 2008a, 18; Surtees, 2008b; Anne Gallagher and Elaine Pearson, 2008, "Detention of trafficked persons in shelters: A legal and policy analysis"; Ruth Rosenberg, *Trafficking of adult men in the Europe and Eurasia region: Final report* (Washington D.C.: Creative Associates International, 2010).

<sup>167</sup>Hinton, Alastair. *I thought it could never happen to boys: Sexual abuse and exploitation of boys in Cambodia, an exploratory study* (Phnom Penh: Hagar Cambodia, 2008), 53-55.

<sup>168</sup>Hinton, 2008, 51.

<sup>169</sup>Respondent interviewed about attitudes to abuse of boys in Cambodia. *Ibid*, 135.

east Asian victims suggest that males are much less likely to suffer sexual abuse.<sup>170</sup> Males are therefore less likely to need post-trafficking support that reflects this. Gender may also affect how victims perceive the same types of abuse.

Third-party perceptions about gender affect men's access to services. Numerous authors observe that authorities are less likely to identify males as victims, often mistaking them for criminals or illegal immigrants (see example in Box 4).<sup>171</sup> Donors have been less willing to invest resources to assist men, meaning males can be effectively 'declined' by service providers.<sup>172</sup> Furthermore, men may communicate and work through their problems differently to females, and may therefore be less effectively assisted by programmes designed for females.

*"The women come back and cry and talk about how things were. They use certain words, like 'suffer'. Among the men, none of them do that. They are willing to give you facts, but are less likely to vocalise complaints. You have to dig harder to find out about conditions, or how hard it was." —Assistance provider*

Finally, gender may affect victims' willingness to accept services. Men may decline services that are incompatible with gender-related expectations to provide for their family. They may also reject the identity of 'victim' (or reject assistance) because it "implies a powerlessness and fragility" which does not fit their concept of masculinity.<sup>173</sup> As one service provider recalled:

*"When I ask the men, "Do you know you are trafficked?" some say, "No, I was not trafficked." What they mean is that they are strong, no one can traffic them. They say they ended up in the situation just because they were in Thailand for the first time and didn't know the situation."*

Men may also decline services if they fear stigma and discrimination; if they do not believe the abuse was 'that bad' (or at least better than unemployment); or if they believe they were partially responsible, for instance by agreeing to go abroad or work illegally.<sup>174</sup> Declining services may be temporary decision, and victims may make different decisions at different stages of (re)integration.<sup>175</sup> Providing space for men to reconsider assistance is a further challenge for assistance providers.

Of course, gender is merely one factor that may influence a survivor's decisions, and some men do not fit the stereotype.<sup>176</sup> Nevertheless, assistance providers should be aware of the possible influence of these factors.

## **(Re)integration services for men**

Globally, (re)integration assistance services for male victims are under-developed compared to those for women and children.<sup>177</sup> Some existing examples are shown in Box 6.

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<sup>170</sup> Kiss et. al, "Health of men, women, and children in post-trafficking services in Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam: an observational cross-sectional study." *The Lancet Global Health* 3, 2015, 157-158; Lyneham and Joudo Larsen, 2013.

<sup>171</sup> Anne Gallagher and Elaine Pearson, 2008, "Detention of trafficked persons in shelters: A legal and policy analysis"; Rosenberg, 2010, 25; Surtees, 2008a, 18.

<sup>172</sup> Surtees, 2013, 6.

<sup>173</sup> Surtees, 2008b, 25. See also Anette Brunovskis and Rebecca Surtees, *Leaving the past behind: why some trafficking victims decline assistance* (Oslo: Fafo and Vienna: NEXUS Institute, 2007) in Surtees, 2008a, 91-92.

<sup>174</sup> Brunovskis and Surtees, 2007, in Surtees, 2008a, 91-92.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid, in Surtees, 2007, 98-99.

<sup>176</sup> Surtees, 2008b, 20.

<sup>177</sup> Gallagher and Pearson 2008; Rosenberg, 2010; Surtees, 2008b; Lyneham and Joudo Larsen, 2013, 4-5.



### **Box 6: International examples of (re)integration services for men**

In the United Kingdom the Salvation Army assists trafficked males. Between July 2011 and October 2014, they supported 156 trafficked men in England and Wales. In October 2014, they had 65 men being supported in accommodation. Their services include residential care and follow-up, transport, medical care, counseling, support to engage with criminal proceedings, translation services and referral to other services.<sup>178</sup>

In Vietnam, IOM has run a self-help group for ten male victims in Hue province. They met monthly to discuss topics of interest, and also received a grant for income generation activities, as well as training on life skills, farming and animal husbandry techniques.<sup>179</sup>

In India, the International Justice Mission runs a reintegration programme for male and female victims of bonded labour. Social workers assist survivors to return to their native villages, provide food and accommodation as needed and assess the family situation. Within the first two months of rescue, survivors are encouraged to attend a Freedom Training programme, a three to five-day retreat in which survivors learn about topics such as human rights, nutrition, saving, their legal entitlements and what to do if their exploiter returns. The training is followed by monthly group discussions with other survivors, and home visits from the social worker. Social workers help the survivor to find employment, enrol children in school and access other legal entitlements. Assistance to the survivor and their family usually lasts two years.<sup>180</sup>

Existing literature indicates Cambodia has nascent services, which puts it ahead of some other countries in the region. Yet there remains “a profound dearth of assistance for trafficked males in Cambodia”.<sup>181</sup> National practitioner forums on (re)integration in the greater Mekong sub-region (GMS) countries highlighted a lack of services for males as a key issue,<sup>182</sup> as did a 2012 assessment of services in Cambodia.<sup>183</sup> A 2013 study of (re)integration in Greater Mekong Sub-region countries had similar findings.<sup>184</sup> Of the 78 males in the study (of which 27 were Cambodians), only 10 were ‘comprehensively assisted’. Twenty went unassisted altogether, roughly one quarter of the participants.

Victims of Giant Ocean interviewed by Surtees received legal assistance but little to no other (re)integration assistance.<sup>185</sup> This was despite NGOs or IOs having identified these men as victims. Some received one-off food packages and a small travel grant, but little beyond this. None of these victims reported receiving medical assistance or counseling. A number wished to receive vocational training, but could not access this as it meant leaving family or foregoing a salary while training. Some victims had requested or actively sought other assistance, without success.

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<sup>178</sup> Salvation Army United Kingdom. “Male trafficking case.”

<sup>179</sup> IOM, “Self-help groups for male victims of trafficking launched in Viet Nam.” 2012.

<sup>180</sup> International Justice Mission, “India: Annual review 2013. Bonded labour,” 2013, 7; Conversation with IJM staff member.

<sup>181</sup> Surtees, 2014, 152.

<sup>182</sup> UNIAP, World Vision and NEXUS Institute, 2012, 11.

