

Cambodia July – September 2017

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| Key partners | Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MOLVT) Department of Labour and Vocational Training (PDOLVT), Kampong Cham, Prey Veng, Battambang, Kampong Thom, and Kampot Cambodian Labour Confederation (CLC) National Union Alliance Chambers Cambodia (NACC) Association of Cambodian Recruitment Agencies (ACRA) National Employment Agency (NEA) Legal Support for Children and Women (LSCW) Phnom Srey Organization for Development (PSOD) |
| Target sites | Kampong Cham, Prey Veng, Battambang and Phnom Penh, Kampot, and Kampong Thom |
| Focal point | Mr Veth Vorn, National Project Coordinator, vorn@ilo.org , +855 12 777264 |

Background information

With 300,000 young Cambodians entering the labour market each year and no nationally set minimum wage, many Cambodian workers go abroad seeking employment opportunities and higher wages. The primary destination country for Cambodian migrant workers is Thailand, with workers commonly migrating into the fishing, agriculture, livestock, construction, manufacturing and service sectors, including domestic work. Only a small minority of these workers (and even fewer women workers) use regular channels to migrate, instead relying on social networks and unlicensed brokers to cross the border and seek employment.

Since 2010, the Republic of South Korea has become the second most popular destination for regular Cambodian migrant workers. Cambodia also has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Japan, but far fewer migrants travel there for work, likely due to the technical requirements of the Industrial Training Program and Technical Internship Program. MOUs with the governments of Qatar and Kuwait were signed in 2011 and 2009 respectively. So far no Cambodian migrant workers have been sent through these channels. As of December 2015, 400 Cambodian domestic workers had been deployed through private recruitment agencies to Singapore as part of a pilot project to see if this is a viable migration option in the future.

In December 2015, a new MOU and agreement on labour cooperation was signed between Cambodia and Thailand. Cambodia and Malaysia also signed two MOUs in December 2015 for sending general workers and domestic workers to Malaysia, lifting the suspension on recruitment agencies sending domestic workers to Malaysia that had been in place since 2011. Despite discussion, sending did not recommence in 2016. An agreement on the recruitment of domestic workers and general workers was also signed with Saudi Arabia in February 2016, but no timeline has been set for implementation.

Cambodian women migrant workers tend to migrate into low-skilled jobs in construction, agriculture, manufacturing, entertainment, hospitality and domestic work. Reports of abuse and exploitation of domestic workers have been recorded in all countries where Cambodian domestic workers are employed. With ageing populations in Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore, demand for household and caregiving services in the region is expected to continue to grow.

While the Cambodian Government has not put a formal ban on recruiting and sending Cambodians overseas to work in fishing, the Government has made several statements indicating that they do not support regular migration into the fishing industry. In response to the 2016 request from the President of the Cambodian Human Rights Committee (CHRC) to the Royal Thai Government to protect the rights of fishers, the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand indicated they would undertake further measures to protect workers in the sector.

The Policy on Labour Migration for Cambodia and Action Plan (2015-2018) outlines the Government's commitment to harness labour migration for development. Goals include skills development, promoting productive use of remittances and supporting successful return and reintegration.

Cambodia at a glance

 Population: 14.9 million

 Labour Force: 7.0 million

Migration to Thailand

117,424 MOU migrant workers

Source: Office of Foreign Workers Administration, Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour, Thailand (February 2016)

461,851 migrants registered at one-stop service centres

Source: Office of Foreign Workers Administration, Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour, Thailand (July 2015)

111,493 registered migrants completing nationality verification

Source: Office of Foreign Workers Administration, Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour, Thailand (February 2016)

Migration to Malaysia

8,548 regular migrant workers (October 2015)

Source: Immigration Department, Ministry of Home Affairs, Malaysia

Workers migrating through official channels:

Thailand (2006-2016): 116,000
W43,950:M72,050

Malaysia (1998-2016): 46,452
W40,011:M6,441

Republic of Korea (2007-2015):
43,571

W8,319: M35,252

Japan (2007-2016): 2,383
W1,461:M922

Singapore (2013-2015): 400
(W400)

Source: Department of Employment and Manpower, Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, Cambodia (January 2016)

Main activities July–September 2017

- MRCs in five provinces conducted outreach activities that reached a total of 4,147 (W2,257: M1,872) potential migrant workers and their families. The MRCs distributed safe labour migration information and materials, including migration tips, migration legislation including a Sub-decree, eight Prakas, and copies of Cambodia's Labour Migration Policy.
- LSCW provided legal assistance and legal counselling to 54 migrant workers (W15: M37). A total of US\$44,000 was ordered to compensate 35 migrants recruited by an unregistered private recruitment agency.
- On 18 July, the ILO conducted a meeting with the Association of Cambodian Recruitment Agencies (ACRA) (W2: M3). The purpose of the meeting was to follow up on the results of ACRA's survey, provide an update on the recruitment agency landscape in Cambodia and discussed the need to organise a consultation to draft a Code of Conduct for ethical recruitment practices. On 8–11 August, the TRIANGLE in ASEAN Programme arranged for two ACRA representatives and Cambodia's NPC (M:3) to participate in a study tour to Viet Nam. The purpose of the visit was to learn about the Viet Nam Association of Manpower Supply (VAMAS) model for developing, ranking and monitoring the Code of Conduct for Viet Nam's recruitment agencies. Participants also learnt how MRCs work to assist migrant workers through capacity building and outreach activities. ACRA has decided to further discussion on developing a Code of Conduct in Cambodia.
- On 12-13 September, implementing partners (W10: M12) received a Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment training course delivered by the ILO. The aim was to raise awareness and increase understanding of gender issues, discrimination against women, and the TRIANGLE in ASEAN gender strategy. All participants engaged in the interactive learning activities and learnt practical tips on ways to advance gender equality. A gender network was created using Facebook, where members can share ideas and experiences.
- On 29 August, the ILO held a tripartite plus stakeholder consultation on the 10th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML) (W7: M31). The meeting developed a set of national recommendations to improve the protection of migrant domestic workers and the implementation of policies and support services.
- On 14 July, the ILO presented findings from the ILO and IOM Baseline Survey at the Labour Migration Forum (W9: M17) with the aim to ensure that programs and approaches related to labour migration, development and mobility were shared among stakeholders. The presentation highlighted pre-migration, migration, and post-migration experiences of migrant workers, associated costs and also positive outcomes of migration.

