FLOW MONITORING SURVEYS: INSIGHTS INTO THE PROFILES AND VULNERABILITIES OF CAMBODIAN MIGRANTS TO THAILAND (ROUND TWO)

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)
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DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX (DTM)

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Executive Summary

Labour migration is a key demographic trend influencing and shaping the growth of many countries in Southeast Asia, particularly Thailand. Thailand's steady economic growth in recent decades has sparked an increase in labour demand, resulting in a continued influx of low-skilled foreign workers from neighboring Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar. By 2017, a total of 723,911 Cambodian nationals had received documentation status for residing in Thailand. Due to different economic and social reasons for Cambodian nationals, especially the younger generations consider migration to be a viable option. Although migration from Cambodia to Thailand has a long-standing history, migrants still face several challenges. Due to the precarity of jobs acquired (predominantly low-skilled, without proper legal status and limited in-country support networks) migrants are often exposed to heightened risks and vulnerabilities compared to local populations.

In order to gain a better understanding of the migration patterns and the nature of flows from Cambodia to Thailand – with a particular focus on possible vulnerabilities – IOM Thailand's Migrant Assistance and Counter-Trafficking Unit initiated a survey exercise in May 2018 in the provinces of Battambang and Banteay Meanchey, utilizing the Flow Monitoring component of IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM). Flow Monitoring is a tool designed to track movement flows, and the overall situation at key points of origin, transit and destination; it is an optimal tool to provide a more detailed understanding of the migration situation at the Thai-Cambodian border. With special consideration to the experience of migrant workers, IOM Thailand aimed to explore migrants' profiles, drivers of migration, the level of preparedness for migration, as well as associated vulnerabilities and return intentions. This research activity is part of a larger regional activity, collecting DTM data across various countries. This exercise builds upon the pre-established Flow Monitoring Registry (FMR) and Flow Monitoring Survey (FMS) activities along the Thai-Myanmar border in Tak province, Thailand, from June 2018 until May 2019. The activity is being further implemented at the Thai-Lao border in Vientiane city from July 2019 until August 2019.

IOM collected two rounds of data over the duration of five months: from mid-March until end-May and from end-May until mid-August 2019.

From mid-March until end-May 2019, a total of 3,127 Cambodian nationals were surveyed in the provinces of Battambang and Banteay Meanchey, of whom 3,122 were identified as migrant workers. The 3,122 migrant workers were categorized in two different migrant groups. The first group was comprised of outgoing migrants, leaving Cambodia prior to beginning employment in Thailand (n=2,499) and the second group of incoming migrants, returning after their employment (n=623). Two different survey tools were designed to capture the most accurate information possible for both target groups. The findings serve to identify migration patterns as well as identify common challenges and vulnerabilities and can be used to better inform policy and programming for the protection and assistance of migrant workers. In August 2019, IOM published "Flow Monitoring Surveys: Insights into the Profiles and Vulnerabilities of Cambodian Migrants to Thailand", which analyzed this first round of survey data collected in Battambang and Banteay Meanchey province between mid-March and end-May 2019. The initial report included an extensive theoretical section, reviewing existing literature for the five thematic areas of interest: Cambodian migrant profiles, drivers of migration, pre-migration preparations and arrangements, migrant vulnerabilities and return intentions.

From end-May to mid-August 2019, the team collected 2,503 additional surveys in the provinces of Battambang and Banteay Meanchey of which all migrants reported to be travelling to/from Thailand for employment purposes. Looking at the complete dataset, DTM Cambodia collected 5,630 surveys in five months, of which 5,625 were completed by Cambodian migrant workers.

Building on the report from the first round, this report analyzes the second round of data collection and provides a more detailed analysis of the data, examining the similarities and differences in the results across the two rounds of data collection. In so doing, the report aims to advance a more comprehensive understanding of Cambodian migrants in Thailand, with the larger dataset increasing the representativeness of findings. The report first provides a thematic analysis of the findings and then draws correlations between factors like gender, education, documentation status, employment sector and duration of stay in Thailand.

As the final of two reports, the analysis will not focus extensively on the last round of data results as such, but will instead provide an overarching analysis of the combined datasets and report on the combined data outcomes.

The results of both data collection rounds indicate that migration between Cambodia and Thailand is cyclical; many migrants only return for a short period to visit family and/or friends and migrants who had previously worked in Thailand frequently return to Thailand for further employment. The main findings of the report show that the information levels and expectations of incoming migrants are for the most part in line with the work experiences and impressions of outgoing migrants. The brief summaries per thematic area below provides a distillation of findings from the data collected:

Migrant Profiles

Throughout both data collection rounds, the average Cambodian migrants is a married, 29-year-old male with primary education. Male migrants were overrepresented in the overall sample at 57 per cent. The share of female respondents decreased during Round Two of the data collection. The largest proportion of over half of the sample population is between the ages of 16 and 32 years old. As already identified during Round One migrants tend to be married rather than single when they migrate from Cambodia to Thailand. The majority had completed primary education as their highest and only form of education (two third of the sample). The most common provinces of origin were the border provinces where the data collection took place, i.e. Battambang and Banteay Meanchey. Migrants transiting through Poi Pet originated from all over Cambodia while migrants interviewed around Kamrieng district (around Daung international border) and Phnom Preuk district (close to local checkpoints) appeared to be predominately originating from Battambang (more than half of the sample). Migrants preferred to stay in Thailand either for periods of over one year or below one month especially in the border provinces of Chanthaburi as well as Bangkok, Chon Buri, Samut Prakan and Rayong.

Drivers of Migration

Prior to embarking on their migration journey, the majority of respondents during both data collection rounds were privately employed, mainly in the agriculture/forestry sector. The unemployment rate (pre-departure) overall lies at roughly 15 per cent and was higher for female than for male respondents, and for younger Cambodian nationals (age group between 16 and 30). Migrants commonly reported more than one reason for going to Thailand, and these reasons were primarily associated with finding employment, having family problems or the pressure to make repayments on loans and problems related to landownership. This research also confirms that migration from Cambodia to Thailand seems to be cyclical in nature, as over three quarters of the sample had previously migrated to Thailand at least once. In line with the network theory, migrants heavily relied on family and friends to obtain trusted information about life and jobs in Thailand. As main reason for choosing Thailand as a destination the main denominators were higher incomes as well as easy access to the job market.

Pre-migration Arrangements and Preparations

With a few exceptions, throughout both data collection rounds almost all respondents reported to already have arranged employment prior to their departure, mainly with the support from family and friends in Thailand. In line with the employment sectors during their last stay in Thailand, jobs were predominately secured in the agriculture/forestry sector as well as construction and manufacturing. Samut Prakan gained importance for the manufacturing sector during Round Two. On average returning migrants had paid USD 261 for their journey (USD 248 for outgoing migrants). Moreover, migrants with travel documents for overseas migrant workers and non-immigrant visas (visas related to the MoU) process paid the highest amounts on average. As well as using financial savings, migrants commonly reported having borrowed money from their employers as well as organized wage deductions with employers to finance their migration journeys. Returning migrants report having borrowed money more frequently than outgoing migrants. Migrants also often received support for their migration preparations. The share of migrants that received support increased in-between the two data collection rounds.

Migrant Vulnerabilities

Looking at migrants' communication in Thai, over two third of the sample ranked their speaking and understanding abilities at the lowest two level (1 and 2) for both data collection rounds. For reading skills, over 80 per cent ranked their skills at the lowest level (1). Outgoing migrants mostly used border passes or the travel document for overseas migrant workers while returning migrants commonly used their passports with a non-immigrant visa, a border pass or no documents. Depending on the employment sectors, different travel documents were used. Returning migrants had on average earned wages of THB 400 per day. As already identified during Round One, looking at the different provinces, in the border province Chanthaburi migrants most often reported to have received wages below the provincial minimum wage while migrants returning from Chon Buri and Rayong most often reported wages above the provincial minimum wage. The data further revealed that the agriculture sector appears to be the sector with wages below the median minimum wage. Wholesale/retail and construction are identified as the sectors where migrants reportedly received higher wages on average. Migrants did not commonly experience problems en route to Thailand, however, a greater proportion of migrants reported problems during their employment in Thailand. Problems differed between the two population groups. Common expected problems for outgoing migrants were related to payments and wages while returning migrants reported challenges concerning detention and deportation. When asked if migrants knew of support mechanisms, less than half of the whole sample reported to be aware of any such support mechanisms (the proportion increased during Round Two).

Return

When asked about reasons for return to Cambodia, the majority of respondents in both rounds indicated that they were just returning temporarily to visit family or friends. Those that returned for an unknown duration reported a variety of reasons including: family pressure to return and deportation or end of their work permit/visa. Less than half of the respondents (that returned for an unknown duration of time) expected to face challenges upon return. The proportion of respondents that expected problems decreased by 15 per cent in between the two rounds. Expected challenges surrounded finding a job upon return or health problems. Confirming the circular migration patterns, almost two third of the sample had already made plans to migrate to Thailand, again mainly in order to resume their previous jobs in Thailand. Upon return migrants generally reported (almost identical results during both rounds) that both their savings as well as general financial situations had improved through the migration. The data also shows a relationship between having borrowed money and being financially worse off after the migration journey.

Picture 2 - Cambodian migrants at the government office near to Daung international border

Methodology

Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)

The data analyzed in this report is collected using the same methodology as that of the first report published in September 2019 "Flow Monitoring Surveys: Insights into the Profiles and Vulnerabilities of Cambodian Migrants to Thailand – Round One". While the first report considered data collected between mid-March and end-May 2019, this report analyzes data collected during the second round (end-May to mid-August 2019) and also provides a comprehensive analysis of data collected throughout the entire period, from mid-March to mid-August 2019. As in the previous report, the data collection was conducted using two different survey tools designed to capture the most accurate information possible about outgoing and returning Cambodian migrant workers (see Table 1).

Table 1 - DTM Survey Tools

Tool	Target Population	Definition
FMS Tool 1	Cambodian migrants that are crossing the border from Cambodia into Thailand	Cambodian nationals that are leaving Cambodia with the intention to work, irrespective of whether they go to Thailand for daily work or intend to stay longer. Work is defined as taking up employment from an employer, i.e. self-employment is not considered working in this survey.
FMS Tool 2	Cambodian migrants that are returning from Thailand to Cambodia	Cambodian nationals that are going back/ returning to Cambodia after having worked for at least one day in Thailand. Work is defined as taking up employment from an employer, i.e. self-employment is not considered working in this survey.

As in the first report, the analysis is based on surveys collected in Battambang and Banteay Meanchey Province, more precisely Poi Pet city, Kamrieng and Phnom Preuk district. The Round Two sample consists of 2,503 Cambodian nationals migrating to Thailand of whom all individuals indicated coming to Thailand for employment. A total of 2,100 surveys were collected with survey Tool 1 – outgoing Cambodian migrants to Thailand, and 403 surveys were collected with survey Tool 2 – returning Cambodian migrants. The combined dataset from the three rounds of data collection consists of 5,630 Cambodian migrants.

The Flow Monitoring Surveys conducted at select border crossing points are designed to collect and compile structured data to advance an overall understanding of current trends in migration flows of Cambodian migrant workers between Thailand and Cambodia. The analysis of the survey data will follow the structure of the pre-designed thematic areas outlined in Table 2.

Table 2 - Thematic Areas

1	2	3	4	5
Migrant profiles (demographics + socio-economic)	Drivers of migration	Pre-migration arrangements/ preparations	Vulnerabilities en route and upon arrival in Thailand	Reasons for return and challenges upon return

Data Limitations

For numeric variables such as remittances, wages and the cost of migration, large outliers were removed from the analysis to avoid skewing results. In some cases, this might lead to slight inaccuracies in the results, especially when taking the mean of these numeric variables. In order to keep this bias to a minimum, we present different range brackets for remittances, wages and journey costs. The data collected should also not be regarded as representative of all Cambodian migrants leaving to Thailand or returning to Cambodia as the data collection activity only provides information on those Cambodian nationals that enter or exit through select crossing points in Battambang and Banteay Meanchey province. With regard to migrants using other entry and exit locations in Cambodia this data cannot provide any information.

Picture 3 - DTM interview with a Cambodian migrant close to the border crossing point in Poi Pet

Data Analysis

Round Two Data

Between 26 May and 10 August 2019 (11 weeks) IOM Cambodia collected a total of 2,503 surveys using two questionnaire tools designed using the DTM Flow Monitoring component and adapted to fit the context in Banteay Meanchey and Battambang province. To only capture the migrant population traveling from Cambodia to Thailand, at the beginning of the Tool 1 survey migrants were asked if they intended to stay in Thailand or if they had plans to travel further. The results show that all migrants surveyed under Tool 1 reported intend to stay in Thailand.

For Round Two a total of 1,002 surveys were collected in Banteay Meanchey province, more precisely in Poi Pet city, and 1,501 surveys were collected in Battambang province, in the districts of Kamrieng and Phnom Preuk. Looking at the two survey tools, 2,100 surveys were collected with Tool 1 (outgoing Cambodian nationals) and 403 surveys with Tool 2 (returning Cambodian nationals).

Combined Round Data

In the five months period, between 11 March 2019 and 10 August 2019, a total of 5,630 Cambodian national were surveyed using the DTM Flow Monitoring Surveys. Of 5,630 individuals, the larger proportion of 4,601 Cambodian nationals were outgoing migrants (to Thailand) and 1,029 individuals were identified as returning migrants (to Cambodia). Of the entire dataset, 5,625 respondents identified themselves as migrant workers.

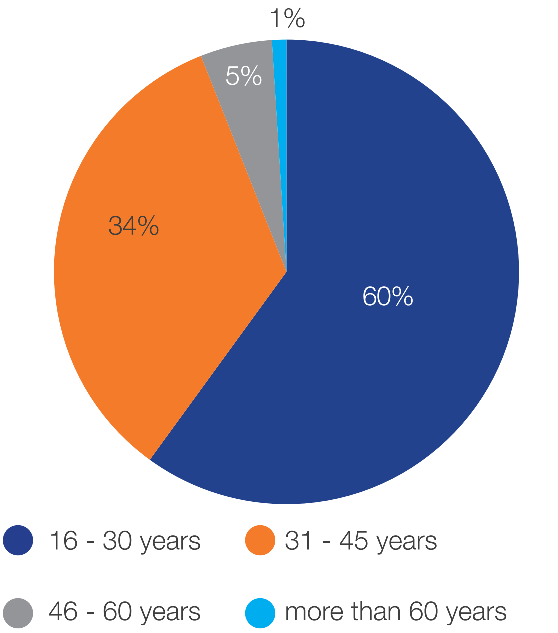
The analysis section below follows the structure of the different thematic areas; whenever possible the study also establishes relationships and cross tabulations between the different thematic areas. Emphasis is also placed on comparison between the two survey tools, as well as between the two rounds of data collection. This report and analysis looks holistically at the full data set, which combines the data of the two rounds of data collection.

Thematic Area 1 – Migrant Profiles

Socio-demographic Profiles

The study is only interested in capturing the movement of Cambodian nationals migrating to and from Thailand, therefore the survey included a question ensuring that only migrants from Cambodian origin were included in the sample. The gender distribution of the complete sample consists of 2,418 female respondents (43%) and 3,212 male respondents (57%). The comparison between the two rounds show that while in Round One 46 per cent of the respondents were female this proportion decreased to 39 per cent in Round Two. The proportion between the two sample populations (n=5,630) were slightly different, with an increased proportion of female respondents for returning migrants (46%) in comparison to outgoing migrants (42%).

Figure 1 - Overall Age Breakdown (n=5,630)



The overall sample of 5,630 respondents was on average 29 years old, with the return sample being slightly older in both rounds (on average 30 years old) and outgoing migrants slightly younger in both data collection rounds (on average 29 years).