<sup>183</sup> Mauney and Srun, 2012.

<sup>184</sup> Surtees, 2013, 110.

<sup>185</sup> Surtees, 2014.

Cambodia's mental health services are at a particularly low stage of development,<sup>186</sup> meaning male survivors have limited prospect of receiving the support they require for mental health problems. A recent assessment of mental health services in Cambodia highlighted gaps in support for male victims and victims of labour trafficking as a particular need.<sup>187</sup>

## Current services provided to trafficked men

### The role of Government

While the Cambodian Government is aware of the need to respond to male victims of trafficking, gross under-funding means that the bulk of (re)integration assistance is left to NGOs and IOs.

The responsibility of the Cambodian Government to assist in (re)integration is outlined in a number of instruments and documents. For instance, Article 6 of the Palermo Protocol, which Cambodia has signed, requires states to “consider implementing measures to provide for the physical, psychological and social recovery of victims of trafficking in persons.” Cambodia's 2007 *Agreement on guidelines for practices and cooperation between the relevant government institutions and victim support agencies in cases of human trafficking* (focusing on victims in shelters) states that “After reintegrating a victim, MoSVY (Ministry of Social Affairs Veteran and Youth Rehabilitation) shall cooperate with victim service agencies, shelters, and the Ministry of Women's Affairs to monitor, follow-up and evaluate the victim in order to prevent re-trafficking at least for the first half year after reintegration”.<sup>188</sup> In 2012, MoSVY and IOM produced the *Standard Operating Procedures on the Provision of Reintegration Support to Male Victims of Trafficking*. These principles state that MoSVY is responsible for conducting family tracing, visiting the family and assigning a case-worker to support and monitor the victim throughout (re)integration.<sup>189</sup>

However, a lack of an operational budget means that MoSVY does not fulfill its mandate.

*“They have roles on paper, and roles in practice...” –Service provider*

MoSVY oversees the Poipet Transit Centre, which receives returnee survivors at the border, and assists adult males to directly return to their communities. Follow-up by government staff is minimal. Between 2010 and 2012, external funding from IOM and UNICEF meant that MoSVY could provide follow-up assistance. According to a staff-member of MoSVY, at that time there were 139 Department of Social Affairs Veteran and Youth Rehabilitation (DoSVY) social workers nationwide, providing family tracing, needs assessments and follow-ups. MoSVY also organised meetings of stakeholders every second month, and worked with IOM to provide skills training to clients.

Since this funding ended, the role of Government now appears limited to referrals, paperwork, some transport home within their province, or visiting clients alongside an NGO. According to a MoSVY staff member, when a victim is returning, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informs MoSVY,

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<sup>186</sup> According to research by the Leitner Center, the Government's annual funding for mental health care was US\$30,000 in 2011. In 2012 there were 14 psychiatric beds in the country. There is also a critical lack of psychologists and qualified counselors. Services are concentrated in major urban centres, with only half of the regional referral hospitals offering any mental health services, and next to none of the smaller rural hospitals. Daniel McLaughlin and Elisabeth Wicker, 2012, “Mental Health and Human Rights in Cambodia,” *Leitner Center for International Law and Justice*, p. 17, 18. See also Denise Hruby, “Cambodia suffers appalling mental health crisis,” *Global Post*, 16 June 2014.

<sup>187</sup> Charlotte Aberdein and Cathy Zimmerman, “The availability of mental health and psychosocial services for trafficked and exploited people in Cambodia: A qualitative study,” *Journal of Women's Health Care* 3, 189 (2014): 4.

<sup>188</sup> Article 78.

<sup>189</sup> Ministry of Social Affairs Veteran and Youth Rehabilitation and IOM, *Standard operating procedures on the provision of reintegration support to male victims of trafficking* (Phnom Penh: IOM, 2012): 9-11.

and the Department of Anti-Human Trafficking and Victim Reintegration telephones the local DoSVY in the victim's province. DoSVY meets the victim and in some cases transports him or her home. According to a DoSVY staff member, the local department then coordinates documents, refers to NGOs and in some cases accompanies the NGO to visit the client. As NGO staff commented: *"Follow-up is not done if there are no NGOs supporting [DoSVY] to go down to the field."*

This inactivity is unsurprising given the minimal operational budget for social workers. According to a DoSVY official, social workers receive US\$120 per month in wages, and operational expenses of around US\$15 per day: *"Fifteen dollars per day is not enough. Fifty dollars- that would be good."* Furthermore, according to NGOs, government social workers' operational expenses are not paid upfront, but are reimbursed, sometimes not until six months or one year later, and not necessarily in full. A DoSVY social worker recalled a recent case in which he paid money out of his own pocket to provide returnees with basic assistance. As he explained: *"We need support from NGOs to cover transport, and paper to print assessment forms."*

The lack of funding means that assisting organisations literally pay to facilitate government involvement. At least four assistance providers recalled providing money to government workers, for instance to cover transportation or food allowance.

*"Government social workers accompany our social workers to visit clients, because MOSVY lacks funding... We cover transport and money for their meals when they travel."*

*"We invited them to ... meet some male victims. They said "as long as you pay us for the petrol to come out."*

NGOs expressed the frustration of paying the Government to do its job:

*"When we reintegrate a survivor to the community, we need to invite an official from DOSVY, and we need to pay. Actually it is their responsibility! And yet we need to pay... So actually we seldom collaborate with the Government."*

Despite these frustrations, a few interviewees reported that they found the involvement of the Government helpful. One NGO brought DoSVY social workers to help them provide counseling. Another appreciated their feedback on case plans, and their (former) assistance with monitoring, particularly given that the local government was based in the community.

All non-government interviewees expressed a wish that the Government would play a greater role:

*"This is what we as an NGO want to see- more responsibility from the Government."*

*"We still have meetings with them, report the cases to them and invite them to repatriations. We try to encourage them to be involved."*

*"In the long-run we have to think about involving MOSVY to have regular case conferences and discussion about service provision."*

The lack of funding is also a frustration for government stakeholders, and they look to external donors to solve the shortfall.

*"Our MOSVY really wants to help the fishermen, but we don't have the money... We want to see the cooperation and support of other NGOs in terms of funding. Our government has a limited budget, so we cannot work alone... we need funding support from NGOs and donors."*

## **The role of non-government and international organisations**

There are at least twelve NGOs and IOs that provide some form of (re)integration assistance to trafficked men. It must be emphasised that many victims are never identified and/or connected with these services.

## Funding

Most funding for (re)integration assistance is provided via IOM or CTIP II. CTIP II provides partners with US\$800 per trafficked person to be spent on aspects of their (re)integration plan. IOM funds victims' return airfares and also administers an assistance grant of up to US\$1000 from the Bali Process and Global Assistance Funds. Additional funding comes from the US State Department and other sources.