- MRCs provided a total of 162 (W65: M97) potential migrant workers with safe labour migration counselling at the community level. A Facebook page was created in order to provide information and update materials to potential migrants in a more effective way.
- 65,000 copies of Khmer-language safe migration tips were distributed across the country through MRCs, PDOLVTs, trade unions and civil society organisations for service providers, potential migrant workers and local communities. An electronic version was also shared with partner organisations.
- 500 copies of the Fair Recruitment Guideline were printed in Khmer and English for Government, employer organisations, private recruitment agencies and other stakeholders, to raise awareness on ethical recruitment practices for migrant workers.

Key developments

Following the adoption of the new Thai law, thousands of migrant workers returned to Cambodia. On 30 June, the Thai Government suspended the implementation of the Decree for 120 days, during which there would be no crackdowns on illegal workers. However, the exodus of migrant workers continued.

The Battambang MRC and PDOLVT worked together to provide safe labour counselling to 459 (W179: M280) returned migrants and their families along the Cambodia-Thailand border (KamReaing, Sampov Leorn and Phnom Preak, Battambang province). They provided information on access to travel documents, and migration through regular channels, job referral information and interviewed migrants interested in taking local jobs in factories, construction and farming.

At the national level, the ILO organised an extraordinary meeting with UN agencies and civil society organisations to clarify support needed to assist migrants. Several meetings were organised with the National Committee for Counter Trafficking (NCCT) and the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MOLVT) who were seeking support for Cambodian migrant workers.

Upcoming activities and key dates October – December 2017

| Date | Event | Location | Attendees | Purpose |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 25 – 26 Oct | 10 th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML) 'Towards Achieving Decent Work for Domestic Workers in ASEAN' | Manila, Philippines | Tripartite stakeholders, ASEAN Secretariat, Civil Society, international organisations | Discuss, share experiences and build consensus on the protection of migrant workers issues and concludes with the adoption of recommendations. |
| Fourth week Oct | Presentation of Fair Recruitment guidelines in Khmer | Phnom Penh | TRIANGLE in ASEAN staff, UN agencies, civil society, labour migration stakeholders, employers, PRAS | Raise awareness of ethical recruitment practices among ILO constituents, especially recruitment agencies, ACRA, and MAC in preparation for the adoption of new guidelines to support COC development |
| Nov | Consultative workshop to develop a Code of Conduct and ranking system for private recruitment agencies | Phnom Penh | TRIANGLE in ASEAN staff, some selected partners, ACRA, recruitment agencies, and MAC | Draft a new code of conduct for private recruitment agencies that is in line with international standards and use the VAMAS as a model. |

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| Second week Nov | Consultative workshop to validate dispute resolution guidelines for migrant workers | Phnom Penh | ACRA, TRIANGLE in ASEAN staff, MOLVT, selected PDOLVT, and MRCs, CSOs | Finalise a dispute resolution guideline for migrant workers, using the ILO's module and training material on dispute resolution, and existing guidelines from the Industrial Relation Project. |
| Fourth week Nov | National workshop on identification and prioritization of labour migration | Phnom Penh | ACRA, TRIANGLE in ASEAN staff, MOLVT, selected PDOLVT, and MRCs, CSOs, UNs | Review the implementation of the Policy on Labour Migration for Cambodia and set priorities for labour migration in 2018. |
| 18 Dec | Consultative workshop on migration cost structures | Phnom Penh | TRIANGLE in ASEAN staff, implementing partners, MOLVT, NCCT/MOI, ACRA | Draft the standard costs for migration, including the cost structure and cost categories for migration. |

Media coverage

| Date | Title | Media Source |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 6 July | Cambodian migrant workers return from Thailand | The Phnom Penh Post |
| 27 July | Cambodia Not Punishing Offenders in Migrant Cases | The Cambodia Daily |
| 27 July | For Migrants, Pull Of Higher Wages Still Strong | The Cambodia Daily |
| 31 July | Migrants still lacking access to justice: ILO | The Phnom Penh Post |
| 2 August | Undocumented migrants signing up in new Thai Centres | The Phnom Penh Post |
| 24 August | More Migrant Workers Returned from Malaysia | The Cambodia Daily |

The **TRIANGLE in ASEAN** programme extends the cooperation between the **International Labour Organization (ILO)**, the **Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade** and **Global Affairs Canada** on protecting migrant workers and enhancing development opportunities. **TRIANGLE in ASEAN** aims to ensure that the benefits of labour migration are equally realised by men and women migrant workers; employers and governments. In shifting emphasis towards leveraging the development potential of migration, **TRIANGLE in ASEAN** aims to shape labour migration opportunities to support inclusive and sustainable growth in the ASEAN Economic Community. **TRIANGLE in ASEAN** engages institutionally with **ASEAN** and focuses on delivering in six countries (**Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam**).