Preventing Trafficking of Women
A Study of Origin and Vulnerability Factors for Trafficking Victims and Direct Sex Workers in Four Cambodian Cities
December 2004
Acknowledgements

The research team extends its gratitude to numerous individuals and organizations that played an invaluable role in the implementation of this research project. In particular, we would like to thank the Khmer Women’s Cooperation for Development, the Cambodian Positive People’s Network (CPN+), CARE Cambodia, Cambodian Women for Peace and Development, and the Cambodian Women’s prostitute Union for assisting us with the implementation of our survey. We would also like to thank Claire Christie of CARE Cambodia for sharing CARE’s experiences with a self-administered survey tool, and Dr. Reto Gass of University Research Co, LLC, who provided us with detailed maps of Cambodia. The team is deeply grateful to Keo Tha and Chan Dina, whose assistance in the field survey was truly invaluable. Finally, we extend our sincerest thanks to the staff of Pact Cambodia for their support and assistance, as well as the United States Department of State who provided financial support for this research project.

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# Table of Contents

**Acronyms**

**Tables, Figures and Maps**

**Executive Summary**

**I. Introduction**

   - Research Context and Aims

**II. Methodology**

   - The Research Team
   - Timeframe
   - Desk Research Methodology
   - Analysis of Origin Databases
   - Field Survey Logistics
   - Survey Tool Design
   - Access Issues
   - Limitations

**III. Literature Review on Trafficking and Risk Factors**

   - Identifying and Defining Trafficked Women
   - The Scope of the Problem
   - The Nature of Trafficking in Cambodia
   - Vulnerability Factors
   - Research on Geographic Sources of Trafficking in the Region
   - Research on Origins of Trafficked Women within Cambodia

**IV. The Survey**

   - Topics and Terms of Analysis
   - Vulnerability Profile Findings
   - Origin Findings

**V. Summary of Findings**

**VI. Recommendations**

**References**

**Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire**

**Appendix B: Additional Figures**

**Appendix C: Additional Source Data**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADHOC</td>
<td>The Cambodia Human Rights and Development Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFESIP</td>
<td>Agir pour les Femmes en Situation Précaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAS</td>
<td>Center for Advanced Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFDS</td>
<td>Cambodia Family Development Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSECAM</td>
<td>Coalition to Address Sexual Exploitation of Children in Cambodia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPN+</td>
<td>Cambodian People Living with HIV/AIDS Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPU</td>
<td>Cambodian Prostitutes’ Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSES</td>
<td>Commercial Sexually Exploitative Situations</td>
</tr>
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<td>CWCC</td>
<td>Cambodian Women’s Crisis Centre</td>
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<td>CWPDB</td>
<td>Cambodian Women for Peace and Development</td>
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<td>DSW</td>
<td>Direct Sex Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO-IPEC</td>
<td>International Labor Organization-International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour</td>
</tr>
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<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KWCD</td>
<td>Khmer Women's Cooperation for Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoSALVY</td>
<td>Ministry of Social Affairs, Labor, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoWA</td>
<td>Ministry of Women's Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSF</td>
<td>Médecin sans Frontières</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCHADS</td>
<td>National Center for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology, and STDs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>USG</td>
<td>Urban Sector Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WNU</td>
<td>Women's Network for Unity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tables, Figures and Maps

Tables
Table 2.01 Number of Respondents by Location 8
Table 2.02 Accompanying NGOs by Survey Location 10
Table 4.01 Animal Horoscope and Potential Ages for the Khmer Cycle 22
Table 4.02 Summary of Findings of Survey Data 24
Table 4.03 Cases with Unidentified Districts of Origin 35
Table 4.04 Most Common Provinces of Origin for All Survey Respondents 36
Table 4.05 Most Common Provinces of Origin for Trafficked Survey Respondents 36
Table 4.06 1997 National Census Data on the Ten Most Populous Provinces 36
Table 4.07 Most Common Districts of Origin for All Respondents 36
Table 4.08 Most Common Districts of Origin for Trafficked Respondents 39
Table 4.09 District Poverty Ranking in ILO-IPEC List of 30 Districts 39