This funding hugely benefits recipients. However, several service providers estimated that US\$2000 is required to enable comprehensive support. Others expressed concern that funding was tied to projects of limited duration, meaning some survivors' support was cut off. Others expressed worry about the long-term sustainability of funding, noting a decline in funding levels.

Further, in at least one instance, gender-based funding restrictions have limited an NGO's ability to assist. In this case, trafficked men in a destination country contacted a Cambodian NGO. However the NGO's available funding was restricted for use with women or children, so they were unable to assist the victims' return. The NGO therefore had to refer the case to other partners, which delayed assistance.

## Identification of victims and connection with services

According to respondents, identification of trafficked men as victims usually occurs when victims contact relatives in Cambodia who then alert service providers who facilitate repatriation assistance. Some victims approach authorities themselves; or NGOs, police or immigration officials identify victims. It is less common that victims return by themselves and then connect themselves with services, though this also occurs.<sup>190</sup>

NGOs and IOs do undertake some pro-active searching for victims. HCC actively searches for victims near the Koh Kong border, and has trained motodopes<sup>191</sup> to transport suspected victims to its centre.<sup>192</sup> In Poipet, IOM and Samaritan's Purse have collaborated with immigration police to identify suspected trafficked persons among deportees. This screening significantly increased IOM's caseload in 2014. Overall, however, screening for victims remains *ad hoc* and the focus remains on women and children. There do not appear to be any examples of proactive searching for Cambodian victims in destination countries, for instance at ports, port towns or detention centres. There is no collated list of missing persons.

## Repatriation assistance

Victims who are identified in the destination country may receive repatriation assistance. A common channel is via IOM in coordination with overseas consulates and the Cambodian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In these cases IOM usually pays for return travel. However, there have been cases in which consulates have not informed the victim of IOM's support, and have charged victims inflated airfares.<sup>193</sup> In destination countries where IOM has a presence, the IOM office will also provide a medical and psychological check and begin family tracing before return.

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<sup>190</sup>For instance eight of 169 male victims assisted by CWCC referred themselves to the organisation. Roughly one tenth of 557 male victims of trafficked and labour exploitation assisted by CTIP II returned by themselves and then connected with services. Data provided by service providers.

<sup>191</sup>Motorbike taxi drivers. After crossing into Cambodia via Koh Kong, it is necessary to hire a motorbike taxi to drive to Koh Kong town.

<sup>192</sup> See Winrock International and USAID, "Counter-trafficking in Persons (CTIP) in Cambodia's newsletter," Issue 6, January-March 2015.

<sup>193</sup> See footnote 137.

A number of NGOs (LSCW, CLEC, LICADHO, World Vision, CCPCR and Chab Dai) have also facilitated returns.

### **Reception and basic needs assistance**

*“It is important to provide [returnees] with some budget money and food including noodles and rice. This is very important because we have nothing when we come back from the boat.”*

–Survivor

Most victims who receive return assistance also receive short-term assistance on arrival. At least seven assistance providers (IOM, CCPCR, CLEC, CWCC, LICADHO, ADHOC and World Vision) offer some or all aspects. Generally short-term assistance includes a medical check, food package, a few days accommodation in a guesthouse, and cash towards transport home. Victims who receive return assistance from IOM go through a formal reception process at Phnom Penh, which also includes an opportunity to hear about NGOs’ services, and a small cash grant and cellphone if needed. IOM has also recently employed a psychologist to provide group and individual counseling.

Several providers assist victims returning overland. Poipet Transit Centre, CWCC, World Vision or Samaritan’s Purse provide basic needs assistance to victims and migrants who return via Poipet. HCC identifies and assists victims returning via Koh Kong. CCPCR assists victims returning via the Vietnam border.

Despite some attempts to protect survivors from exposure to the media, it remains common for male returnees to be photographed and named in media reports.<sup>194</sup> (In comparison, the author did not find any recent photographs of repatriated female victims, possibly indicating a disparity in how media personnel and service providers view male and female victims’ security needs.) Publishing photographs may be harmful for male survivors who prefer privacy or have security fears.

### **Referrals**

There is currently no formalised referral system. Sometimes first responders do not refer survivors for any support. Others are referred only for short-term or partial assistance. Some survivors are referred to organisations providing long-term case management, these survivors are assigned a case manager with responsibility to connect them with wrap-around services. For survivors who do not receive case management, it is unclear who has responsibility to refer a client. Subsequent referrals occur only on an *ad hoc* basis.

### **Coordination of assistance among service providers**

Coordination of (re)integration assistance remains minimal. In 2014, IOM began to hold meetings of assistance providers prior to survivors’ repatriation, to identify available services, and coordinate the reception and immediate assistance. Beyond these meetings there is no targeted coordination of support for trafficked men. Several service providers participate in the Cambodia and Thailand Anti-Human Trafficking Network,<sup>195</sup> though this does not focus on (re)integration.

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<sup>194</sup> See for instance, David, 2014; Khuon Narim and Chris Mueller, “Fishermen home after ordeal on Thai boat,” *Cambodia Daily*, 20 November 2014. Sen David and David Boyle, “A long journey home,” *Phnom Penh Post*, 7 November 2011.

<sup>195</sup> Healthcare Center for Children, “CAHT activities”.

## Shelters and short-term accommodation

*"I don't think there are any safe houses for men. That was my frustration. Some were injured and couldn't go back to the farms, there was nowhere to refer them to because places only take women."*—Service provider

There is only one shelter in Cambodia that accommodates trafficked men: the CCPCR shelter in Svay Rieng accepts male aged up to 25 years. In 2013, the shelter took in 39 male victims of labour trafficking, including 22 victims aged over 18 years.<sup>196</sup> Clients may stay several months and receive counseling or skills training, followed by support in the community.

IOM is soon to open a temporary shelter in Phnom Penh, which may address the existing gap. In the absence of other shelters, organisations have accommodated men in guesthouses or returned them straight home. For instance, the MoSVY-run Poipet Transit Centre sends adult male victims directly home. Until 2014 HCC ran a transit shelter for men in Koh Kong, but now facilitates victims to stay a few days in a guesthouse. Other organisations have paid for guesthouses for survivors testifying in court cases.

The lack of temporary shelters may be one factor preventing organisations from considering integration, rather than reintegration options: there is limited time to reflect on the best place for them to settle long-term. The lack of shelter accommodation has also led to discomfort for some survivors. In one instance, a group of returned fishermen spent one night at a police station before being moved to a guesthouse.

## Legal assistance

At least four NGOs provide legal assistance to trafficked men. Between 2013 and 2015, a coalition of NGOs including CLEC, LSCW, LICADHO and ADHOC represented victims in the case against Giant Ocean International Fishery Co. Ltd.<sup>197</sup> These organisations, and other partners, paid for transport and accommodation to enable victims to participate.