As already identified during Round One, comparing the sample population with previous research on labour migrants from Cambodia the average age of this research appears to be slightly older.

The same applies to the findings regarding the marital status. While it is commonly reported in previous studies that Cambodian labour migrants tend to be single, the data shows that the clear majority in both rounds reported to be married (70% for Round 1; 68% for Round 2; 69% for combined rounds). Respectively 28.5 per cent of the overall sample indicated to be single and the remaining 2.5 per cent of the overall sample were either divorced, widowed or engaged. The proportion of female married responses was higher than of married male respondents (75.5% vs. 64%).

As already identified during Round 1 with the high percentage of married respondents, most migrants also reported having children (64% in Round 1 and 61% in Round 2). Looking at the overall sample of 62.5 per cent (3,516 individuals) that reported to have children, the large majority (more than 80%) reported that at least one of their children was still living in Cambodia. Another 24 per cent also reported that at least one of their children was travelling with them to or from Thailand. Only 5 per cent reported that their children were either already in Thailand before the parent arrived (outgoing migrants) or remained in Thailand after their parent returned to Cambodia (returning migrants). One per cent were located “elsewhere”, meaning a country other than Cambodia and/or Thailand. Female respondents more often reported to be travelling with their children than male respondents (29% versus 19%).

The data shows slight differences between the two data rounds with regard to the levels of education. During round one the two-sample population did not show significant differences in the levels of education. Looking specifically at the results of Round 2, the data shows that return migrants were more likely to have not completed any form of education than outgoing migrants (16% for outgoing migrants and 23% for returning migrants). Furthermore, returning migrants also had a lower proportion of respondents with secondary education (13.5% vs. 16%). Looking at the full dataset 65.5 per cent reported to have completed primary education as their highest degree, 17 per cent completed secondary education and 17.5 per cent reported to have not completed any kind of formal education. The overall number of respondents that reported not having completed any kind of education largely corresponds to previous research on labour migrants from Cambodia.

Figure 2 - Location of Children (n=3,516)

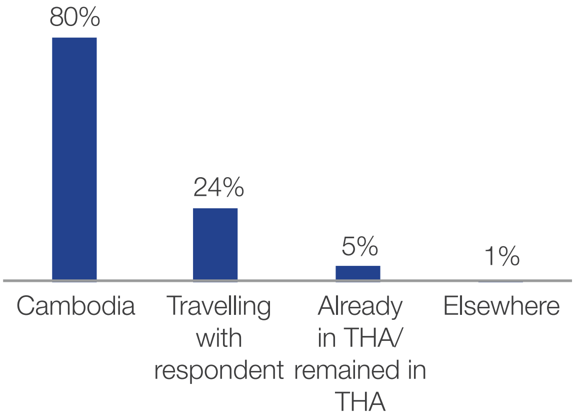


Figure 3 - Level of Education in Round Two (n=2,503)

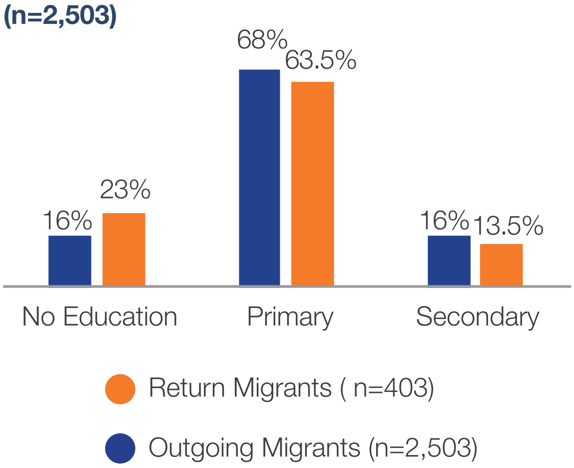
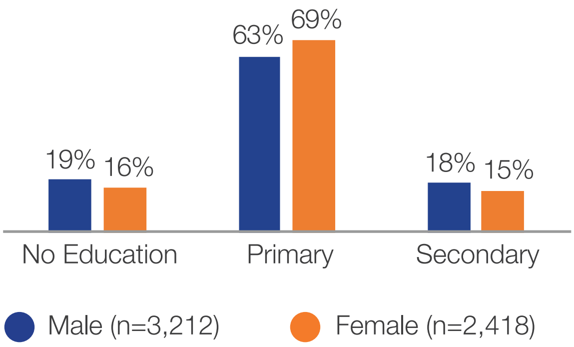


Figure 4 - Overall Level of Education by Gender (n=5,630)



In terms of gender distribution of the overall sample, there is no significant difference between the two rounds. As already identified during Round 1 the data shows that the male sample had a slightly larger proportion of uneducated respondents (19% versus 16%), however male respondents also reported slightly more often to have completed secondary education (18% versus 15%).

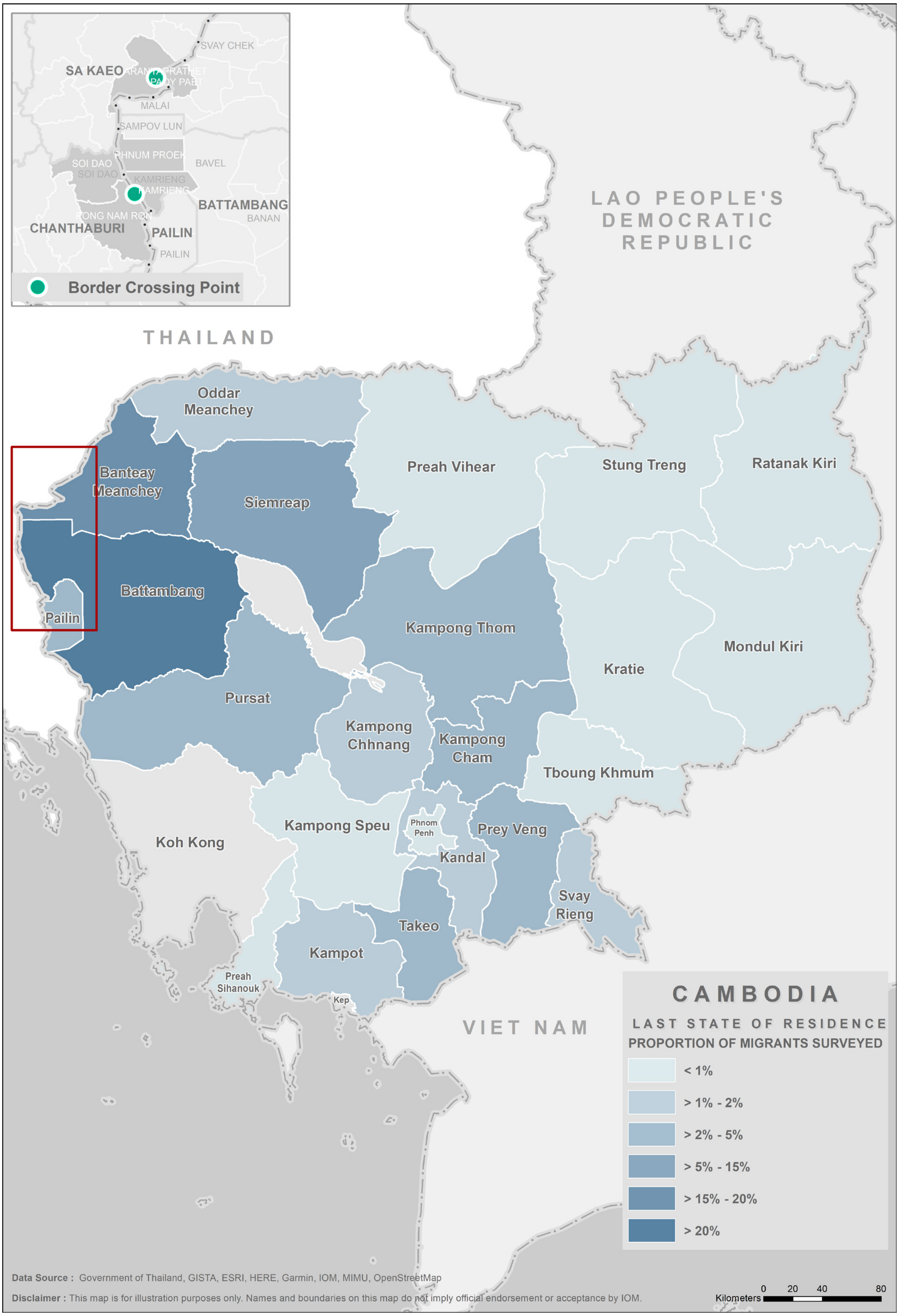
Places of Origin

Of the complete dataset 99.9 per cent cited Cambodia as their last place of residence prior to their migration, 0.1 per cent (4 respondents) had previously lived in Malaysia. Looking at the provinces of origin, Battambang (43%), Banteay Meanchey (16%) and Siem Reap (9%) were named as the three provinces with the largest proportions of transiting migrant workers. Those shares were similar in both data rounds. As in Round One data was collected at locations both in Battambang and Banteay Meanchey province. Those migrants interviewed in and around Poi Pet (Banteay Meanchey province) originated largely from Banteay Meanchey (27%), Battambang (24%), Siem Reap (11.5%), Kampong Thom (8%) and Prey Veng (6%). Looking at the respondents that were interviewed around the Daung international border crossings and some local check points in Kamrieng and Phnom Preuk districts (Battambang province), the majority also originated from Battambang province (57%), followed by Banteay Meanchey (7.5%) and Siem Reap (7%). As already explained during Round One, these results were not unexpected. Although Daung is also an international check point it is more commonly known to be used by border pass holders, while Poi Pet is the busiest international check point in Cambodia and many people from different parts of Cambodia travel there to cross the border to Thailand.

Table 3 - Locations of Origin by Point of Entry (n=5,625)

Origin Location – Respondents in Poi Pet (Banteay Meanchey Province) (n=2,420)			Origin Location – Respondents in Kamrieng/ Phnom Preuk (Battambang Province) (n=3,205)			Origin Location – Total (n=5,625)		
Province	**#**	**%**	**Province**	**#**	**%**	**Province**	**#**	**%**
1. Banteay Meanchey	660	27.27%	1. Battambang	1832	57,16%	1. Battambang	2416	42.95%
2. Battambang	584	24.13%	2. Banteay Meanchey	238	7,43%	2. Banteay Meanchey	898	15.96%
3. Siem Reap	282	11.65%	3. Siem Reap	233	7,27%	3. Siem Reap	515	9.16%
4. Kampong Thom	199	8.22%	4. Pursat	172	5,37%	4. Prey Veng	250	4.44%
5. Prey Veng	143	5.91%	5. Kampong Cham	124	3,87%	5. Pursat	249	4.43%
6. Kampong Cham	105	4.34%	6. Prey Veng	107	3,34%	6. Kampong Thom	244	4.34%
7. Pursat	77	3.18%	7. Pailin	103	3,21%	7. Kampong Cham	229	4.07%
8. Takéo Province	69	2.85%	8. Kampot	66	2,06%	8. Takéo Province	119	2.12%
Other	301	12.44%	Other	330	10.30%	Other	705	12.53%

Map 1 - Places of Origin in Cambodia (n=5,630)



Places of Destination

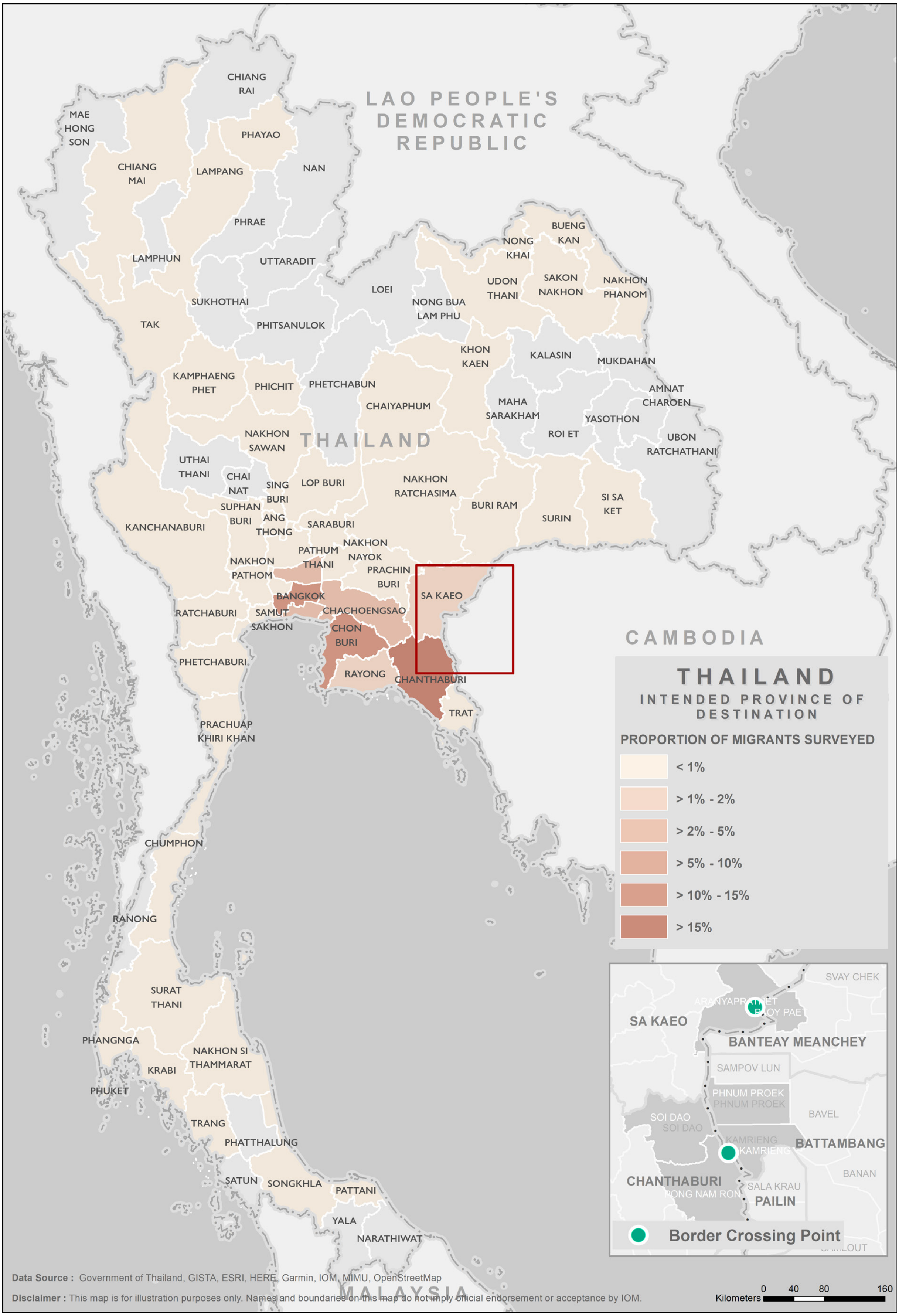
To establish a comprehensive profile of Cambodian nationals migrating to Thailand, it is also important to identify the intended provinces of destination within Thailand. The destinations can provide valuable information on migration patterns, as well as living and working conditions, ultimately allowing for more targeted interventions. While outgoing migrants were asked about their intended destination province in Thailand (single-answer), returning migrants were asked which provinces they had lived in during their last migration experience (multiple-answer). Although, for both samples many of the respondents reported Chanthaburi and Bangkok as their province of destination, in Thailand the distribution looks different. While this was already the case for the Round One results, the results of Round Two are not as distinct. Looking at the full dataset, in the case of outgoing migrants, more than half of the respondents (53%) (50% in Round 1 and 56% in Round 2) reported to choose Chanthaburi as their destination while 26 per cent (18% in Round 1 and 37% in Round 2) of the migrants returned from Chanthaburi. Bangkok and Chonburi are the second and third most popular destination provinces for both samples (see Table 2). Different from Round 1, Sa Kaeo, one of the neighbouring provinces of the data collection locations (bordering Banteay Meanchey) was not as popular anymore as it decreased from 3 per cent to 1 per cent for outgoing migrants and from 8 per cent to 5 per cent for returning migrants in Round Two.