Figures
Figure 2.01 Sample Question from the Self-Administered Questionnaire 9
Figure 4.01 Percentage of Trafficked Women out of Total Respondents 25
Figure 4.02 Ages of All Respondents 26
Figure 4.03 Length of Time in Sex Work for All Respondents 26
Figure 4.04 Length of Time in Sex Work for Trafficked and Non-Trafficked Respondents 27
Figure 4.05 Number of Provinces in Which Trafficked and Non-Trafficked Respondents have worked 27
Figure 4.06 Number of Brothels of Employ for Trafficked and Non-Trafficked Respondents 28
Figure 4.07 Years of Schooling of Trafficked and Non-Trafficked Respondents 28
Figure 4.08 Literacy Levels of Trafficked and Non-Trafficked Respondents 29
Figure 4.09 Numeracy Levels of Trafficked and Non-Trafficked Respondents 29
Figure 4.10 Marital Status of Trafficked and Non-Trafficked Respondents Before Entry into Sex Work 30
Figure 4.11 Parental Status of Trafficked and Non-Trafficked Respondents Before Entry into Sex Work 30
Figure 4.12 Family Problems of Trafficked and Non-Trafficked Respondents Before Entry into Sex Work 31
Figure 4.13 Reasons for Entry into Sex Work for Trafficked and Non-Trafficked Respondents 31
Figure 4.14 Decision-Makers for Entry into Sex Work for Trafficked and Non-Trafficked Respondents 32
Figure 4.15 Travel Companions en Route to First Brothel of Employ for Trafficked Respondents 33
Figure 4.16 Persons Who Enlisted Trafficked and Non-Trafficked Respondents at the First Brothel of Employ 33
Figure 4.17 Family Involvement in Entry into Sex Work for Trafficked Respondents 34
Figure 4.18 Distance Between Province of Origin and Province of Current Employ for All Respondents 40
Figure 4.19 Distance Between Province of Origin and Province of Current Employ for Trafficked and Non-Trafficked Respondents 40
Figure 4.20 Distance Between Province of Origin and Province of Current Employ for All Respondents Differentiated by Survey Location 41

Maps
4.01 Districts of Origin Differentiated by Frequency for All Respondents 37
4.02 Place of Origin Differentiated by Survey Location for All Respondents 38
Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of research undertaken for Pact Cambodia’s WORTH program for the prevention of trafficking. The aims of the research were to conduct an assessment of the geographic origin of selected trafficked Cambodian women and girls and to explore various vulnerability factors that prompt or precede their entrance into sex work. The research consisted of a review of current literature and a field survey with 420 brothel-based sex workers in Kampong Som, Sisophon, Poipet, and Phnom Penh. All respondents were Khmer nationals, as they comprise the target group of Pact’s WORTH program. The survey tool consisted of a self-administered questionnaire designed for use by both literate and illiterate participants.

The number of respondents classified as trafficked was 132 women, 31.4% of the total number of respondents. The majority of respondents were aged between 17 and 27. 45% of the trafficked respondents had never been married when they entered sex work and 33% were divorced. 30% of non-trafficked respondents had never married and 43% were divorced.

Material poverty was the most commonly given factor regarding reasons for entry into sex work (62.9%). Deceit was the second most common factor for trafficked participants. Loss of virginity was noted as an indicator of vulnerability as it was reported as a reason for entry by 18.2% of trafficked respondents and 21.2% of non-trafficked respondents.

The majority of trafficked respondents had little education and low literacy levels: 76.5% had received three years or less of formal education. 51% ranked themselves as illiterate. The most common family problems reported by respondents prior to their entry into sex work included debt, food shortages, a divorced or dead parent, illness, and alcoholism. Unlike other studies, family involvement in entry into sex work was noted by very few participants.