These organisations have also provided legal aid in cases against Cambodian brokers for trafficking males. Based on conversations with legal aid providers, there have been at least nine cases against Cambodian brokers for trafficking boys to Vietnam for begging, and there is one case underway regarding trafficking males to Thailand for begging. One organisation reported being involved in at least ten cases against Cambodian brokers accused of trafficking men to the fishing industry.

In some cases, brokers have been successfully convicted. According to one service provider, at the time of writing, two perpetrators are still in jail in Svay Rieng for trafficking victims to Vietnam, and seven have been released. In at least two other cases, brokers were sentenced to around 10 years in prison and ordered to pay compensation to the victim. However, victims seldom ever receive compensation. In one 'successful' case described above, the brokers never paid compensation because they were too poor. Court cases usually last several years: one ongoing case has been underway roughly four years.

Cases against perpetrators in Thailand are very rare, even though most brokers who are complicit in trafficking are in Thailand. Nevertheless, several World Vision clients are currently

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<sup>196</sup> Correspondence with CCPCR staff member.

<sup>197</sup> LSCW and CTIP II; Surtees, 2014; Sen David and Danson Cheong, "Fishermen trafficker charged," *Phnom Penh Post*, May 13, 2013.

involved in cases in Thailand. All legal aid providers voiced the frustration that investigations so rarely go beyond the border, due to a lack of police resources and cooperation.

### **Health support**

Survivors who are assisted usually receive a basic medical check at a health centre or on the service provider's premises. Initial assessments vary between providers, but usually do not include blood tests, x-rays or screening for HIV or other sexually-transmitted infections.

When service providers identify a need for additional care, some will pay or provide transport for survivors to access public or private hospitals. For instance, one organisation paid for treatment for three survivors who suffered a skin disease after exploitation on a fishing boat. One survivor's spouse also contracted the disease, so the organisation assisted her also. The organisation paid US\$61 for this medical care- a cost that would be prohibitive for many survivors to pay themselves.

Overall, however, service providers recalled very few cases of clients receiving ongoing medical assistance. One survivor described receiving short-term health assistance only:

*"When I came back I had stomachaches, heart problems and felt dizzy.... Sometimes I even fainted... Soon after returning I went to see doctor from [an assistance provider]. They gave me medication. That helped for short time. Since then, I haven't been for any more medical tests. I do not have money to go."*

The low frequency of ongoing health support seems unusual in light of the case studies and academic research, which suggests that ongoing health problems are common. This may indicate that health problems are in fact quickly treated; that victims do not voice medical problems; or that service providers do not identify or respond to needs for assistance.

### **Mental health support**

Mental health support for survivors is extremely limited. For survivors suffering severely from depression, PTSD or other symptoms, there are very few referral options. All service providers interviewed for this study reported that they refer to the Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation (TPO), or a local health centre. TPO has bases in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Battambang, Kampong Thom and Kampong Cham and provides assessments, trauma counseling and other services. However, accessing this support usually requires survivors to travel, which may be impossible without financial support.

Social workers who provide ongoing support for survivors are trained in basic counseling only. While this may not equip them to identify all mental health needs (as discussed below), social workers with basic skills they can nevertheless provide useful support. One social worker described a client who went through a divorce, and phoned the social worker many times in this period. Another survivor said of their social worker: *"My social worker keeps calling me. He never forgets me."* In the case of CWCC, clients can also be referred to an anger management worker within the organisation.

It is worth noting that in the Cambodian context it is particularly important for assistance organisations to provide mental health support. Among the Cambodian population at large, knowledge of mental health problems is very low.<sup>198</sup> Few people know how to access assistance, or understand its benefits compared to traditional methods. For instance, one

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<sup>198</sup>Tanja Schunert et. al, 2012.



survivor was referred to an NGO for psychological support, but his mother preferred that he be treated in a Khmer traditional ceremony.<sup>199</sup> Service providers can therefore play a useful role educating survivors about mental health and the benefits of treatment<sup>200</sup> in a context where few seek this help independently.

### Long-term case management

Six organisations provide some degree of ongoing (re)integration support after survivors return to the community. Two provide short-term follow-up only (six months or less), with the aim of referring to other services. Four organisations provide long-term assistance. Their case managers support economic empowerment, provide basic counseling, and refer for other services. Table 2 shows the scope of follow-up support.

Almost all support takes place in the survivor's home community. While several organisations support survivors to attend vocational training in different locations, it is rare for survivors to be supported to integrate permanently into a new community.

#### Box 7: Successful cases due to long-term case management

*“One of our clients was trafficked to Thailand then Malaysia for fishing, and came back with nothing. When he first arrived home, he was very aggressive and made a lot of trouble with his family. We approached TPO to provide psychosocial counseling for a couple of months, then we discussed a business plan with him. His wife has skills selling groceries so we started to establish a small business for the family. The man started helping to expand the shop. Now they can live without our support. ...He can send his children to school, build a latrine and save money for healthcare. He even bought a new motorbike for his family. His level of anger is getting better.”*

*“I met one victim who we supported for more than two years. He started a small barbershop in his village. This helped his income level but the experience also gave him confidence. He became a commune council member responsible for youths and children. He became an advocate in the village, educating others about safe migration.”*

One 18-year old survivor was referred by MoSVY to the shelter in Svay Rieng. He had been trafficked to Vietnam at age four by his uncle to sell lottery tickets and beg on the streets. Shelter staff facilitated for him to study motorbike maintenance at a shop for six months. They also provided other training in life planning, business management, communication and health. The survivor eventually had the skills to open his own business. The organization provided capital and other materials; his mother also provided some capital. Through this business the survivor could earn 20-30,000 riels (US\$5-6) per day. He also started a mobile maintenance service, and learnt to raise animals and grow vegetables to sell. He plans to save to buy more materials, clear the debt he owes his mother and save for his own family.

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<sup>199</sup> LSCW and CTIP II, 23.

<sup>200</sup> Surtees, 2014, 157.