Table 4 - Provinces of Destination by Population Group (n=5,630)

Intended Province of Destination – Outgoing Migrants (n=4,601)			Province of Destination – Returning Migrants (n=1,029)		
Province	#	%	Province	#	%
1. Chanthaburi	2434	52.90%	1. Chanthaburi	264	25.66%
2. Bangkok	608	13.21%	2. Bangkok	168	16.33%
3. Chon Buri	459	9.98%	3. Chon Buri	143	13.90%
4. Samut Prakan	199	4,33%	4. Rayong	63	6.12%
5. Chachaoengsao	162	3.52%	5. Pathum Thani	56	5.44%
6. Pathum Thani	108	2.35%	6. Sa Kaeo	52	5.05%
7. Unknown	102	2.22%	7. Samut Prakan	39	3.79%
8. Sa Kaeo	85	1.85%	8. Chachaoengsao	33	3.21%
9. Rayong	64	1.39%	9. Unknown	41	4.98%
Other	380	8.25%	Other	170	16.52%

As already apparent from the question on province of origin, the different data collection points show varying provinces of intended destination. Poi Pet, as the busiest international border point known to be used by migrants from all over Cambodia, it is important to note that the data collected at this crossing point indicates that migrants intend to travel specifically to Bangkok (27.5%), Chonburi (21.5%) as well as Samut Prakan (9.5%) and Chachoengsao (8%). However, for migrants going through Daung or the local checkpoints of Ou Anlouk and O Romdoul, the most common destination is the neighbouring province of Chanthaburi (90%) and only 3 per cent intended to go onward to Bangkok. The exact reason cannot be identified in this report, however, as anecdotal knowledge suggests, the area around Daung international border is used especially for border region migration (i.e. through utilization of the border pass). Those results are similar in both rounds, however, in Round Two the proportion of migrants that pass through the data collection points in Battambang and go to the neighbouring province of Chanthaburi increased from 88 per cent to 93 per cent. For migrants crossing through Poi Pet, the neighboring province of Sa Kaeo was less frequently cited as a destination during Round 2, as it decreased from 6 per cent to 2 per cent. Instead more migrants indicated their intention to travel to Samut Prakan (increased from 4% in Round One to 17% in Round Two) as well as Chachoengsao (increased from 5% in Round One to 12% in Round Two).

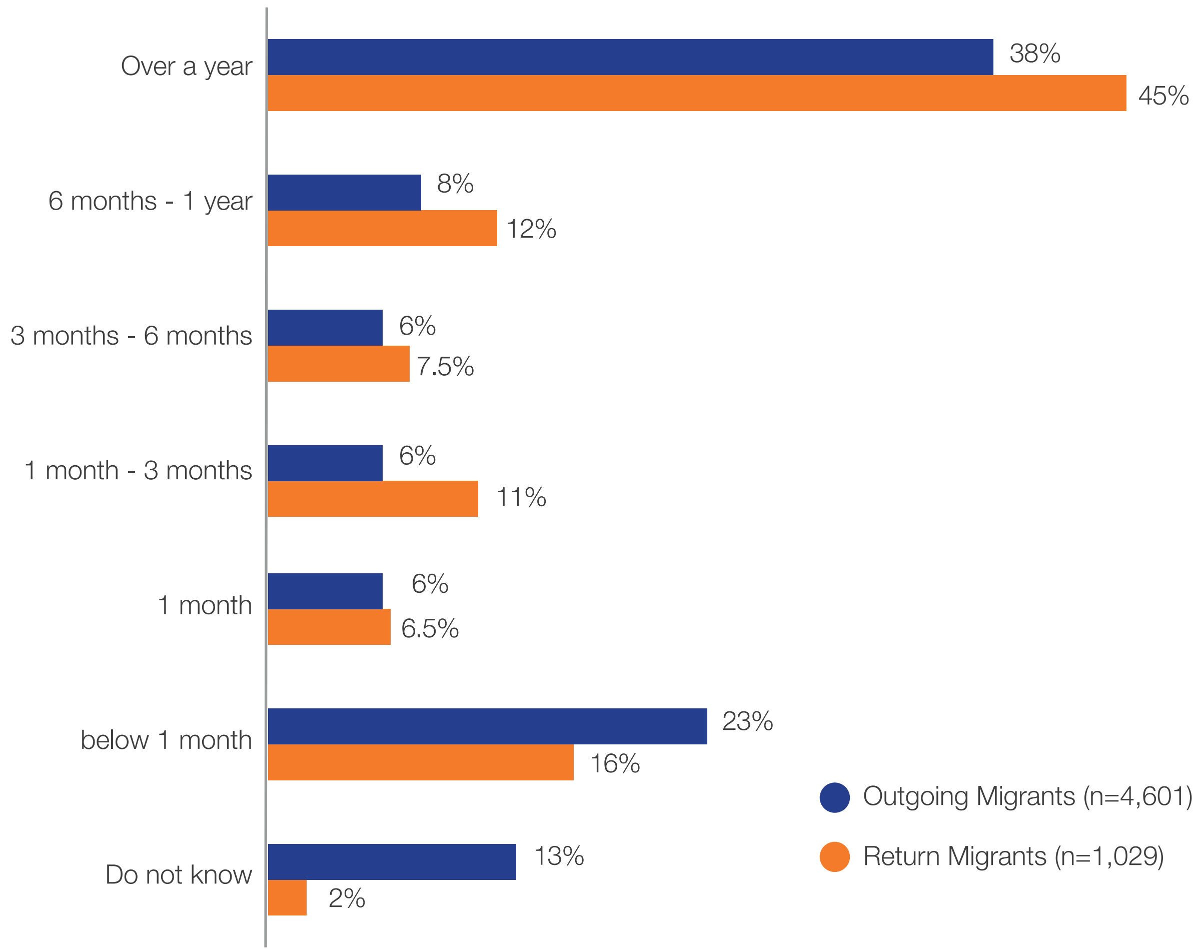
Map 2 - Intended Provinces of Destination (Outgoing Migrants) (n=4,601)



Duration of Stay

Incoming migrants were asked about their intended duration of stay in Thailand while returning migrants were asked to specify how long they stayed in Thailand. Knowing the duration of stay can help IOM to better understand migration patterns. Short or longer-term migration can have different impacts on the migration experiences. The data shows that longer-term migration seems to be preferred by both samples. Of the overall outgoing sample, 38 per cent reported wanting to stay in Thailand for more than a year (39% in Round. 1 and 37% in Round 2). This corresponds with the results of the return data wherein 45 per cent reported to have left Cambodia more than a year ago (52% in Round One and 35% in Round 2). While daily labour does not seem to be common within both samples, especially for the outgoing migrants, a relatively large proportion of 18.5 per cent reported that they only intend to stay for one week (the amount of time that can be spend on a border pass). This will be further explored in section four covering the different documentation statuses. Returning migrants were asked the additional question whether the intended duration of their stay was the same as the actual duration of stay. Two thirds of the sample (66.5%) confirmed that the intended time of stay and actual time of stay in Thailand matched. Another 28 per cent reported that they did not know the length of their stay and for 5.5 per cent, the time did not correspond with their expectations. The largest proportion had expected to stay longer than they had stayed.

Figure 5 - Expected Duration of Stay in Thailand (Outgoing Migrants) vs Actual Duration of Stay in Thailand (Returning Migrants) (n=5,515)



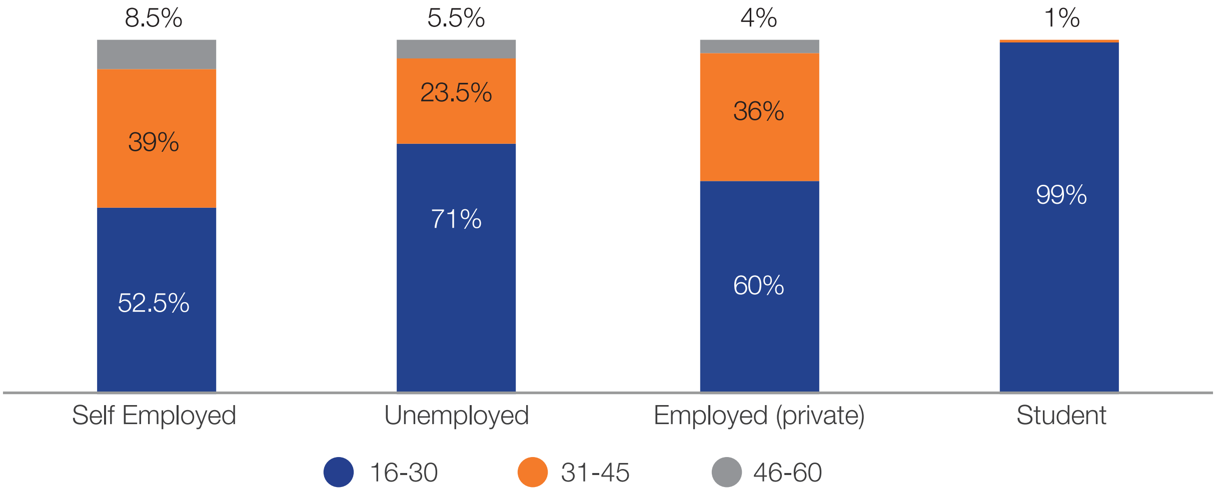
Thematic Area 2 – Drivers of Migration

Although the literature often discusses the 'push and pull factors' for migration from Cambodia, this analysis takes a more holistic approach to the process, to provide a deeper understanding on why Cambodian migrants choose Thailand as their main destination over other countries in the region. Understanding the drivers of migration requires a look at the migration process in totality. This means that factors causing a person to leave cannot be evaluated alone but need to be viewed in relation with other factors that might attract an individual to choose a specific country. Before turning to drivers of migration, the socio-economic characteristics of migrants are analyzed to understand their conditions prior to departure.

Socio-Economic Profiles

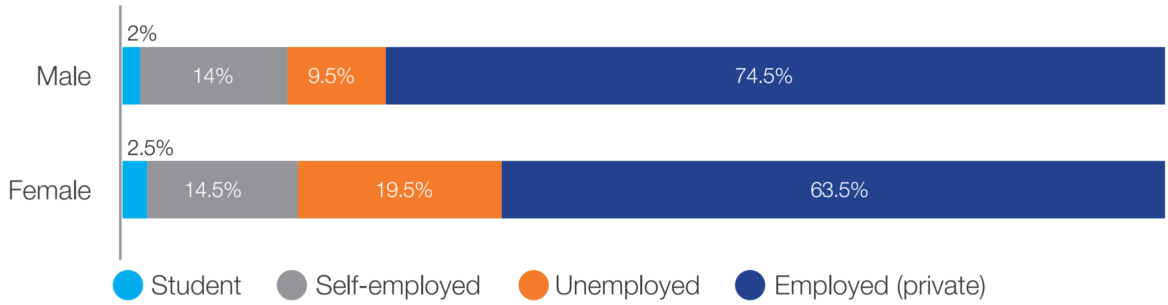
The data reveals that the most common forms of previous employment in Cambodia was private employment (72% for outgoing and 61% for returning migrants). Like Round One, the proportion of unemployment (for the complete dataset) is larger for respondents returning to Cambodia than of those leaving Cambodia (12.5% versus 20%). This distribution is similar for both data rounds. Next to private employment the data also shows that 13 per cent of the outgoing and 17 per cent of the returning sample reported that they were self-employed prior to their migration. Working on a daily wage basis was not common for Cambodian migrants in either of the two rounds. Looking at the age distribution of the whole sample the data shows that the unemployment rate is especially high for the younger generation between the age range of 16 and 30 years (see Figure 6). The distribution between the two rounds look relatively similar for the main employment statuses (private employment, unemployment, self-employment and student).

Figure 6 - Overall Status of Employment before Migration by Age Group (n=5,515)



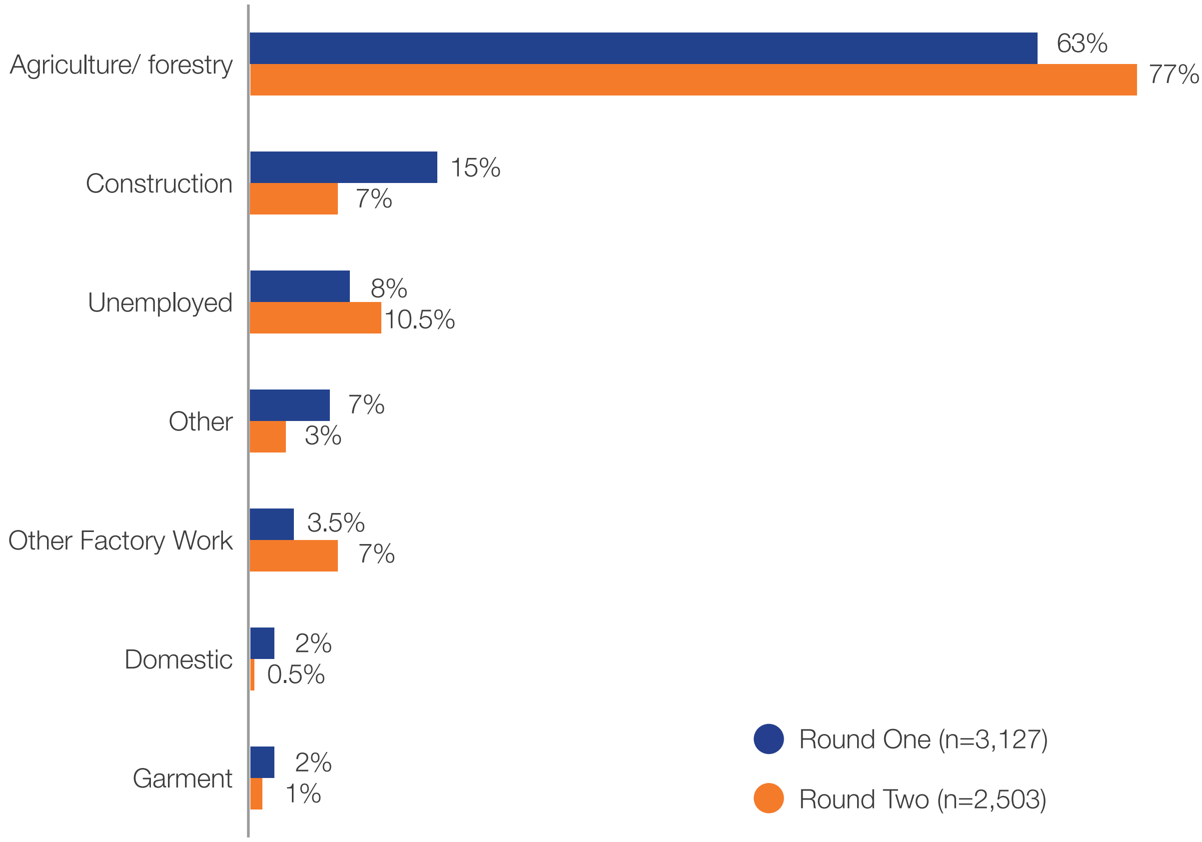
he gender distribution the data shows that the female proportion of those unemployed is twice as large than the male sample (20.5% vs 11%) (see figure 7).

Figure 7 – Status of Employment before Migration by Gender (n=5,515)



Prior to their migration, respondents were most commonly employed in the agriculture/forestry sector or in construction. Different from Round One, less people reported to be employed in the construction and domestic work sector. However, the proportion of other types of factory work as well as the proportion that reported to have been unemployed increased during Round Two (see Figure 8).