The majority of the surveyed respondents were not trafficked into sex work, however, their vulnerability profiles prior to entry into sex work were largely the same as the trafficked respondents. The lack of alternative income generating options and the large demand for sex workers pushes many women in the region and in Cambodia towards sex work. Furthermore, not all trafficking takes place at the village level. Women who migrate for work, particularly those engaged in blind migration, are vulnerable to traffickers once isolated from their homes and family. Women already in sex work are also vulnerable to trafficking.

There was no single province or district of origin that represented the majority of the survey respondents, but there were clear origin clusters and many respondents came from the populous southeastern region of Cambodia. The data indicates that many respondents never worked in their home province, and 67.1%, were working in a province more than two provinces away from their home. Thus targeting provinces by selecting ones with high numbers of sex workers is not advisable for a trafficking prevention program.

Few respondents originated in remote provinces, and it is clear that ethnic minorities do not face a greater risk of trafficking than the majority Khmer population. This distinguishes Cambodia from other countries in the region, such as Thailand, where ethnic minorities are more at risk than the majority population. Cambodia’s ethnic Vietnamese population may be significantly at risk, but this is currently difficult to gauge.

The survey findings concluded that women aged 17-27 who are impoverished or in debt, uneducated, and come from dysfunctional families are vulnerable to trafficking. Divorced women with or without children as well as women who were never married are also identified as vulnerable. Pact’s WORTH program in Cambodia should target women who fit
this vulnerability profile and their families. Reducing the vulnerability of at-risk women will require addressing illiteracy, economic impoverishment, lack of income generating alternatives, and issues of family dysfunction.

The research team recommends that the WORTH program be implemented in selected impoverished districts in southeastern provinces, such as Kandal, Kompong Cham, Takeo, and Prey Veng. It is recommended that a district-level selection be made based on district poverty levels, proximity to major roads and frequency of occurrence as a district of origin for the sampled respondents.
I. Introduction

A. Research Context and Aims

In early 2005, Pact Cambodia will launch WORTH, a Women's Empowerment Program intended to decrease women's vulnerability and prevent trafficking. Preventing trafficking in women requires a long-term approach targeting its dual roots of poverty and gender inequality. Prevention-based interventions address the economic and social needs of vulnerable and at-risk women to help eradicate the trafficking of women and girls for labor and sex.

The key to improving the living conditions for vulnerable women is an approach that allows them to take control over their own lives. Pact’s prevention initiative will decrease vulnerability and build self-confidence and independence among its beneficiaries through a self-help group program that focuses on literacy and savings-led microfinance. The WORTH program is owned and managed by its women participants, allowing for the women to take full control over their means of empowerment.

In order for the WORTH program to target women and communities that can be considered at risk of being trafficked, a research project was implemented to identify the vulnerability factors and geographic origins of Cambodian trafficking victims. This report presents the findings and conclusions of the research and serves as the basis for determining where Pact will implement its WORTH program.

The aims of the research were to conduct an assessment of the geographic origin of selected trafficked Cambodian women and girls and to explore various vulnerability factors that may prompt or precede a woman’s entrance into sex work. The research consisted of a review of current literature and a field survey with 420 brothel-based sex workers in Kampong Som, Sisophon, Poipet, and Phnom Penh.

The scope and nature of trafficking in Cambodia has proved difficult to assess. As one researcher stated, "The very illegality of the phenomena, coupled with the stigma felt by many of its victims, makes it extremely difficult to obtain reliable data from any of the participants."¹ A number of estimates and projections have been done on the scale of trafficking in Cambodia and the region. As a recent International Organization of Migration study of alternative care states: “There is widespread acceptance that trafficking occurs within Cambodian national borders but there has been very little systematic study of the phenomena.”² Few national-level studies have been conducted, although many smaller scale studies are available or underway, studies which are largely qualitative in nature.