**Table 2: Case management and ongoing follow-up**

	Number of case workers involved in follow-up with trafficked males	Duration of follow-up	Number of trafficked males assisted	Support provided
IOM	5, in Phnom Penh	Short-term only. Monitor on a case-by-case basis for 3-5 months.	241 in 2013 and 2014	IOM phones clients monthly for up to five months and visits when resources are available. They refer most cases to NGOs. IOM also provides vocational training to some clients.
Chab Dai	3, in Phnom Penh	Short term only.	Approx. 30 in 2013. None in 2014.	Chab Dai social workers provide one to three follow-up visits or phone calls, and refer clients to other services.
HCC	3, in Phnom Penh and Koh Kong	Until the end of the project. This may be up to 18 months, but usually less than a year.	18 (Jan 2012-Dec 2014).	HCC has two social workers and one (re)integration officer. They assess the socio-economic conditions of victims and help survivors and their family build a sustainable income generating activity. Staff also provides basic counseling and refer to other services.
CWCC	4, in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Banteay Meanchey	Usually over one year.	175 (Jan 2012-Dec 2014). In Dec 2014, approximately 100 were still supported.	CWCC social workers have a caseload of 30-40 men, and administer a grant to realise a (re)integration plan. Social workers can also refer to CWCC anger management worker if needed. At first, social workers may visit twice a month, later less frequently or by phone.
World Vision	6, in Battambang, Siem Reap and Banteay Meanchey	Standard is two years follow-up, or longer if needed.	46 in 2014, all adults.	World Vision assists survivors based in Battambang, Banteay Meanchey and Siem Reap. They have three reintegration officers, assisted by three community staff and respective DOSVY officials, who follow up with clients twice a month for the first three months, then less frequently. They assist survivors to implement a (re)integration plan, which may involve vocational training or starting a small business. Once per year, survivors gather for a retreat, at which they discuss victims' rights, business skills and other topics.
CCPCR	8, in Kampong Thom Svay Rieng, Siem Reap and Phnom Penh	One to two years, or longer as needed.	98 (Jan 2012-Dec 2014).	CCPCR provides follow-up support to clients that have left its Svay Rieng shelter. Follow up includes a grant and support for the victim and/or their family to start a small business, usually related to skills the victim has studied in the shelter. CCPCR also provides child victims with support to attend school.

## Supporting economic empowerment

Economic empowerment has been defined as “trafficked persons equipping themselves with the skills, resources and confidence to economically support themselves and their families, whether through self-employment or a job working for others”.<sup>201</sup> Support for economic empowerment may involve any combination of providing vocational/skills training, job placement, or support to be self-employed.

IOM, World Vision, HCC, CWCC and CCPCR have programmes to support the economic empowerment of trafficked men. IOM currently has a budget to provide vocational training for 50 men, for instance paying for clients training in mechanics, driving trucks or taxis, or in construction. In one case, a survivor returned to a broken family and had no accommodation. He received moto repair training and was able to live on-site.

Survivors assisted by HCC, CCPCR, CWCC and World Vision are offered skills training or given advice and materials to help them become self-employed. The kinds of training and employment offered include running a shop, moto repair, tractor repair, motorbike cleaning, telephone repairs, computers and electronics, tailoring, hairdressing, or agriculture such as raising crops, poultry farming, or raising other animals.

Almost all support is based around the victim generating income in their home community. There are no formal job placement programmes for trafficked men, however some social workers have found job placements on an ad hoc basis. Many (but not all) service providers portrayed their economic empowerment assistance as a means of preventing migration. No service providers mentioned supporting survivors to migrate safely as a form of economic empowerment.

### Box 8: Examples of successful economic empowerment

One organization supported a victim to start a grocery shop, from which he could generate US\$5.00-7.50 a day. He saved and bought a pig, and some cassava which he dried and sold. With these earnings and selling the pig he could build a new house. As the service provider noted: *“We think this is a successful case because the house was built, the shop is still operating, the client has not re-migrated and his mental problems have become better.”*

Another organization fixed a survivor’s house and provided tools and a water pump for irrigation. The survivor and his wife work growing rice and crops to sell. He also does casual work building roads. Together he and his wife earn US\$74-123 per month, to support seven children. He says: *“Even though we have more children now, my lifestyle is better because my wife runs a plantation and small business and we can send our children to school.”*

Another survivor was assisted to attend eight months training in Siem Reap to fix motorbikes. The training included accommodation, food and medication. He was also sent to work with a motorbike fixing shop, and during this time got about US\$80 per month commission. He considers this very good and useful assistance because he now has a skill for life.

Another survivor paid his own way through a training course. An organization later provided him tools to start his own business. He said: *“My life since I returned has been very different, because now I have a skill [repairing tractors]. The experience on the boat was very hard, and when I came back I had new commitment. Now that I am skilled, I can make a living by myself. Although the wages in Cambodia are very low and it’s hard to find job, I will never go abroad any more, because have a skill I can use here.”*

<sup>201</sup> Surtees, 2012.

# Challenges and opportunities of existing services

The successful cases above show that (re)integration support can make a difference to survivors. However, there are a number of challenges with existing services that prevent comprehensive assistance. There are also opportunities to enhance services.

## 1. Many victims not identified

*“I think we are missing thousands of cases...” - Assistance provider*

A very low number of trafficked men are identified compared to the estimates of victim numbers. As discussed above, there are likely to be tens of thousands of Cambodians working on Thai fishing vessels, and several thousand may be victims of trafficking. Nevertheless, in recent years fewer than two hundred trafficked men have been identified per year.

Screening of deportees and returning migrants to identify victims remains weak. There is also next to no proactive searching for Cambodian victims in destination countries, such as Khmer-language outreach in ports or detention centres. It is highly likely that some Cambodian victims remain stranded or detained. Some repatriated victims report seeing Cambodians at overseas ports.<sup>202</sup> Further, in 2014, the Thai NGO Labour Rights Promotion Network conducted a fact-finding trip to Ambon, Indonesia and found dozens of Thai and Myanmar fishers stranded and awaiting repatriation assistance. These researchers reported seeing Cambodians also.<sup>203</sup> In addition, there may be several hundred victims of Giant Ocean unaccounted for. There is therefore an urgent need to improve the identification of victims.

## 2. Many identified victims receive no assistance, or only short-term or partial assistance

Even among male victims who *are* identified, many go unassisted or receive only short-term or partial assistance. This is due to poor referrals, particularly the lack of assigned case managers. It is also due to poor coordination and a lack of access to particular services.

### Poor referrals

*“It’s not clear whose responsibility a client is. .... When [assistance organisations] take a client, no one hears from the organisations again.” -Assistance provider*

The referral system is currently *ad hoc*. Surtees found that some Giant Ocean victims received no assistance, despite being identified by police, NGOs or IOs.<sup>204</sup> This may be because first responders do not know the importance of (re)integration assistance, their responsibility to refer, or the referral options available.

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<sup>202</sup>For instance, Giant Ocean victims reported seeing Cambodians at Kaohsiung port, Taiwan, and possibly Saldanha near cape town. LSCW and CTIP II, 23, 37.

<sup>203</sup> Conversation with Labour Rights Promotion Network, November 2014. See also Labour Protection Network Foundation and Chulalongkorn University, “Press release 30 September 2014: Seminar on assistance to Thai Sea fishers left in Ambon, Indonesia: Possibilities of forced labour and human trafficking among migrant workers in fishing industry.”

<sup>204</sup> Surtees, 2014, 153.