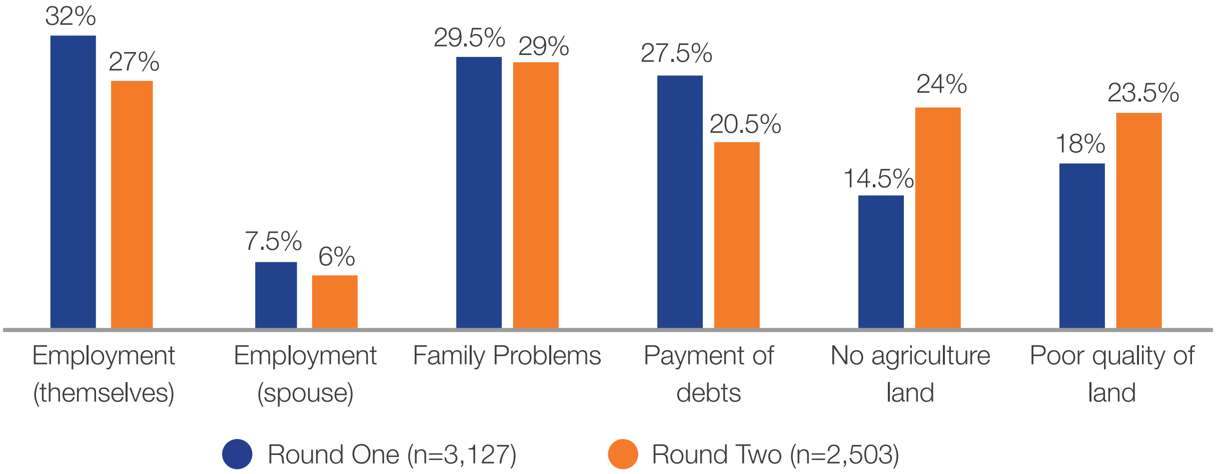
Figure 8 - Overall Sectors of Employment before Migration by Data Collection Round (n=5,630)



Reasons for Leaving Cambodia

Knowing the reasons for leaving combined with factors influencing the decision-making process can provide crucial information on migration patterns. Some respondents reported multiple reasons for migrating to Thailand. The main reasons were related to employment (30%), family problems (29%), the payment of debts (24.5%), as well as problems related to landownership such as having poor quality land (20.5%) or not owning land (19%). Another 7 per cent also reported joining their spouse who found employment in Thailand. The most common reasons were largely similar throughout both rounds; however, some differences were visible, for example the proportion that reported to be leaving Cambodia in order to pay their debts decreased from 27.5 per cent in Round One to 20.5 per cent in Round Two and the problems related to land increased from 18 per cent to 23.5 per cent in the case of poor quality land and from 14.5 per cent to 24 per cent in the case of not owning any agriculture land (see Figure 9).

Figure 9 - Reasons for Leaving Thailand by Data Collection Round (n=5,630)

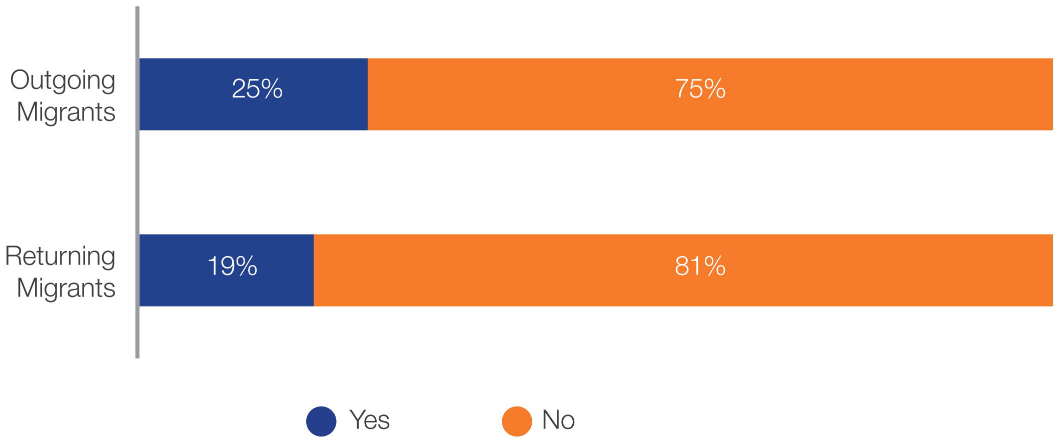


In terms of gender distribution (looking at the complete dataset), the data shows that females appear to be slightly more likely to follow their husbands than vice versa (9.5% versus 4.5%). The reason to leave because of family problems was rather taken by males than females (38.5% versus 17%). Reasons related to land were more commonly cited by females rather than males. Roughly 23 per cent females noted having no agricultural land as a reason in comparison to 15.5 per cent of the male respondents. With regards to poor land quality the proportion was 25.5 per cent for females and 17 per cent males.

Of the 70 per cent that did not explicitly cite employment (for themselves) as a reason for migration, they were asked if they either planned to work in Thailand during their stay (outgoing migrants) or if they had worked during their stay in Thailand (returning migrants). For both samples nearly the entire sample confirmed that they planned to work during their stay in Thailand (with the exceptions of 5 respondents throughout both rounds). As a result they were excluded from the sample as the subsequent questions mainly related to work experiences and expectations in Thailand. The new sample size for both rounds combined from this question forward is therefore n=5,625.

To understand the migration patterns, the respondents were asked if this was their first experience working in Thailand. Of the outflow sample, 75 per cent reported that they had previously migrated and worked and 81 per cent of the returnee sample reported they had migrated and worked in Thailand previously. For those that had previously worked in Thailand, the main sectors of employment were agriculture/forestry (44%), followed by construction (32%) and manufacturing (15.5%).

Figure 10 - First Time Coming to Thailand for Employment by Population Group (n=5,625)



The most common reasons for respondents to choose Thailand over other countries, included higher incomes (66%), easy access to the job market (49%), close proximity and easy access (geographically) to Thailand (49%), better working conditions (7.5%) as well as having family and/or existing connections in Thailand (7.5%).

Although family/friends were not commonly reported as a main reason for choosing to migrate to Thailand, they do play an important role for the respondents in providing information about life in Thailand. Most of the complete sample (63.5%) cited family and friends in Thailand, followed by other migrants that had previously lived in Thailand (18.5%) previous migration experiences (6%) or recruitment agencies (7%) as their source of information. To a lesser extent did migrants rely on family and friends in Cambodia (2.5%) or unofficial brokers (1.5%) for information about life in Thailand. The distribution is relatively similar throughout both data collection rounds. The importance of family and friends in Thailand supports the established network theory that migrants often rely on family/friends that have already set up roots in the country of destination and a significant amount of trust is placed in the experiences of their family/friends in their own migration journey.

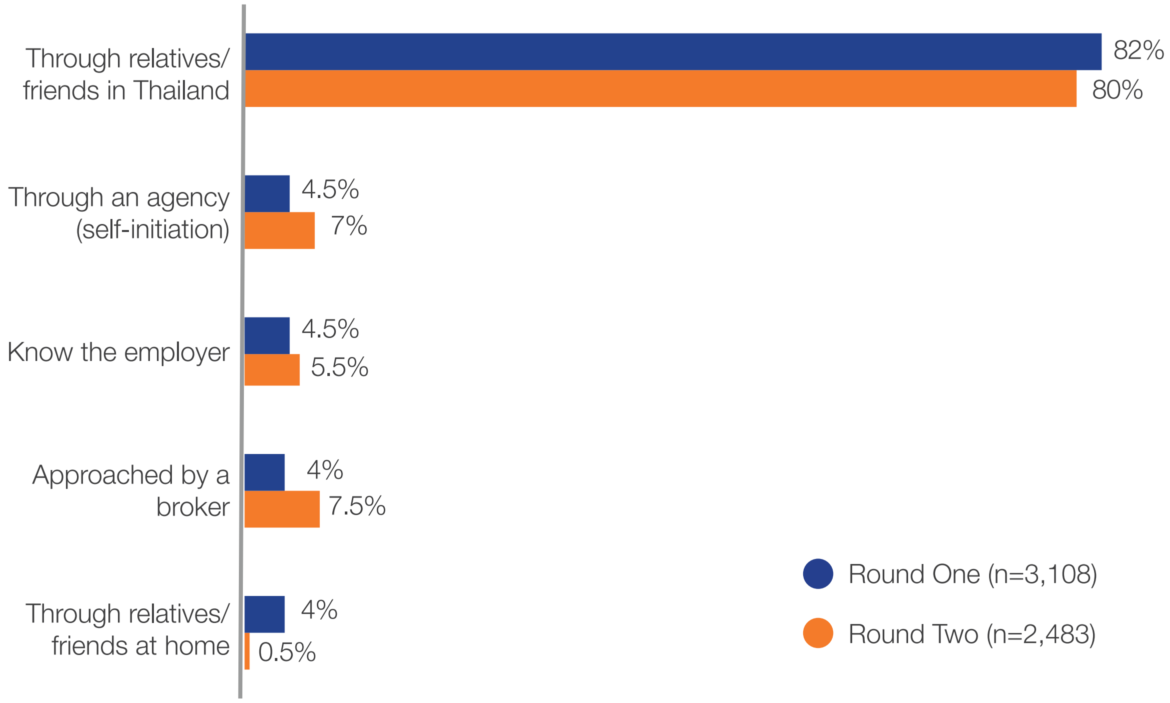
Picture 4 - Cambodian waiting at the Departure Gate at Daung International Border Crossing

Thematic Area 3 – Pre-migration Arrangements and Preparations

Employment Arrangements

Understanding migrants' preparations and arrangements prior to migration is crucial to identify potential vulnerabilities that could emerge from the lack of informed decision making. Respondents were asked if they had secured a job prior to their journey to Thailand. For both population groups as well as throughout both rounds, the overwhelming majority reported to have a job already secured before leaving Cambodia (99.2% for outgoing migrants and 98.2% for returning migrants). Those proportions were almost identical throughout both rounds of data collection. This result might be slightly biased because some of the outgoing respondents reported that they returned to Cambodia only for a short-period and at the time respondents were on their way back to Thailand with the intention to reassume their old job as will become clearer in Thematic Area Five. In line with the information retrieved in Thematic Area Two about the sources of information about life in Europe, the clear majority of respondents cited the role of family and friends that helped them secure a job. Results are similar between the two sample populations as well as between rounds (see Figure 11)

Figure 11 - How Employment was Obtained by Population Group (n=5,592)



The respondents were further asked about the sector of employment in Thailand. For both samples, the three main employment sectors are agriculture/forestry, construction and manufacturing. The distribution is almost equal between the two rounds. Almost half of the outflow sample (46%) reported to be working in agriculture/forestry followed by 31 per cent working in construction and 16 per cent in manufacturing, while one third of the return sample (35%) worked in construction, an almost equal proportion (33.5%) in the agriculture/forestry sector and 14 per cent in manufacturing.

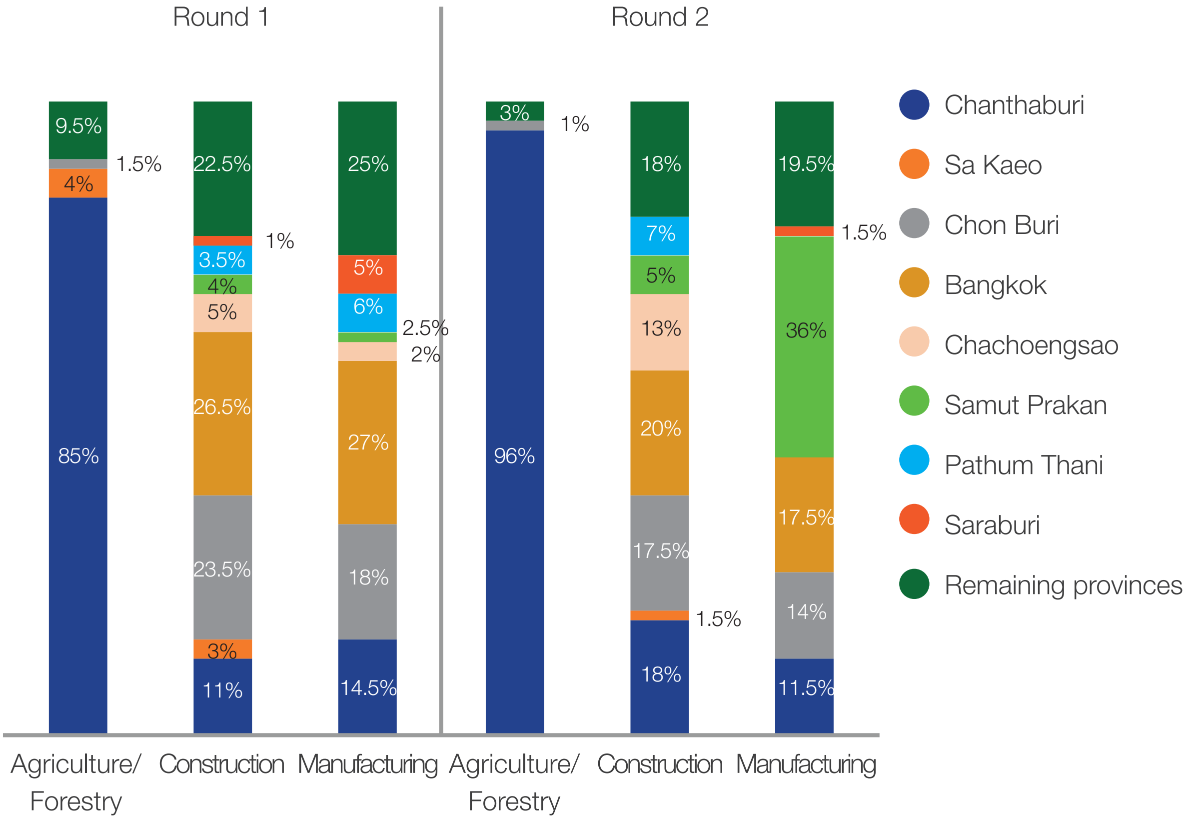
As shown in the table below, the difference in the data collection points is worth noting. As already visible during Round One, the overall data confirms anecdotal knowledge that around the border points in Battambang movements are mostly related to agriculture work. Of those migrants that cross between Thailand and Cambodia, at the border points in Battambang, over 70 per cent reported that their work is related to the agriculture/forestry industry, while those migrants crossing in Banteay Meanchey Province (specifically in Poi Pet city) reported most commonly to be working in construction (54%), manufacturing (27%) with only a small proportion of 5.5 per cent working in the agriculture sector.

Table 5 - Main Sectors of Employment in Thailand by Point of Entry (n=5,591)

Employment Sectors: Daung (n=3,175)			Employment Sectors: Poi Pet (n=2,416)		
Sector	**#**	**%**	**Sector**	**#**	**%**
1. Agriculture/ forestry	2309	72.72%	1. Construction	1306	54.06%
2. Construction	475	14.96%	2. Manufacturing	657	27.19%
3. Manufacturing	216	6.80%	3. Agriculture/ forestry	136	5.63%
5. Hotels/ accommodation/ food services	75	2.36%	4. Wholesale retail/ trade	73	3.02%
5. Wholesale retail/ trade	36	1.13%	5. Hotels/ accommodation/ food services	60	2.48%
6. Other	63	1.98%	6. Other	184	7.62%

In terms of intended provinces of destination, certain patterns can also be recognized. Although Chanthaburi was already clearly the main destination for the agriculture sector during Round One with 85 per cent this proportion even increased to 96 per cent during Round Two. For the construction sector, Bangkok and Chon Buri were less popular during Round Two as the proportion of migrants intending to work in construction in Bangkok decreased from 26.5 per cent to 20 per cent and in Chon Buri from 23.5 per cent to 17.5 per cent. Chanthaburi on the other hand gained 7 per cent (increase from 11% in Round One to18% in Round Two). Manufacturing is the third most popular employment sector, particularly for migrants going to Samut Prakan during Round Two with a significant increase from 2.5 per cent to 36 per cent during Round Two (see Figure 12).