A variety of definitions are used for human trafficking and commercial sex trafficking. This report uses the definition of the 2000 United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children. The Protocol defines trafficking in persons in the following manner:

(a) the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the

prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;

(b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;

(c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;

(d) “Child” shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.

This definition was accepted by Royal Government of Cambodia in 2000, when it became a signatory to the United Nations Protocol.

II. Methodology

A. The Research Team
The research project was led by an expatriate consultant. Two Pact staff members, a Khmer national and an expatriate aided in the desk research, survey design and data analysis. The field survey was implemented by a national team. One Pact staff member and two field workers with experience in research in the brothel setting comprised the core field survey team. They were joined by a local NGO staff member or affiliated volunteer at each survey location. All team members were female.

B. Timeframe
During the ten weeks of the study, the research team acquired and read documents related to trafficking and sex work in Cambodia; engaged in an internet search for related regional research on geographic origins; examined origin-related data gathered by other organizations working with trafficked women and girls; designed, implemented and analyzed results of a survey with brothel-based direct sex workers; produced a report on the findings of the research and prepared an electronic presentation.

C. Desk Research Methodology
The desk research phase included a topical review of available literature and internet research. More than forty documents were reviewed from a variety of sources and authors, including the Ministry of Social Affairs, Labor, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSALVY), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA), International Labor Organization-International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Cambodian Women’s Crisis Centre (CWCC), The Cambodia Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC) and the Center for Advanced Study (CAS).

The topics examined in the desk research phase included regional cross-border trafficking patterns, origin studies in the region, vulnerability profiles of trafficked women and girls, surveys on the number of sex workers and trafficked sex workers, mobility amongst sex workers, minors in sex work, reintegration of trafficking victims, and case studies and life histories of sex workers and trafficking victims in Cambodia.
D. Analysis of Origin Databases
The research team attempted to access the origin data gathered by various organizations providing different forms of care for victims of sex trafficking. Initially, access to MOSAVY’s Coordination and Documentation Center database for the Return and Reintegration Project was sought, but this was abandoned when it became clear that the majority of the data contained in this database was not highly relevant for the research.3 No origin data was gained in this stage of the research. Obstacles in obtaining origin data included sealed records in organizations, broken databases, and extended delays in granting permission that made it impossible to secure the data in the timeframe of the research. The research team acknowledged that confidentiality is a significant issue for survivors of sexual exploitation and data was sought anonymously. Many of the refusals were linked to non-functioning or low functioning databases.

E. Field Survey Logistics
The field survey was administered in brothels with direct sex workers.4 Brothels were identified as the field survey venue because it was assumed that the majority of the women trafficked into sex work in Cambodia work in brothels.5 The survey was implemented over a fifteen day period in four cities: Kompong Som, Sisophon, Poipet, and Phnom Penh (Table 2.01). A one day field test was implemented in Tuol Kork with 18 participants, and the questionnaire was subsequently adjusted. The total sample consisted of four hundred and twenty direct sex workers. All respondents were Khmer nationals, as they comprise the target group of the WORTH program.

The three survey locations—Kompong Som, Banteay Meancheay, and Phnom Penh—were selected because they possess significant numbers of sex work venues6 and are situated in three distinct geographic regions: southern, northwestern, and central Cambodia.7 In addition, Banteay Meancheay was chosen because of its high migration rates. In order to maximize access to brothels, (a venue where Pact Cambodia has no direct programs), contacts were made with NGOs that have programs and established relationships with local brothels. A local NGO staff member or affiliated volunteer accompanied the survey team at each survey location (Table 2.02). The permission of brothel managers was sought before the team entered a brothel. The survey was administered by convenience sampling: that is, sex workers present in a chosen brothel were asked if they were willing to participate in a confidential survey. brothels were only visited once by the survey team.

F. Survey Tool Design
The research team designed a self-administered questionnaire that could be used by both literate and illiterate participants. A quantitative tool was chosen to facilitate gathering information from a large sample size within the survey period.