Other survivors have been referred for only one type of assistance, such as legal aid or vocational training. However, this is no guarantee they will be referred on for other services. For instance, one survivor described incurring debt to pay US\$1000 for medical treatment. According to him, the organisation supporting him with economic empowerment never offered him medical care. Another respondent also noted this breakdown in referrals:

*“We met a guy who was clearly quite distressed after twelve months of coming home. The social worker agreed and said, “I think he needs psychological assistance.” I don’t know he hadn’t received that earlier, because he had been assisted with skills training.”*

This breakdown in referrals is understandable if no one has clear responsibility for a client’s care. It is also understandable if organisations have a limited mandate. For instance, as a provider of legal aid noted: *“When we focus on legal assistance, we only focus on legal assistance, and we forget about [other needs in] (re)integration... So the men receive less support.”* To address this problem it is necessary to assign each survivor a case manager who has responsibility for the survivor’s care and a mandate to address their range of needs.

### **Lack of systematic referral to case managers**

A key issue undermining assistance is that survivors are not systematically referred to organisations providing long-term case management. For instance, of 557 victims of trafficking and labour exploitation assisted by CTIP II, only two-thirds were assisted by organisations that offer case management.<sup>205</sup> While existing case management has many challenges, survivors who receive it do enjoy relatively comprehensive assistance.

Case manager support is essential for several reasons. First, it enables ongoing assessment of the survivor’s changing needs. At present there is an over-reliance on initial assessments, which are usually conducted within the first few days after a victim’s return. At this stage some victims still have memory problems due to trauma, even to the extent that they *“cannot remember their villages.”*<sup>206</sup> Many have not yet re-united with their families, and do not have clarity about their needs and aspirations. They may decline assistance that later on they may wish to receive.

Furthermore, trafficked men are unlikely to disclose all abuse and needs until they have developed trust. A researcher who interviewed dozens of Indonesian trafficked men over a period of weeks commented that, *“Only when victims felt comfortable and supported would they talk about the more horrendous aspects of abuse, particularly rapes.”* Service providers assisting male trafficking victims in the UK had similar observations: *“Sometimes it takes weeks for them to start trusting here”.*<sup>207</sup> This emphasises the need for a case manager who can follow up over the long term.

To address this problem, it is necessary to train all first responders and assistance providers to refer survivors to organisations providing long-term support from case managers. Case management should be offered whether or not survivors have obvious needs on arrival, as needs may arise later in (re)integration. Resourcing for case management should also be increased.

### **Lack of coordination across assistance providers**

*“A case management network- to have service providers to coordinate on cases and have a clear delegation and division of labour, and be able to update other partners regularly- this is what is really missing here.” -Assistance provider*

<sup>205</sup> CTIP II data provided by Winrock International.

<sup>206</sup> Observation of an assistance provider.

<sup>207</sup> Munro and Pritchard, 2013, 18-19.

There is next to no coordination among the various service providers who provide ongoing assistance to trafficked men. In 2014 IOM initiated several meetings to coordinate assistance for particular groups of returning survivors. However there are no meetings to discuss ongoing support, or duplications and gaps in the assistance nationwide. There is also no systematic way for service providers to stay updated about referral options. While meetings should not be too regular to infringe on service providers' time, occasional meetings may enable providers to troubleshoot difficult cases, or discuss how to divide labour to best utilise limited resources.

### **Necessary services not available or accessible**

Even if survivors' needs are identified, several types of services remain unavailable, or inaccessible in certain locations. Specialist medical and psychological care is available only in Phnom Penh and other major urban centres. In certain parts of the country, particularly rural areas and northeastern provinces, services of many kinds are lacking.

Support with drug or alcohol addictions is very limited across the country. One service provider said he would never refer to the local government drug rehab centre because *"It is run by the army. They have no counseling skills and just want the client to do labour."* These comments are consistent with a Human Rights Watch assessment of government facilities for drug users.<sup>208</sup>

There is a lack of temporary accommodation for trafficked men, apart from the CCPCR shelter in Svay Rieng. Survivors elsewhere have no ability to stay and recuperate or search for jobs, but instead they must return home within days. The planned IOM shelter in Phnom Penh may address this problem.

Not all survivors have opportunities to attend survivor retreats, or meet with other survivors. Some form of support group may be well received, as a survivor commented: *"If I was going to meet men with similar experience, we would laugh together and talk about our experience in Thailand. I want to visit them and talk to them, but I don't know how."*

## **3. Challenges of providing long-term assistance**

Victims who receive long-term case management receive relatively comprehensive assistance. However, the quality of case management is compromised by resource constraints, case managers' limited training and the practical challenges of survivors' remoteness, mobility and immensely difficult situations.

### **Case managers insufficiently resourced**

The geographical remoteness of many clients is a major obstacle to assistance. As shown above in Maps 1-3, victims are dispersed across the country. Many are in remote villages, some inaccessible in the rainy season. As shown in Table 2 above, there are currently very few staff involved in providing long-term assistance to men, approximately 20 nationwide. Some of these also assist other types of clients. Therefore, due to time and resource constraints, some case managers necessarily prioritise the victims near towns:

*"We lack transportation to assess or meet with victims who live far from town. Mostly we work only on the cases close to town, for instance cases where it takes one morning to visit and get back to the office."*

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<sup>208</sup> Human Rights Watch, *They treat us like animals: Mistreatment of drug users and "undesirables" in Cambodia's drug detention centres* (United States: Human Rights Watch, 2013).



Likely due to resource constraints, in some cases delayed follow up has compromised (re)integration, as victims have re-migrated because they cannot wait for assistance. In one case, DoSVY and an assistance provider assessed one victim whose family had pressing financial needs and emotional problems. However, due to a lack of staff, the assistance provider then took three months to contact the victim. The victim could not wait for assistance, and migrated again.

In another case, a survivor was angry after waiting for a year to receive equipment he was promised. According to the service provider, the delay was due to a very heavy caseload, and also because the survivor kept changing his mind about what he wanted. This delay may affect the survivor's livelihood, but also their trust of service providers in the future.

Increased financial and human resources are required to overcome geographical barriers and to ensure prompt follow up. There may also be opportunities to enhance coordination across agencies in order to best utilise the resources available.

### **Retaining contact with highly transient clients**

*"The young men want to move..." - Assistance provider*

High numbers of survivors are lost to follow up, which is a significant factor in victims going under-assisted. Slow assistance is only one reason, survivors may move at any time for better opportunities, or simply change phones. All assistance providers emphasised the challenge of retaining contact with highly transient clients.