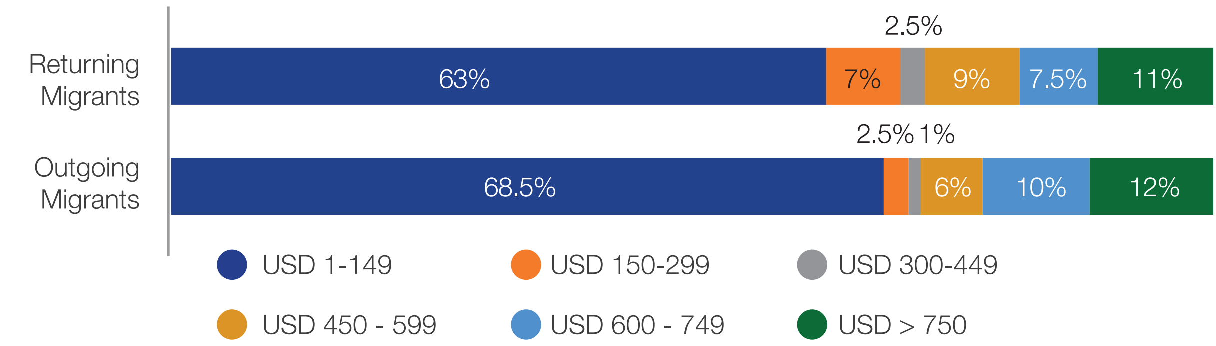
Figure 12 - Top 3 Sectors of Employment by Intended Province of Destination (n=5,591)



Migration Costs

In terms of migration costs, on average, returning migrants paid roughly USD 15 more than incoming migrants. The difference was USD 30 during Round One and during Round Two outgoing migrants indicated to have paid USD 15 more than returning migrants. For the complete dataset, on average outgoing migrants reported that they paid up to this point around USD 248. Returning migrants indicated that they had paid USD 261 in total. The average cost does not tell much - it becomes more interesting to look at the different cost brackets to see the spending habits. Breaking the costs into different cost brackets, the data shows that the largest proportions of both samples (68.5% of outgoing and 63% of returning migrants) reported costs between USD 1 and 149. Interestingly, the second largest proportion, also for both population groups (12% for outgoing and 11% for returning migrants) was the largest cost bracket of USD > 750 (see figure 13).

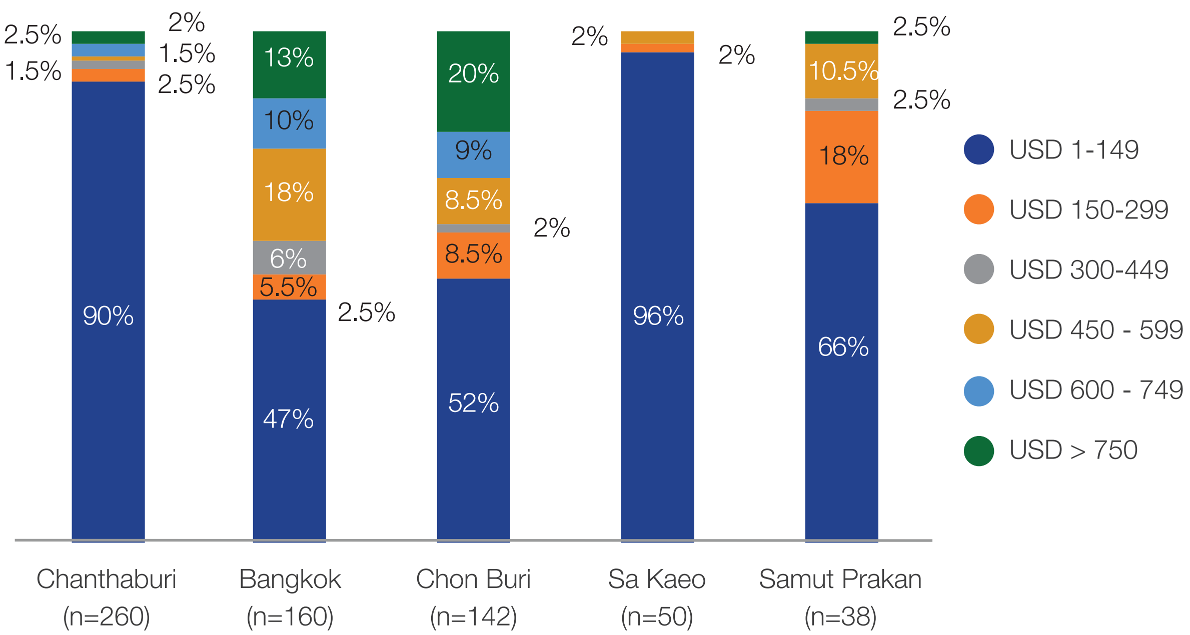
Figure 13 - Migration Costs by Population Group (n=5,443)



The average costs identified in this research is lower than numbers often reported in previous research studies. To shed more light on the different types of costs, different variables are considered to have an impact on the costs. Migrants going through regular channels are known to pay higher migration costs. Furthermore, migrants that only travel to neighbouring provinces are known to pay less than migrants that travel to provinces further into Thailand.

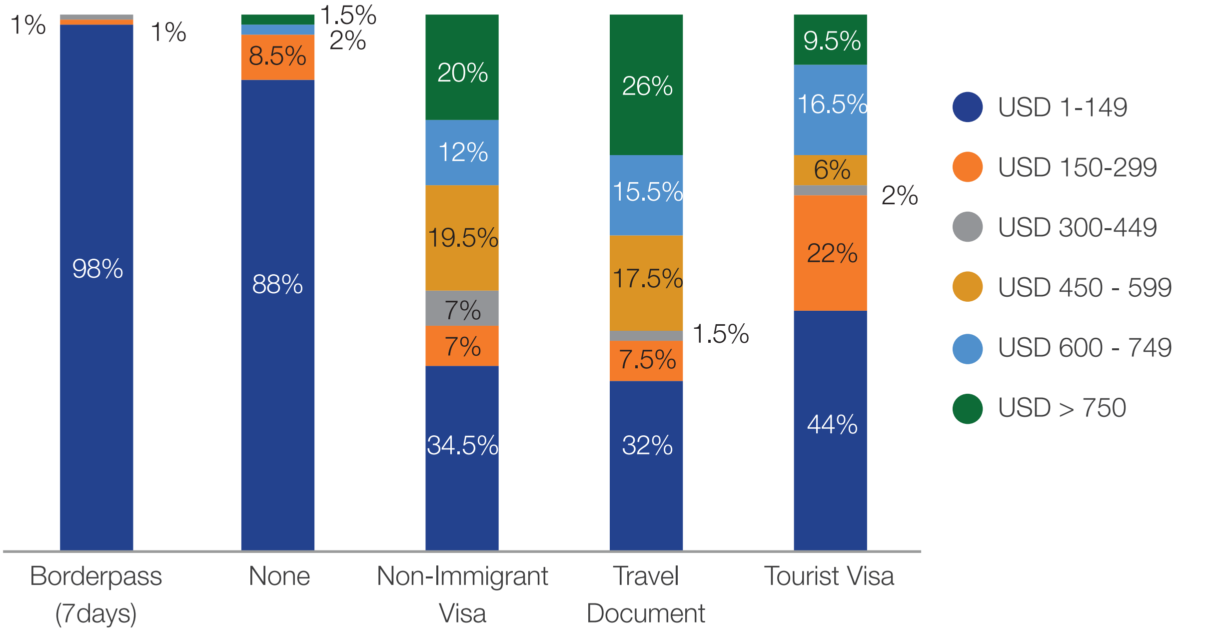
Looking at the relationship between those variables and the migration costs, the data shows that returning migrants going to provinces further into Thailand also indicated higher costs. Migration to Chanthaburi and Sa Kaeo, which are the provinces in Thailand that border the locations of the data collection, is associated with lower costs in comparison to Bangkok and/or Chon Buri (see Figure 14).

Figure 14 - Overall Migration Cost by Province of Destination (Returning Migrants) n=994



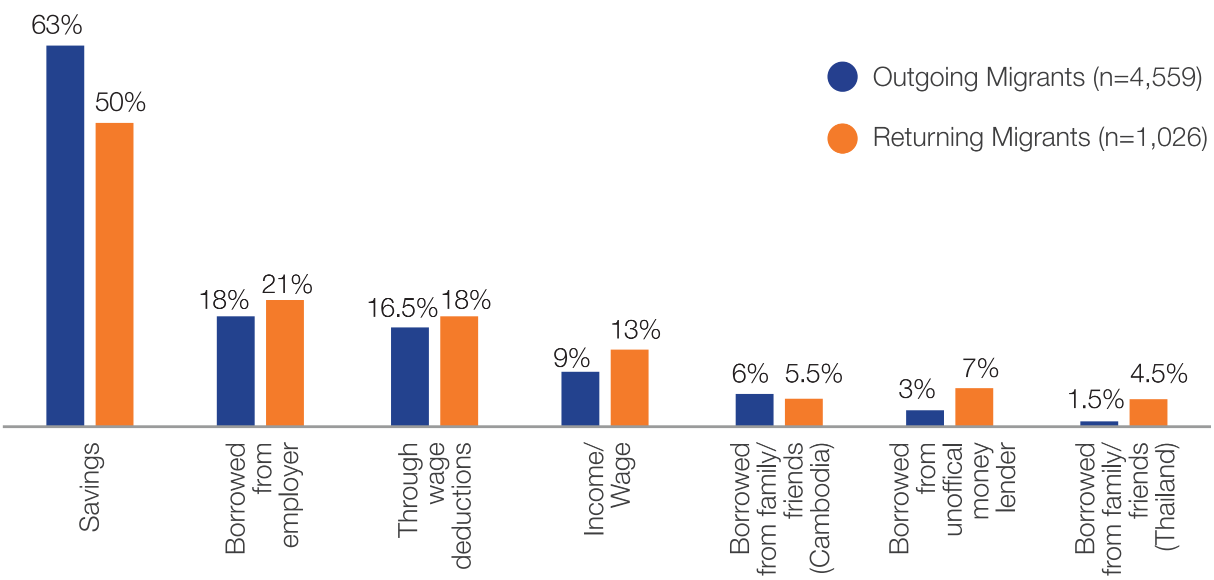
In terms of documentation status, those migrants travelling on a 'travel document for oversea migrant workers[1]' and Non-Immigrant visas (connected to the MoU) were most likely to be paying costs over USD 600. Migrants travelling on border passes and migrants with no document paid costs between in the lowest bracket (USD 1-149). This data also supports previous research that shows legal processes such as the MoU process is especially costly.

Figure 15 - Overall Migration Cost by Documentation Status (Returning Migrants) n=994



The costs of migration can indicate whether migrants will be vulnerable in the long run –taking out a loan can especially increase the risk of vulnerabilities. Therefore, migrants were asked sources to finance their journeys. For both samples, the most common source of funding migratory journeys were financial savings, however, other migrants also reported to have borrowed money from their employers or organized wage deductions with their employers in Thailand. The sources to finance the migration journey do not vary throughout the two data collection rounds. Returning migrants also appear more likely to have borrowed money (40% returning migrants, 30% outgoing migrants and 32% in total) Figure 16 below shows the overall sources by population ground for the combined sample.

Figure 16 - Main Sources to Finance the Migration Journey by Population Group (n=5,625)

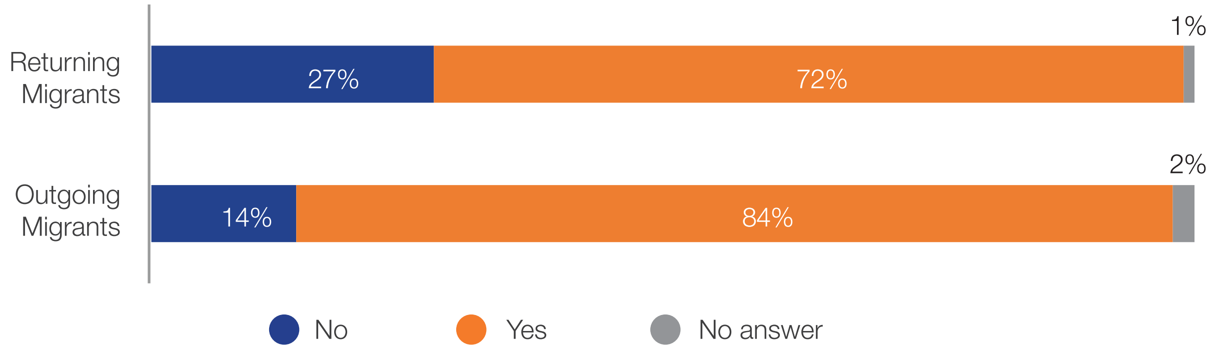


1 Travel documents for Cambodian migrant workers is kind of travelling document that the Royal Government of Cambodian issued for Cambodian migrant workers to work abroad and valid only for 5 years.

Support Mechanisms

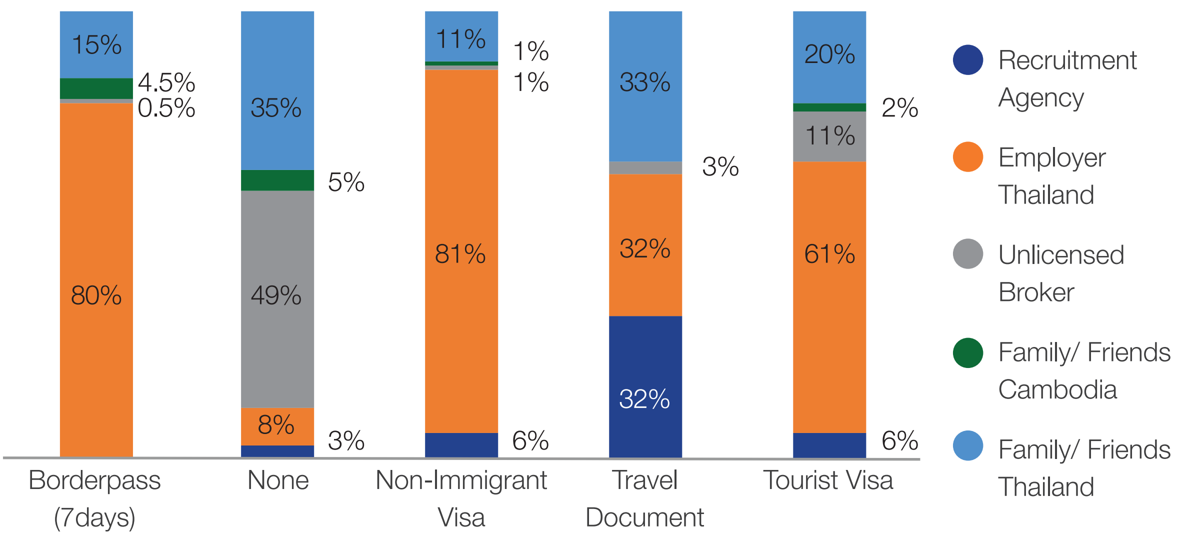
Beyond financial support, respondents were asked about other forms of support for their journey, and, in case they received it, who helped them and how. This question can elucidate some valuable insights into migration dynamics especially if brokers were involved, if migrants largely made their own arrangements or if family/friends were used as support networks. For both samples, the majority reported to have received some form of support (84% for outgoing migrants, 72% for returning migrants and 82% in total). The proportions look slightly different throughout the two rounds – from Round One to Round Two, there was an increase for outgoing migrants from 80 per cent to 90 per cent as well as an increase from 66 per cent to 82 per cent for returning migrants.