3 See discussion in III. B.
4 Brothel-based sex workers in Cambodia are often referred as direct sex workers. Indirect sex worker is a term used for women who sell sex—regularly or intermittently—in venues such as karaoke bars, other forms of night clubs, massage parlors, and bars.
5 However, the research team acknowledges that some women are trafficked into karaoke parlors and other forms of indirect sex work.
6 The NCHADS draft version of Mapping the Sexual Entertainment Services in 2004 noted 136 brothels in Phnom Penh, 57 brothels in Kompong Som and 49 brothels in Banteay Mieachey (25 in Sisophon and 20 in Poipet).
7 It was assumed that any patterns in terms of current sex work venue and place of origin would be more clearly delineated by examining locations in geographically distinct regions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Location</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kompong Som</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banteay Meanchey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sisophon</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poipet</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phnom Penh</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>420</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The self-administered questionnaire provided confidentiality to participants. Participants’ responses were not spoken with this technique, thereby avoiding the risk of information being overheard or influenced by others. Administration of the tool using small peer groups increased confidence among the participants. This type of questionnaire was chosen because of its potential to be an active and empowering experience for the participant, avoiding the passive exchange which occurs when an interviewer writes on the participant's behalf and the participant gives spoken responses.

The survey was administered by teams of two: a facilitator and an assistant. The teams met with small groups of three to ten participants, each of whom filled in her own questionnaire booklet. Each page of the booklet displayed written answer options with a corresponding symbol for women who were illiterate. A corresponding poster held by the facilitator displayed the survey question and the answer options. The survey facilitator asked the question to the group and then pointed out the answers and their corresponding symbol. Questions and answers were repeated twice. The assistant aided any woman who expressed confusion or requested help in marking an answer. The facilitator announced when multiple responses were permitted for a question and otherwise told participants to mark only one response.

A translated version of the questionnaire in full may be found in Appendix A. A sample question is displayed below.

Figure 2.01  Sample Question from the Self-Administered Questionnaire

5. How many years of school did you attend?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never entered school</td>
<td>Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 years</td>
<td>Star</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 years</td>
<td>Palm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than six years</td>
<td>Moon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because of the nature of the tool, all answers were limited to multiple choice responses.

G. Access Issues
As discussed above, the field survey team largely surveyed brothels that had established relationships with NGOs. Arguably, these may not be the brothels where recently trafficked women are held; it is likely that the owners/managers of brothels that are destinations for trafficked women are aware that they are involved in illegal activity and less accessible to outside intervention.

Research suggests that many sex workers are highly mobile, both in and out of forms of sex work as well as between work locations. In addition, a sex worker who was trafficked into the
trade may remain in sex work after working off her debt (or after coming of age, in the case of minors). Therefore, even though a brothel that allows NGOs to access its workers may well be a place which does not harbor recently trafficked women, this does not mean that formerly trafficked women are not found there.

For the purposes of accessing as many brothels as possible over a short period of time, coordinating with local NGOs was chosen as the best option available (Table 2.02).8

In areas where local contacts were used, three brothel managers refused to allow the field team to conduct the survey. One additional brothel manager evicted the field team when overhearing the facilitator ask the question about reason for entry into sex work, despite participants' protests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.02 Accompanying NGOs by Survey Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kompong Som</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khmer Women's Cooperation for Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sisophon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPN+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poipet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care Cambodia: a volunteer HIV/AIDS peer educator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phnom Penh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodian Women for Peace and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khmer Women's Cooperation for Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodian Prostitutes Union</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H.  Limitations