*"Staying in touch? That is the big question..."*

*"Women are easy clients... they mostly stay with their family and children. But the men keep moving, it's difficult to keep track, to monitor."*

*"Many male victims migrate back very quickly. Only a few stay here. This is fine if they migrate safely, and if we can get updated information from them. But so far we haven't been able to do this."*

Assistance providers described various techniques for retaining contact with survivors. One organisation distributes phones to clients on arrival. Others provide hotline cards so the survivor can make contact; others ask for phone numbers of family or village leaders. One organisation recalled giving grants in several installments, and felt that this increased their ability to retain contact with survivors.

Despite these efforts, contact is frequently lost. One provider estimated they lose contact with 20-30 percent of male clients, another 70-80 percent, another 90 per cent or more. However, at least two long-term service providers did not report this problem. These providers believed survivors were now reluctant to migrate, due to their trafficking experience, or the support they were now receiving. High numbers lost to follow-up are also evident in two studies of survivors that attempted multiple interviews: the LSHTM and IOM study lost contact with at least 56 percent of Cambodian male participants before the second interview at 30 to 90 days;<sup>209</sup> another study of trafficked men lost contact with 50 of participants before their second interview.<sup>210</sup>

The difficulty of maintaining contact limits all kinds of support. It is particularly damaging to any

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<sup>209</sup> Zimmerman et al., 2014. 164 of all 269 participants were lost to follow up. At a minimum, 133 would be males, which is 56 percent of the male sample.

<sup>210</sup> Conversation with service provider.



kind of mental health support, which requires stability to build trust over a long period. Addressing this challenge involves a range of approaches, including the methods already employed above. Ensuring prompt follow up is important to reduce the urgency to re-migrate. Providing conditional cash grants or other incentives for maintaining contact is another possibility.

### **Training of case managers**

Case managers providing long-term assistance are seldom trained to identify and address highly complex social and psychological needs. Most are trained only in basic counseling, and refer complex cases to partners such as TPO. However, in several cases described above, case managers have failed to refer survivors to assistance. This may be because they did not recognise the need, or did not know about referral options.

Case managers may also lack training and experience assisting male clients, who may ask for help or work through problems in different ways to female clients. As a service provider described:

*“Men are different to work with. They don’t fit the typical model of a vulnerable person who sits in corner and cries. They can be difficult, awkward, aggressive or silent. Social workers need to pay attention to different responses, and this requires training, including training to deal with the social worker’s own prejudices and assumptions.”*

Case managers should receive further and ongoing training to equip them to recognise needs and refer appropriately, and to understand approaches for working with men. There is also room to explore creative approaches that reduce barriers to men receiving mental health care.

## **4. Challenges of economic empowerment**

*“It is best if they can help survivors with equipment to run a business, and to provide them with skills so they can work in Cambodia so they don’t have to go to other countries.” –Survivor*

Supporting economic empowerment of victims in remote, economically-depressed areas is immensely challenging. The following discussion must be seen in this context.

### **Poorly-matched or incomplete assistance compromises (re)integration**

In some cases assistance has been poorly matched to a victim’s skills, aspirations, or economic setting. Sometimes this may be the survivor’s own decision; in other cases, assistance organisations have not listened to the victim. In one case, a survivor received training on growing crops, but he did not have access to land. One survivor recalled receiving training on raising chickens. However, he has never used the training to raise chickens because *“I don’t own any chickens, and also I needed to find money instantly, and it takes a long time to raise chickens”*. Other victims have been set up with a small business for which there is no local demand. As one survivor described: *“I live in big town, so I don’t earn a lot from my grocery shop. There are many other shops next to me, and I’m not on main street...”* Previous studies have also noted poorly matched assistance.<sup>211</sup> These examples waste resources and hinder (re)integration.

Incomplete assistance or a lack of follow-up also compromises (re)integration. For instance, one respondent recalled an organisation that offered a victim help to raise chickens. However, they

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<sup>211</sup> Surtees, 2013, 102-103; 2014, 156.

did not provide training or follow up: when they asked the victim if he knew how to raise chickens, he said 'yes' in order to get the support. Because the client was unsupported, the chickens died. The client was left in a worse situation than before he received the assistance. There is a need for better assessment of the survivor's situation and economic context when selecting methods of income generation, and to resource case managers sufficiently to enable regular follow up.

### **Obstacles to skills training**

Various barriers prevent survivors accessing skills training. Some survivors have family commitments that make them unable to leave home. Many are illiterate, affecting their ability or confidence to participate. Some training providers do not offer a students' stipend or accommodation on site, making these courses inaccessible for survivors who need immediate income to support their family. Some individuals lack a means of transport to attend training.

There are also gaps in the skills that are on offer. As one social worker said: "*We would like to offer training on tractor repairs, but there is no partner who provides this.*" There are few options for training towards urban job placements or in emerging sectors.

It is worth noting that skills training may be 'incomplete' assistance if it does not lead to a job afterwards. Survivors who invest time in training but emerge unemployed may be worse off than if they had earned income instead. Training must therefore be carefully selected after assessing the job market.

### **Self-employment seldom generates high incomes**

Even economic outcomes deemed 'successful' seldom generate high incomes. For instance, a criterion for one service provider to close a case is when the client stably earns a daily income of US\$2.50. A survivor earning this income may well still wish to migrate again: a survey found US\$2.50 was the average pre-migration income of Cambodians who had moved to Thailand.<sup>212</sup>

Moreover, even the best assistance providers cannot guard survivors against failure due to external factors, such as market changes or simply bad luck. For instance, one survivor received training on raising chickens, which he considered very helpful. However he suffered when the chickens became diseased and died.

Of the eight survivors interviewed for case studies, most were still in vulnerable financial situations despite years of assistance. Among the survivors who were solely self-employed, one earned US\$7.50 per day repairing tractors, but another earned only US\$0.60-1.70 per day growing cassava and recharging batteries. Four worked as casual labourers, either to supplement self-employment, or because self-employment had failed. These men earned US\$2.00-7.50 per day, but only when work was available. For instance, one survivor and his wife collectively earned US\$74-123 per month to support a family of nine. Many of these men remain vulnerable to the problems of poverty, and potentially, to exploitative work offers.

More is clearly required to address the economic vulnerability factors that make these men susceptible to trafficking. If generating a reliable income in the survivor's context is not realistic, it may be preferable to support the survivor to settle elsewhere.

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<sup>212</sup> Dickson, 2014.

## **Opportunities for creativity in economic support**

There are opportunities for more creativity in economic support. Existing initiatives overwhelmingly focus on a narrow range of self-employment options in the survivor's home community. They focus on the individual or family, but seldom work on the village level, or with multiple survivors living in the same area. It would be helpful to consider a wider range of self-employment options, village-level initiatives, or options to assist 'clusters' of survivors together when they live nearby.

There is also room to consider alternatives outside the home community. For instance, there are currently no job placement programmes for male victims of trafficking. Identifying job opportunities— and supporting safe migration to these areas— may be one additional option for service providers. This would involve setting up partnerships with the private sector and accommodation providers. Further, if a temporary shelter in Phnom Penh does become available, this may serve as a base from which survivors can explore work, accommodation or training options in the capital.