Figure 17 - Support Received in Migration Preparations by Population Group (n=5,625)



The actors involved were similar for both population groups. Overall, the majority reported to have foremost received support from their employer in Thailand. This proportion increased by almost 20 per cent during Round Two, from 58 per cent to 78.5 per cent (68% for both rounds combined), followed by family and friends in Thailand (26% during Round One, 11% during Round Two, 19% for the combined dataset) and recruitment agencies (roughly 8% in both rounds). For the combined data, only roughly three per cent received support from family and friends at home in Cambodia and two per cent relied on unlicensed brokers. Looking at the gender distribution no significant differences can be identified. The data shows that migrants that 49 per cent of migrants with no documents relied on unofficial brokers, whereas 35 per cent relied on family and friends in Thailand (35%). For the travel documents for oversea migrant workers respondents were commonly supported by family/friends in Thailand (33%), the employer in Thailand (32%) or a recruitment agency (32%). For non-immigrant visas migrants had predominately relied on the employer in Thailand (81%).

Figure 18 - Actors of Support by Documentation Status (n=4,611)

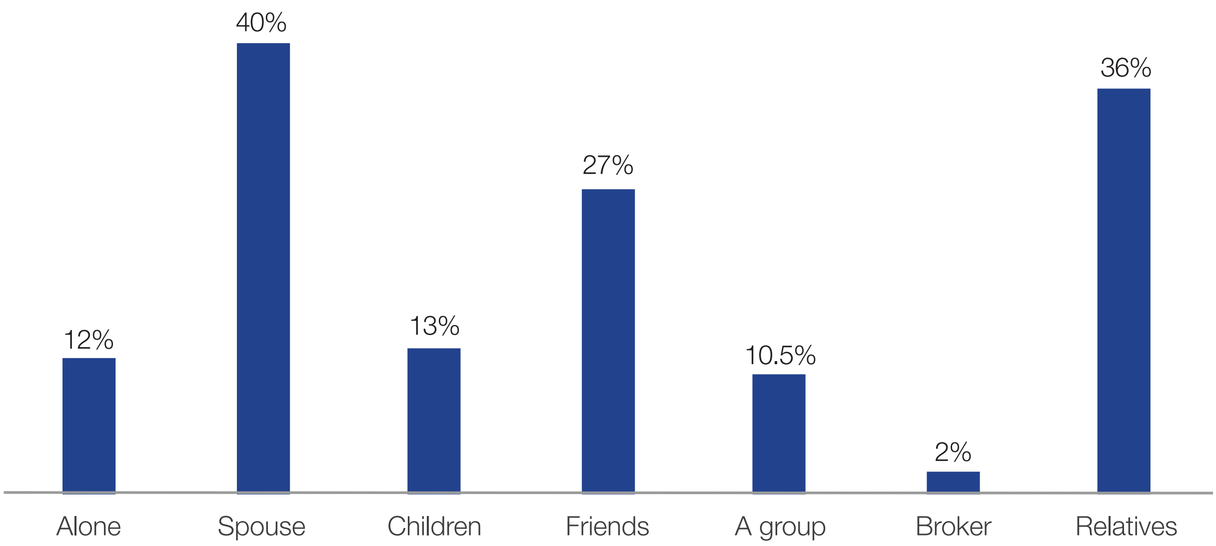


Support was mainly provided in the form of documents (84%), accommodation (59%), employment (32%) as well as transportation (15%) and orientation information (14%). Roughly 40 per cent of migrants that received support indicated that they had only relied on one actor in their migration preparations. Of the others that relied on at least two actors, the majority named family and friends at home (32%) to have supported them. The employer in Thailand (13%) as well was family and friends in Thailand (13%) were also important actors. Different to the first support mechanisms, as second arrangements the majority received support with transportation (75%), followed by employment (26%), accommodation (20%) and documents (17%). Those results largely correspond with each other between the two rounds.

The Journey

Asked with whom they travelled to Thailand and about their journey details. The proportions are similar for both data collection rounds. Looking at the full dataset, the majority of respondents travelled with one or more persons. Only 12 per cent of the overall sample reported to have travelled by themselves. There is no significant difference between male and female respondents travelling alone. The respondents commonly travelled with their spouse (40%), other relatives (36%), friends (27%), their children (13%) or a group of other workers (10.5%). Only 2 per cent reported to have travelled with a broker.

Figure 19 - Travelling Alone or with Company (n=5,625)



When asked how they entered Thailand, the clear majority indicated an international border crossing point (90%), followed by local check points (6.5%) and unofficial points (2%).

Overall, the two per cent that reported to have crossed at an unofficial point were either holding a border pass (7-day validity) or no documents[2].

2 This shall not be taken as a representation of the overall migrant population going to Thailand. Since the data collection points were mainly around international and local checkpoints the results will be skewed in that direction

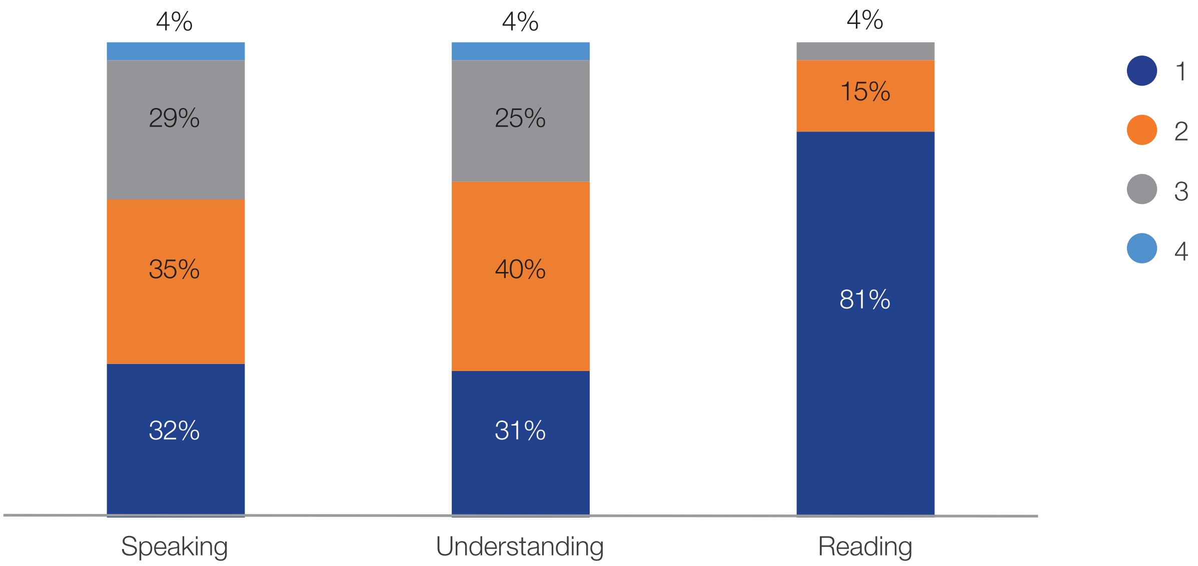
Picture 5 - DTM Interview at the Poi Pet Transit Center

Thematic Area 4 - Migrant Vulnerabilities

Language Skills

Migrants can become vulnerable at different points of their migration experience for a variety of reasons and circumstances. This study uses several proxies and indicators to explore vulnerabilities in greater depth. One of the indicators is language, and in this case, the ability of Cambodian migrants to communicate in Thai. Respondents were asked to rank their ability to speak, understand and read Thai from a scale of 1 to 5[3]. Analyzing the two sample populations throughout both rounds, the data results are relatively similar. Overall, the largest proportion ranked their ability on level 2 for both speaking and understanding (35% and 40%). For reading the largest proportion placed themselves on the lowest level (1) namely in 81 per cent of the cases (see Figure 20). The subsample of returning migrants were also asked if their Thai language skills had improved during their stay. The overall results from both rounds show that 74 per cent of the return sample reported that their Thai has improved "a bit", while 12 per cent reported "a lot" and for 14 per cent their Thai language skills have not improved at all.

Figure 20 - Thai Speaking/ Understanding/ Reading Levels (n=5,625)



Documentation Status

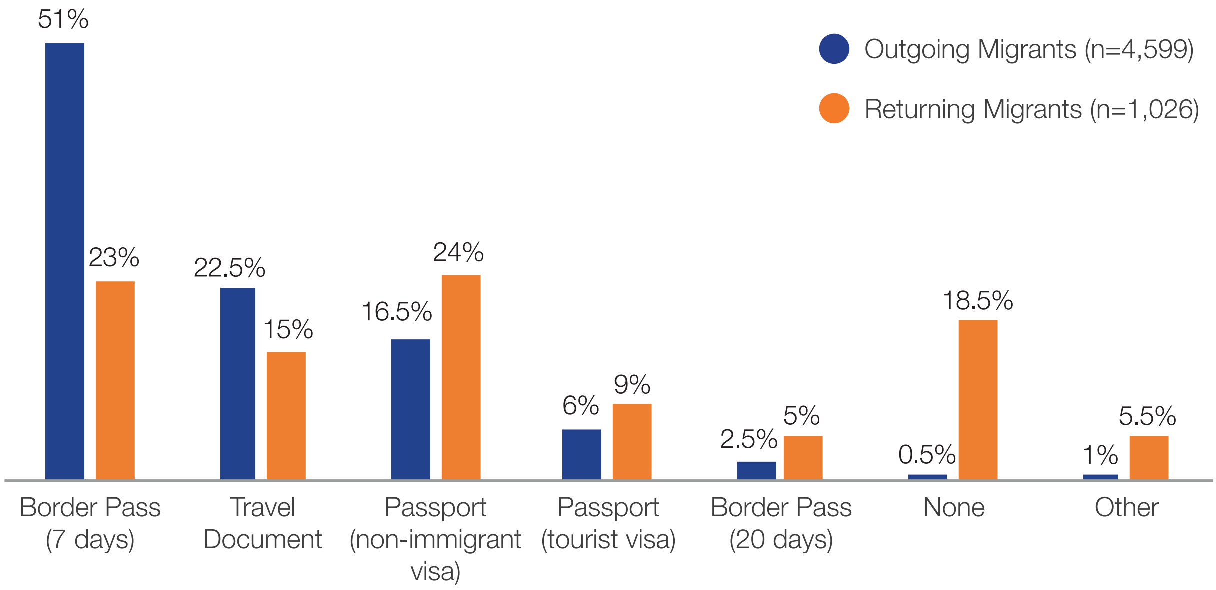
A second indicator used in the survey to assess Cambodian workers' vulnerability is access to legal status in Thailand. Outgoing migrants most often reported to be entering on a border pass (valid for 7 days) (51%) as well as on travel documents for oversea migrant workers[4] (22%) and Non-Immigrant visas[5] (16.5%), while returning migrants most commonly initially entered Thailand on Non-Immigrant visas (24%), border passes (23%), with no documentation (18.5%) or travel documents for oversea migrant workers (15%). Throughout both rounds, returning migrants more often reported to have initially entered Thailand without documents.

3 5 being the highest level of ability

4 Travel documents for oversea migrant workers are often issued in connection to the MoU process

5 Migrants receiving a work permit on a MoU are often issued Non-Immigrant visas

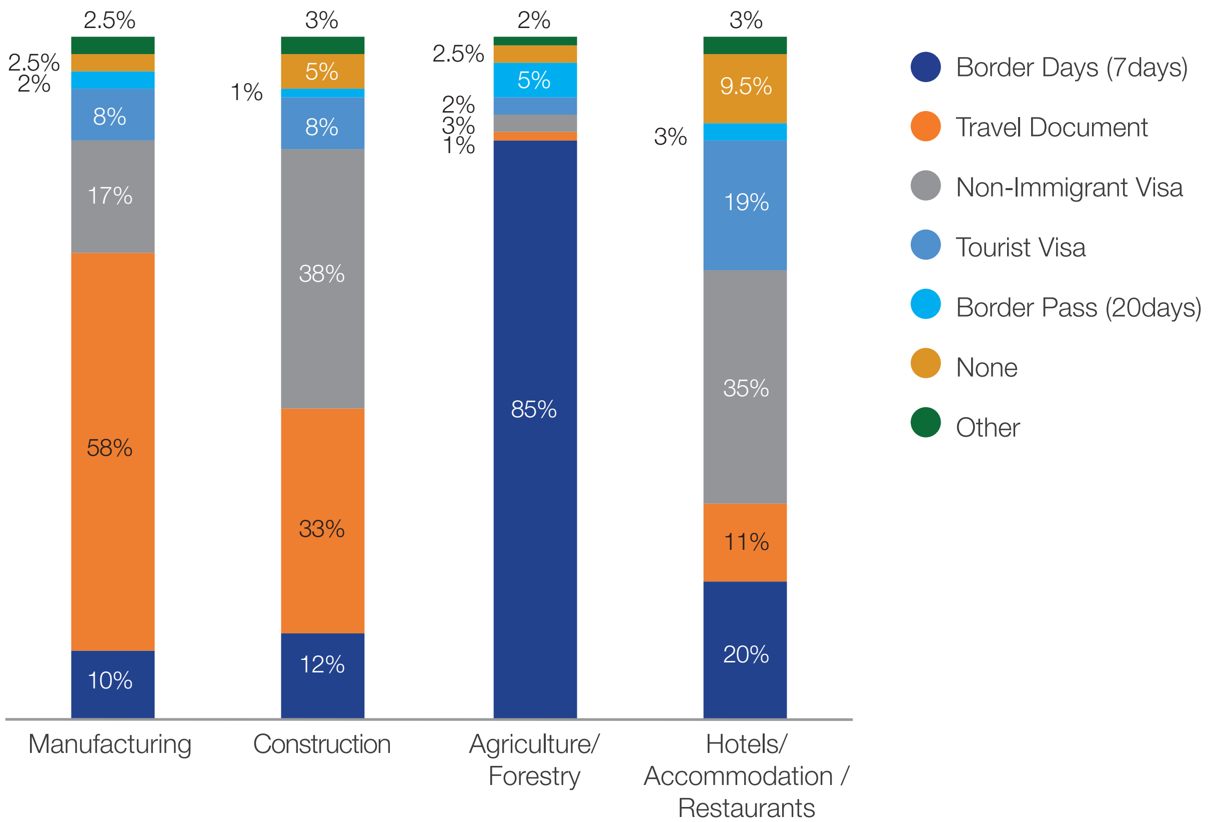
Figure 21 - Document Status by Population Group (n=5,625)



The large of return migrants without documents should not be overinterpreted since return migrants were also interviewed at the Poi Pet Transit Center. The Transit Center is a transit point for Cambodian migrants that are being returned to Cambodia by Thai immigration authorities. In terms of migrants that did not have documents, 67 per cent were interviewed at the Transit Center.

The data shows that depending on the employment sectors the documentation type varies. Migrants working in agriculture most commonly used border passes (mostly the ones valid for 7 days) while those employed in construction and the manufacturing industry used the travel document for overseas migrant workers or a non-immigrant visa (see Figure 22).

Figure 22 - Documentation Status by Employment Sector



The data shows that migrants without documents were mostly employed in construction (41%), agriculture/ forestry (20%) and to a lesser extent in the manufacturing (10.5%) and the service industry (6.5%).

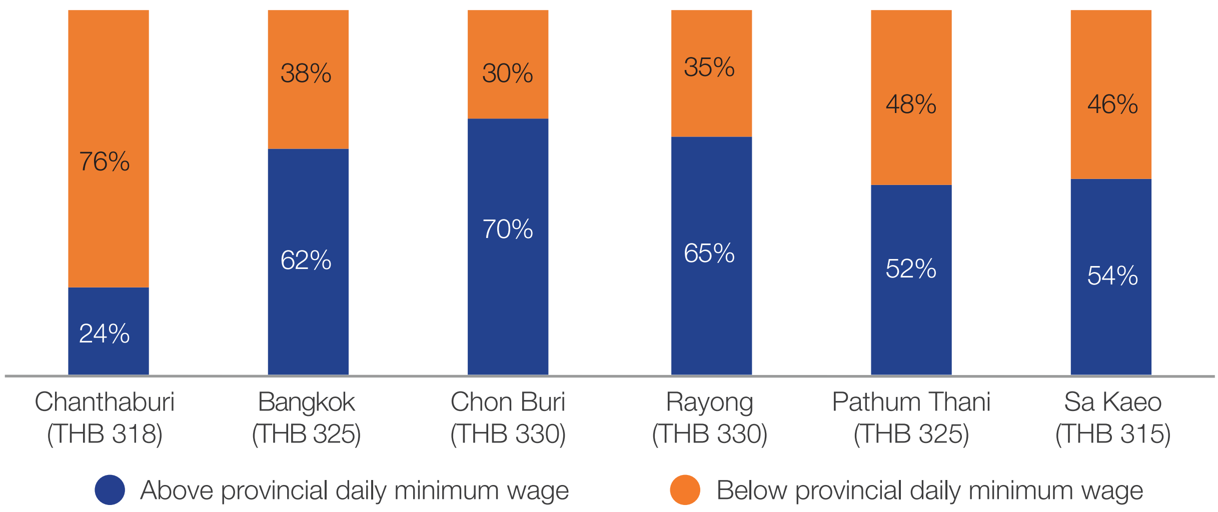
Migrants were further asked if they had a contract of employment – 84 per cent reported not having a contract, of the remaining 16 per cent, 15 per cent had an MoU contract and 1 per cent had a contract but not in connection with the MoU.

Of the 16 per cent (887 respondents) that had a contract, 91 per cent had seen the contract. Almost 98 per cent also reported that they signed their contract themselves. However, 11 per cent signed the contract in a language that they did not understand.

Wages

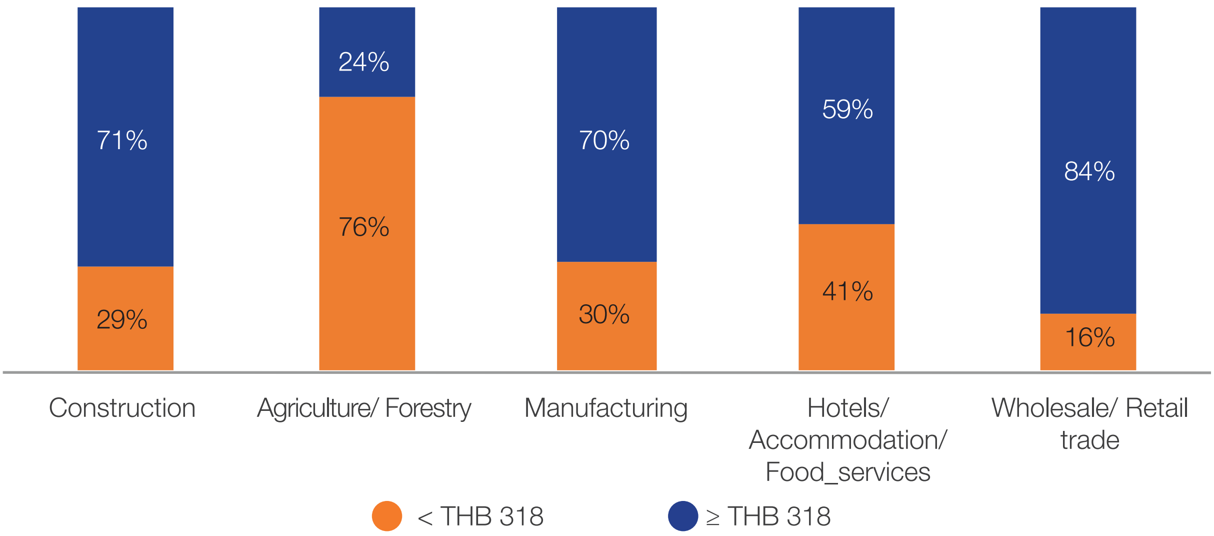
Working conditions and contract conditions can also be used as indicators for potential vulnerabilities in the workplace. The majority of both sample populations during both rounds (86% of outgoing an 91% of returning migrants) reported that they knew their wages prior to migration. The data shows that on average, outgoing migrants expected to be paid THB 365 (THB 393 in Round One and THB 332 in Round Two) and returning migrants had on average been paid THB 400 (THB 432 in Round One and THB 350 in Round Two). The average calculation does not provide much discerning information since wages have to be considered in relation with other factors and variables to gain any deeper insight or draw any significant conclusions. Looking at the main provinces of return migrants (from Table 2 under Thematic Area 1) and the provincial minimum wage for both data rounds, the results are similar and show that migrants returning from Chon Buri, Rayong and Bangkok reported wages above the provincial minimum wage, while 76 per cent of respondents returning from Chanthaburi reported that they received wages below the provincial minimum wage of THB 318. Pathum Thani as well Sa Kaeo were also provinces were only roughly half of the respondents reported wages above the provincial minimum wage.

Figure 23 - Daily Wages by Provincial Minimum Wage (Returning Migrants) n=956



Looking at wage distribution by employment sector for returning migrants, the data shows that migrants employed in the agriculture/forestry industry were least likely to be paid the minimum median wage[6]. The proportion of respondents that reported wages below the minimum wage in the agriculture/forestry sector increased from 73.5 per cent in Round One to 81 per cent in Round Two. On the other hand, for the construction sector the proportion of respondents that received wages above the median minimum wage of THB 318 increased from 67.5 per cent to 77 per cent. The proportions for manufacturing remained largely the same between the two rounds. The results for the combined dataset can be seen in Figure 24[7] below.

Figure 24 - Median Minimum Wage by Employment Sector (Returning Migrants) n=956

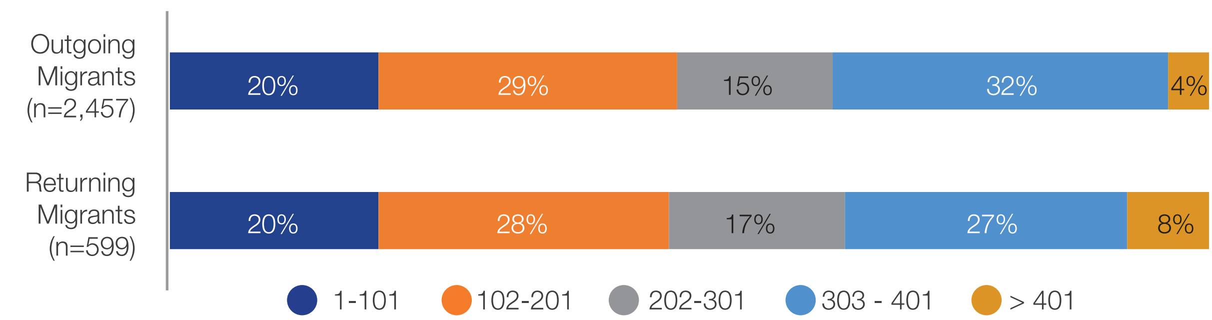


In terms of wage expectations, 98 per cent of the return sample reported that their expected wage and the actual wage were the same, for 1.5 per cent the actual wage was lower, and for 0.5 per cent, the wages were higher. In terms of daily working hours, 88 per cent of return migrants worked on average eight hours a day, 10 per cent worked more than eight hours, and the remaining two per cent worked less than eight hours.

Remittances

With regards to remittances, 59 per cent of outgoing migrants reported that they intend on sending remittances (this proportion decreased from 63% during Round One to 53% in Round Two) and 62 per cent of the return sample indicated to have done so (this proportion decreased from 70% in Round One to 49% in Round Two). The average amounts show that outgoing migrants expected to remit less money than of what returning migrants had sent.

Figure 25 - Remittance Brackets by Population Group (n=3,056)



6 Since there are several minimum wages in Thailand, depending on the province of employment, the study will use the median minimum wage of THB of 318 whenever making comparisons across different provinces

7 Some the results should not be overinterpreted because of small sample sizes e.g. wholesale and retail sector

The proportion of returning migrants remained largely similar during both rounds (UDS 230 in Round One and 233 in Round Two), however, the amount increased from USD 200 to USD 216 for outgoing migrants. Data shows that for both population groups the majority remitted money between USD 102 and 201 (29% and 28%) followed by USD 1-101 (both 20%). Of the return sample, eight percent reported amounts above USD 400 (see Figure 25).

There also appears to be a positive relationship between sending remittances home and having children in Cambodia. Only 41 per cent of those without children remitted money home during their stay in Thailand, while 68 per cent of the sample that had children in Cambodia reported that they regularly sent money home. However, there is no relationship between sending money home (returning migrants) and having borrowed money (from different sources). In fact, the proportion of those sending remittances home was roughly 60 per cent for both samples (having borrowed and having not).

Taking the median minimum daily wage of THB 318 and cross-relating it to the likelihood of sending remittances, the data shows that for the proportion of returning migrants that sent remittances, 65 per cent earned above the median minimum wage, while of those respondents that did not send remittances, 62 per cent earned below the medium minimum wage.

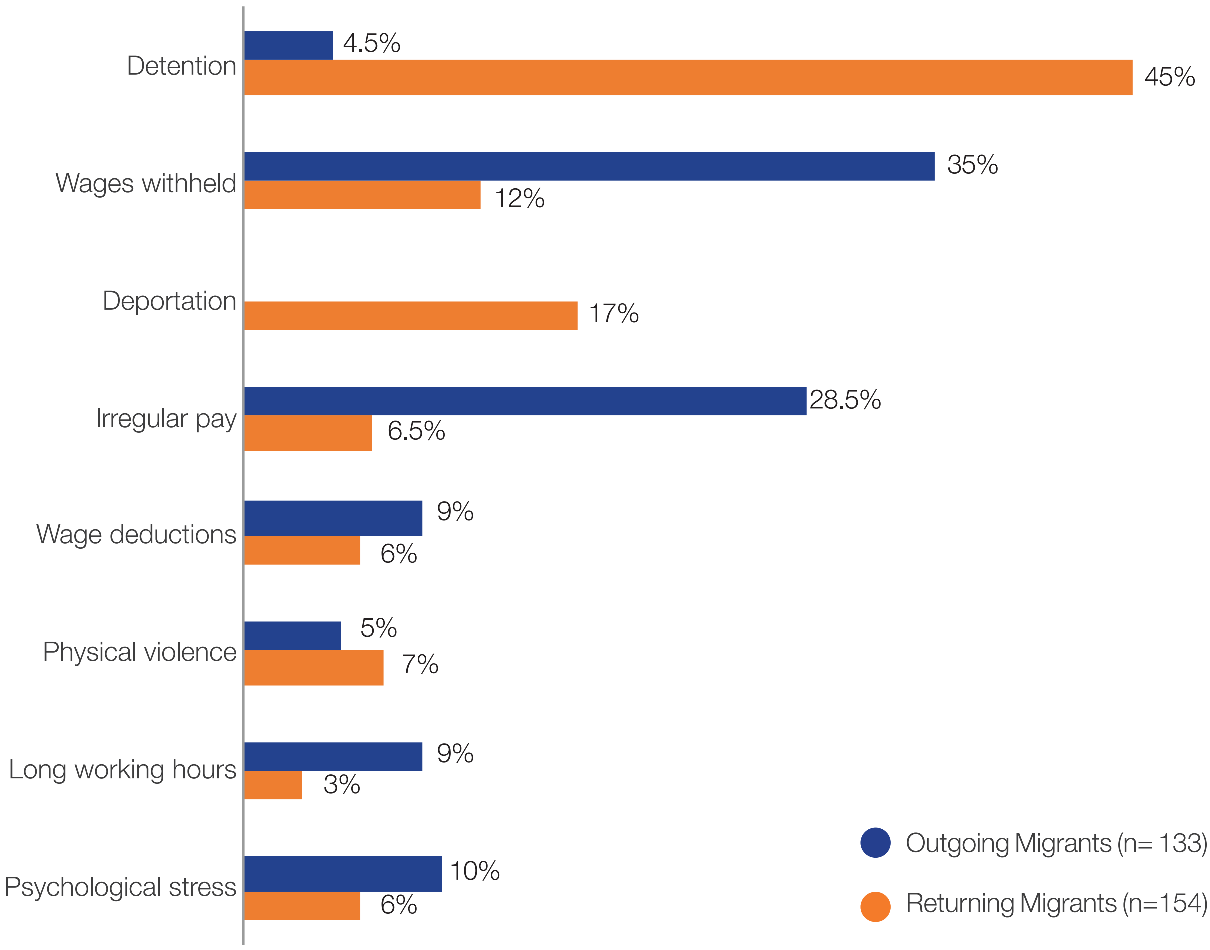
Problems Encountered en Route and in Thailand

To better understand migrant workers' vulnerabilities, the respondents were asked if they had faced any problems during their journey to Thailand (or journey so far, for outgoing migrants) and/or problems at the workplace. Outgoing migrants were asked about their expectations of problems at the workplace. The data shows that most respondents in both samples did not face any challenges during their journey. Only 0.2 per cent (9 respondents) of outgoing migrants reported problems. The proportion of returning migrants is also relatively small with only 2.4 per cent (24 respondents). Those problems were only encountered during Round One of the data collection. During Round Two none of the respondents reported any problems en route. The samples are too small to report on the kind of problems migrants faced.

The data looks different for problems encountered at the workplace (return migrants) or the anticipated problems at the workplace (outgoing migrants). While during Round One already only four per cent of the outgoing migrants expected to face problems at the workplace in Thailand, this proportion decreased to two per cent during Round Two (3% for the combined data). On the other hand, the proportion of returning migrants that reported problems at the workplace in Thailand saw a slight increase from 14.5 per cent to 16 per cent (15% for the combined data).

Returning migrants had faced problems related to detention (45%) and deportation (17%). Outgoing migrants expected problems to occur regarding wages being withheld (35%) and irregular or unreliable payments (28,5%).

Figure 26 - Expected versus Experienced Problems at the Workplace in Thailand (n=287)

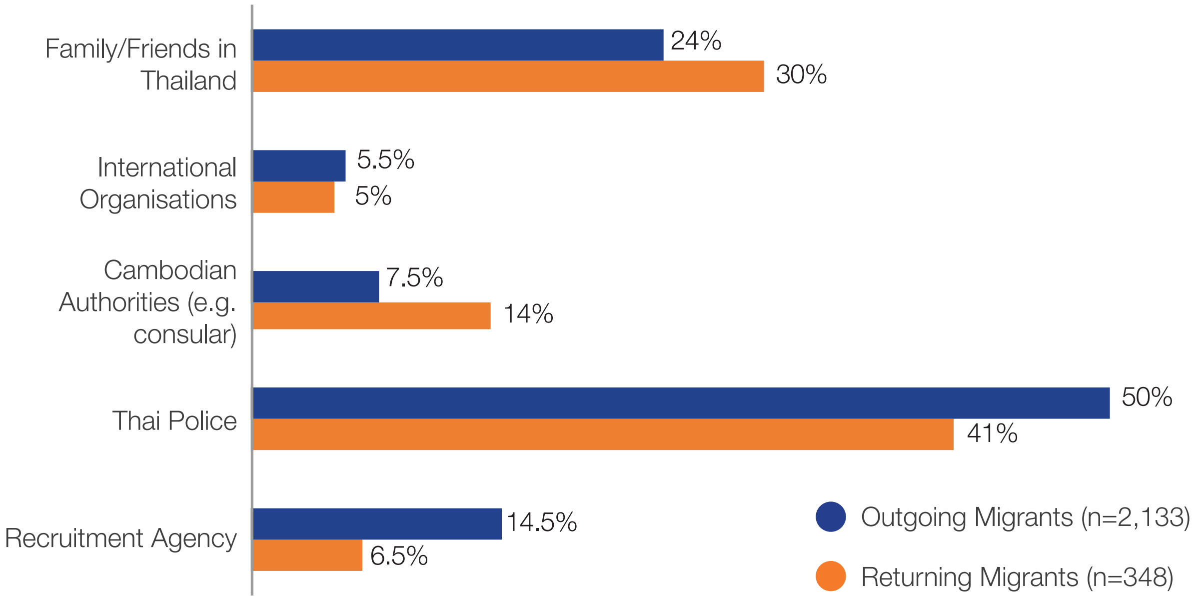


As already identified during Round One, the complete dataset also indicates that a positive relationship seems to exist between lack of documents and problems at the workplace. Of all migrants that reported to face problems, more than half (56%) reported not to have documents. While of all migrants that did not report having experienced problems in the workplace, only 10 per cent did not have proper documentation.