The option of supporting safe migration and/or connecting migrants with opportunities in Thailand could also be considered, with due assessment of the risks. This may involve partnerships with Thai organisations to identify reputable employers and safe travel and accommodation options.

## Recommendations

*“I would like to say to NGOs: if there is any possibility, please go to the fishing boats in Thailand and check them... Provide workers with better living conditions, food, shelter and medication.” –Survivor*

*“Consider possibilities for those who are detained! Please free them as soon as you can so they do not suffer like I experienced.”–Survivor*

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that effective (re)integration assistance requires development in reception and referrals, legal aid, health and mental health care, work with families, case management and support for economic empowerment. Changes are needed to increase the *number* of victims that receive long-term assistance, and to improve the *quality* of support.

Key priorities to improve (re)integration services include:

- Increasing government resources allocated for (re)integration, so that the MoSVY has the operational budget to fulfill its mandate
- Improving referrals to ensure that each survivor is assigned a case manager
- Increasing resources for case management, and building capacity of case managers to identify needs, particularly in mental health
- Exploring the current low level of long-term medical care, and
- Improving the selection and delivery of support for economic empowerment, particularly exploring more options outside the home community.

While not part of (re)integration assistance, urgent priorities also include increasing the number of victims identified, and the speed of repatriation assistance. These steps affect how survivors begin the (re)integration process, and whether they are even offered assistance.

## Recommendations for the Royal Government of Cambodia

- a) Increase the operational budget of MoSVY so the Ministry can play a greater role in (re)integration assistance.
- b) Improve screening at borders. Introduce targeted screening for deportees who report they previously worked on fishing vessels.
- c) Update the training curricula of Cambodian immigration officials and police so they are equipped to (i) refer all identified survivors to assistance providers who provide case management and (ii) challenge misperceptions that males are not victims of trafficking.
- d) Provide more resources to embassies and consulates – perhaps in the form of dedicated labour attachés - to speed up repatriations, and to play a role in identifying victims. Prioritise Malaysia and Indonesia.
- e) Improve access to safe migration channels, for instance by making travel documents quicker and cheaper to obtain.

## Recommendations for assistance providers

### Identification

- a) Coordinate data collection across agencies in order to monitor identification trends.
- b) Initiate Khmer language outreach in overseas ports to identify potential victims and connect them with assistance. Prioritise ports in Thailand, Indonesia (particularly Ambon Island), Malaysia and South Africa where past victims have escaped.
- c) Develop a list of Cambodian missing persons. Publicise the list internationally, particularly to port authorities.
- d) Advocate for destination-country governments to improve screening for victims among deportees, detainees and migrants in general, particularly those working on fishing vessels.

### Repatriation assistance

- a) Advocate for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to urgently increase resourcing of foreign consulates to speed up returns of identified victims. Prioritise Malaysia and Indonesia.
- b) Refund families who have self-funded the victim's return travel, in order to free their families from debt.

### Reception and initial referrals

- a) Improve privacy during receptions. Increase efforts to shield returnees from the media. Challenge misperceptions that male victims do not have security fears.
- b) Consider opportunities of having survivors briefly gathered for the reception period, for instance to offer basic mental health education or share video testimonies from other survivors.
- c) Train all first responders and assistance providers to refer survivors to organisations providing long-term case-management. Update training curricula accordingly.

### Access to justice and compensation

- a) Strengthen partnerships to pursue legal cases in the Thai jurisdiction.
- b) Continue to provide advocacy services and avenues of legal redress so that victims' right to compensation is realised.

### Long-term case management

- a) Increase resourcing to ensure case managers can deliver comprehensive and timely support. Strictly limit caseloads.
- b) Build capacity of case managers to:
  - i. correctly identify needs, particularly in mental health, and refer accordingly;
  - ii. work with families;
  - iii. select economic empowerment support best suited to the context.
- c) Consider sharing training opportunities with other (re)integration organisations, for instance those working with prisoners or refugees.
- d) Explore new options for retaining contact with survivors, for instance providing incentives for survivors to stay in contact with service providers.
- e) Prepare for the eventuality that survivors re-migrate. Strengthen networks of partners in Cambodia and Thailand who can take referrals and follow up.
- f) Explore ways to coordinate long-term assistance, for instance by restarting regular meetings of service providers, as ran in the past. These may serve as a forum to identify opportunities for collaboration, and to stay updated about referral options.

### Health support

- a) Investigate the apparently low level of ongoing health support offered, compared to health problems documented in academic literature.
- b) Broaden the scope of initial health assessments.

### **Mental health support**

- a) Explore ways to reduce barriers to men accessing mental health support, such as incorporating a mental health component into vocational training or offering phone counseling. For survivors who have an initial reception in Phnom Penh, consider offering basic education about common mental health symptoms, or showing video testimonies from survivors who have benefited from assistance.
- b) Update training curricula for case managers to equip them to identify mental health needs, and to understand effective approaches for working with men.
- c) Explore the potential of self-help groups or other group support. Draw experience from existing programmes within Cambodia and international examples in Vietnam and India. Explore opportunities to offer group retreats to a larger number of survivors.
- d) Advocate for the overall development of mental health services in Cambodia.

### **Support for families**

- a) Throughout all aspects of assistance to the survivor, consider ways to support family members with their needs as secondary victims.
- b) Offer health and mental health support to family members. Consider ways to educate family members about mental health. Consider offering family counseling, and extending survivor retreats to include family members.
- c) Include family members in economic empowerment.

### **Support for economic empowerment**

- a) Consider employment options both inside and outside the survivor's community. If the survivor wishes to migrate, support them to do so safely. This may involve connecting them with accommodation, job opportunities or safe migration education. Follow up in the new location.
- b) Establish a job placement programme in cooperation with the private sector.
- c) If the survivor chooses to be self-employed, ensure their business plan meets demand in the local market.
- d) Match vocational training with skills shortages, and offer a more diverse range of skills in emerging sectors, including partnerships with the private sector. Reduce barriers to training by offering accommodation, transport and a stipend for trainees.
- e) Explore options to support on a commune and village level, or to support multiple survivors who are clustered near each other. Consider partnerships with experts in rural livelihoods development.
- f) Prepare back-up plans in case planned income-earning methods fail.

### **Funding**

- a) Increase the budget per survivor to US\$2000 or more. Ensure funding is flexible enough to be used to support family members.
- b) Encourage donors to fund men as well as women and children.
- c) Challenge donor perceptions that men are not victims of trafficking, or funding practices that reinforce this misperception.
- d) Advocate for MoSVY to increase its operational budget so the Ministry can play a greater role in reintegration assistance.

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