Migrants were asked if they had information about support mechanisms in case of problems in Thailand. Comparing the data collection rounds, the share that knew support mechanisms decreased between Round One and Round Two for both population groups. For outgoing migrants, roughly 46 per cent indicated that they had information about support mechanisms (48% in Round One and 42% in Round Two). While of the return sample, only 34 per cent knew how to seek assistance in case of problems (37% during Round One and only 28% during Round Two). Of the outgoing migrants, 35 per cent and 49 per cent of the returning migrants reported not seeking help. Looking at the gender breakdown of the overall sample, the data shows only a slight difference in knowledge of support mechanisms. Females appear to be slightly more likely to know about mechanisms than males (46% versus 42%). When asked about the actors they know that could provide support, the largest proportion named the Thai police was named by both population groups as well or family/friends in Thailand for returning migrants and recruitment agencies for outgoing migrants (see Figure 27). Especially the proportion of outgoing migrants that reported to would rely on family/friends in Thailand has drastically decreased between the two rounds (from 34.5% to 10%). Although the proportion is smaller for returning migrants the difference is not as big (from 35% to 20%).

Of the 33 per cent of the return sample that were aware of support mechanisms, roughly 29 per cent had received the support they needed, 14 per cent had not, and 50 per cent received partially support.

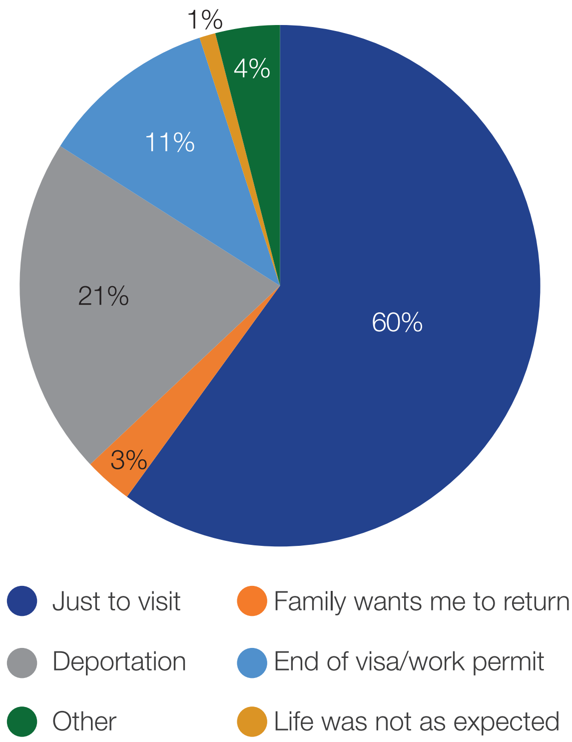
Figure 27 - Main Known Support Mechanism in Thailand by Population Group (n=2,481)



Thematic Area 5 – Return

Questions for thematic area five were only included in the survey tool for returning migrants as it centers on the topic of return. The most common reasons for return included visiting family and friends in Cambodia for both data collection round (63% in Round One, 56% in Round Two and 60% combined). This group of returnees reported that their return was for a short period of time. For the remaining 40 per cent that intended to return for a longer period reasons included deportation, end of work permit/ visa, or family pressure. Of this group, 43 per cent reported that they do not expect to encounter any problems upon return (52% in Round One and 37% in Round Two), whereas 32 per cent expected problems with finding jobs, 12 per cent worried about debts, 8 per cent cited psychological health and 7 per cent named physical health problems as a possible challenge.

Figure 28 - Reasons for Return

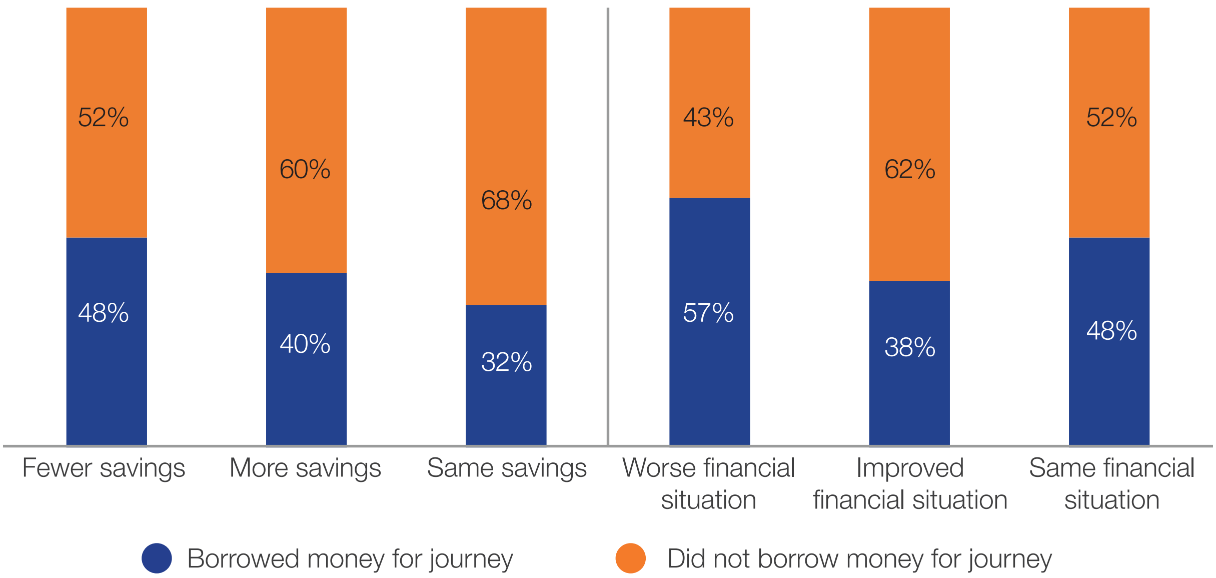


As the data has shown, many Cambodian nationals migrate to Thailand several times throughout their lives. The migrant workers (those with presumed longer-term return intentions) were therefore asked if they intended to migrate again and, if so, would Thailand be the destination country. The data shows that results were similar for both rounds and 64 per cent in total have the intention to migrate again. Without exception this group of migrants wanted to return to Thailand, with 85 per cent naming the reason for return is to assume working in their old jobs and/or because of higher wages (4%) as well as better employment conditions (3.5%), to rejoin family/friends (2.5%) or because living conditions are assumed better (2%).

As previous research has shown, migrants can incur debt during migration, often by failing to properly anticipate certain costs or by expecting to earn more money than they end up being able to. The survey therefore included a few simple questions on the respondents' financial situation upon return. In terms of financial health, 83.5 per cent in total reported that their savings had increased (same proportion for both rounds), for nine per cent, their savings had largely remained the same while 7.5 noted a decrease. At the same time, 87 per cent in total also reported that their general financial situation improved through the migration (same share in both rounds), for seven per cent it remained the same and for 6 per cent their general financial situation had worsened. This was commonly because they were not able to make enough money with their job in Thailand or because they had accumulated debts.

The complete dataset suggests a correlation between borrowing money and the likelihood of having a worsened financial situation. as well as, although to a lesser extent, between borrowing money and having fewer savings after the migration (see Figure 29). In general, the proportion of respondents that reported a worse financial situation or fewer savings were also more likely to have borrowed money in comparison to the respondents that reported more/same savings or an improved/same financial situation.

Figure 29 - Status of Savings and Financial Situation After Borrowing Money for the Migration Journey



Picture 6 - Daily Migrant Flows at Daung International Border

Picture 7 - Daily Migrant Flows at Poi Pet International Border

Conclusion

The results of this second round of data collection and the combined results from both rounds are useful in providing empirical data to confirm or challenge anecdotal knowledge or preconceptions about cross border movements and labour migration between Thailand and Cambodia. Undertaking two separate rounds of data collection makes it possible to compare data gathered at different points in time, and to confirm or challenge previously identified findings.

The data collection activity in Banteay Meanchey and Battambang province took place in Poi Pet city and Kamrieng/Phnom Preuk districts within a timeframe of five months (each round was 11 weeks long). A total of 5,630 Cambodian migrants were surveyed, of whom 5,625 were identified as Cambodian migrant workers. During Round One, the DTM team collected a total of 3,127 surveys and during Round Two an additional 2,503 surveys were conducted. Of all surveys collected, 4,601 interviews were conducted with outgoing migrant workers and 1,029 with returning migrant workers. A total of 2,421 migrants were interviewed around the international border of Poi Pet and 3,209 migrants were interviewed around the international border of Daung as well the local checkpoints called O Romdul and Ou Anlouk.

Migrant Profiles

Throughout both data collection rounds, the average Cambodian migrant is a married, 29-year-old male with primary education. Male migrants were overrepresented in the sample at 57 per cent. The proportion of female respondents decreased during Round Two of the data collection. The largest proportion of over half of the sample population is between the ages of 16 and 32 years old. As already found in Round One, migrants tend to be married rather than single when they migrate from Cambodia to Thailand. The majority had completed primary education as their highest and only form of education (two third of the sample). The most common provinces of origin were the border provinces where the data collection took place, i.e. Battambang and Banteay Meanchey. Nevertheless, as already identified during Round One and supported by the findings during Round Two there is a difference in the patterns of origin locations depending on the data collection points. Migrants transiting through Poi Pet originated from all over Cambodia while migrants interviewed around Kamrieng district (around Daung international border) and Phnom Preuk district (close to local checkpoints) appeared to be predominately originating from Battambang (more than half of the sample). Migrants preferred to stay in Thailand either for periods of over one year or below one month especially in the border provinces of Chanthaburi as well as Bangkok, Chon Buri, Samut Prakan and Rayong. Different from Round One, Samut Prakan increased in popularity as intended destination province for outgoing migrants while Rayong was a common destination for returning migrants. The neighbouring province of Sa Kae decreased in popularity for both sample populations during Round Two.

Drivers of Migration

Prior to embarking on their migration journey, during both data collection rounds the majority of respondents were privately employed, predominately in the agriculture/forestry sector. The unemployment rate (pre-departure) overall lies at roughly 15 per cent and was higher for female than for male respondents and for younger Cambodian nationals (age group between 16 and 30). Migrants commonly reported more than one reason for migrating to Thailand, and these reasons were primarily associated with finding employment, having family problems or the pressure to make repayments on debts and problems related to landownership. This research also confirms that migration from Cambodia to Thailand seems to be cyclical in nature, as over three quarters of the sample had previously migrated to Thailand at least once. In line with the network theory, migrants heavily relied on family and friends to obtain trusted information about life and jobs in Thailand. As main reason for choosing Thailand as a destination the main denominators were higher incomes as well as easy access to the job market.

Pre-migration Arrangements and Preparations

With a few exceptions, throughout both data collection rounds almost all respondents reported to already have arranged employment prior to their departure, mainly with the support from family and friends in Thailand. In line with the employment sectors during their last stay in Thailand, jobs were predominately secured in agriculture/forestry, the construction and manufacturing sectors. Migrants using the crossings in Battambang province mainly reported to be working in the agriculture sector while migrants crossing through Poi Pet worked in the construction or manufacturing industry. While Chanthaburi province in Thailand was already reportedly popular for migrants working in agriculture this proportion increased to over 95 per cent during Round Two. Working in the construction and manufacturing sector was more common for the provinces of Bangkok and Chon Buri. Samut Prakan gained importance for the manufacturing sector during Round Two. On average returning migrants had paid USD 261 for their journey (USD 248 for outgoing migrants). Costs related to journeys to neighbouring provinces such as Chanthaburi and Sa Kaeo were on average cheaper than to Bangkok and Chon Buri. This result was visible during both data collection rounds. Moreover, migrants with travel documents for overseas migrant workers and non-immigrant visas (visas related to the MoU process) paid on average the highest amounts. Next to financial savings, migrants commonly reported to have borrowed money from their employers as well as organized wage deductions with employers to finance their migration journeys. Returning migrants appear more likely to have borrowed money than outgoing migrants. Migrants also often received support for their migration preparations. The proportion of migrants that received support increased between the two data collection rounds.

Migrant Vulnerabilities

Looking at migrants' ability to communicate in Thai, over two third of the sample ranked their speaking and understanding abilities at the lowest two level (1 and 2) for both data collection rounds. For reading skills, over 80 per cent ranked their skills at the lowest level (1). Outgoing migrants mostly used border passes or the travel document for overseas migrant workers whereas returning migrants commonly used their passports with a non-immigrant visa, a border pass or no documents. Depending on the employment sectors, different travel documents were used. For agriculture, the border pass was a common document while migrants working in manufacturing predominately travelled on the travel document for oversea migrant workers and the construction sector was popular for migrants with non-immigrant visas and travel documents for oversea migrant workers. The majority of respondents reported not to have an employment contract. Of those that did, the majority signed their contract themselves and were also able to understand the language of the conditions. Returning migrants had on average earned wages of THB 400 per day. The average amount between the two rounds varied by almost THB 100. As already identified during Round One, in the border province Chanthaburi migrants most often reported to have received wages below the provincial minimum wage while migrants returning from Chon Buri and Rayong most often reported wages above the provincial minimum wage. The data further revealed that the agriculture sector appears to be the sector with wages below the median minimum wage. Wholesale/retail and construction are sectors where migrants reported receiving higher wages on average. Migrants did not commonly experience problems en route to Thailand, however, more migrants reported problems during their employment in Thailand. Problems differed between the two population groups. Common expected problems for outgoing migrants were related to payments and wages while returning migrants reported challenges concerning detention and deportation. Less than half of the whole sample reported to be aware of any support mechanisms (the proportion increased during Round Two). Of those that knew of support, their concept of mechanisms mainly referred to family/friends in Thailand as well as the Thai police.

Return

The reasons for return to Cambodia were linked to duration. The majority of respondents in both rounds indicated that their return was temporary, to visit family or friends. Those that returned for an unknown duration reported a variety of reasons including: family pressure to return, deportation or end of their work permit/visa. When asked if they expected to face challenges upon return, less than half expected to encounter problems. The proportion of respondents that expected problems decreased by 15 per cent in between the two rounds. Expected challenges upon return were concerns with finding a job or experiencing difficulties with their health. Confirming the circular migration patterns, almost two third of the sample had already made plans to migrate to Thailand again mainly in order to resume their previous jobs in Thailand. Upon return migrants generally reported (almost identical results during both rounds) that both their savings as well as general financial situation had improved through the migration. The data also shows a relationship between having borrowed money and being financially worse off after the migration journey.

Picture 8 - IOM enumerator surveying migrant workers

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