1. Secondary research challenges

A lack of coordination and information-sharing between groups in Cambodia slowed and hampered this phase of the research: no centralized source currently exists for research on trafficking and sex work in Cambodia. Finding relevant research was thus a time-intensive task involving inquiries to the large number of organizations in Cambodia. As an ILO secondary research review on migration noted, "There is a sea of information available in Cambodia in the form of project reports and evaluations from hundreds of organizations, but the difficulty is in knowing who to talk to, and in sifting through all of these to identify those with info most relevant to the task at hand."9 A variety of organizations are involved in sex work research that has not yet been officially released, such as Policy Project, ILO-IPEC Program to Prevent the Trafficking of Children and Women, and AFESIP. In addition, difficulties in assessing the reliability of the existing data on regional and national trafficking further slowed the desk research. Internet research encountered the same hurdles. Drawing comparisons between various reports was also problematic due to the use of diverse methodologies, differing samples (usually quite small in number), and the complex nature of trafficking and sex work. Additionally, information rapidly becomes outdated in this field.

2. Field survey challenges

One of the major difficulties in doing research on trafficking stems from its illegality. The fear of prosecution or repercussion may lead to unreliable data.10 Accessing brothels, where the majority of victims of sex trafficking are employed, poses additional constraints. The

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8 When the team diverged from this technique they experienced difficulty in entering brothels. For example, one team went independently to the Wat Koh area in Phnom Penh on the last morning of the survey. Local fruit sellers and motodopes identified the area's brothels, but managers denied that they operated venues, although some sex workers were standing under trees near the buildings. Local motor-taxi drivers reported recent arrests and indicated that some places "raised" (jenjum) girls, which often implies the presence of trafficked or indentured sex workers. As they were leaving, a customer exiting one of the "non-brothels" approached the team and asked if they had come to sell a girl.


current laws surrounding sex work in Cambodia do not classify sex work as illegal, but it is illegal to earn money from sex workers—thus “brothel owners, procurers, and accomplices are all liable under the law, and penalties range up to 20 years. Further, operators of places of “debauchery or obscene acts” can be sentenced to five years.”\textsuperscript{11} Although brothels still operate openly in Cambodia, they “operate on the margin of Cambodian law…are subject to the whims of law enforcement and can be raided at any time.”\textsuperscript{12} This report acknowledges the difficulties of doing research on trafficking and particularly the constraints of doing research in a brothel setting. Some specific areas of limitation are noted below.

- The survey may not have been administered in brothels which are common destinations for trafficked victims, since these brothels are presumably more closed to the NGOs which aided the field survey team.
- The constraints of surveying women in a brothel setting who may have experienced or be experiencing coercion and oppressive conditions may have hindered women from giving honest responses to the most sensitive questions.
- Some variance occurred in the sampling technique in the field. In Sisophon a local NGO staff member helped elicit permission from brothel managers but did not help implement the survey in the brothels with the field team. In Phnom Penh, teams went independently to two locations.
- The survey was implemented in Phnom Penh the week before \textit{Pchum Ben}, the Festival of the Dead. The number of sex workers in the city was lower than normal, as many women had gone home for the holiday, and the field survey team interviewed fewer women than anticipated.
- The complexity of circumstances surrounding entry into sex work may not have been adequately presented by a multiple choice tool. In addition, the Khmer language can be highly contextual. Choosing Khmer terms for the answer responses which had only one meaning/interpretation was a challenging task. Confusion regarding chosen terms is discussed in IV.A. Finally, despite the design of the survey tool, low literacy rates may have complicated understanding of the tool.
- Finally, the tool used could not identify every means that is classified as trafficking according to the U.N. 2000 Protocol, nor the age of entry into sex work of every respondent. The number of respondents classified as trafficked should thus be considered a working minimum rather than an absolute total.

\section*{III. Literature Review on Trafficking and Risk Factors}

\subsection*{A. Identifying and Defining Trafficked Women}

\subsubsection*{1. Mobility}

Mobility and migration are factors that complicate the identification of the trafficked. A 2004 International Organization for Migration study on care for exploited children summarizes the following kinds of issues:

Differentiating between people who voluntarily cross borders or move from one province to another searching for work and those who are trafficked can be difficult. Both groups have similar prevailing economic conditions and situations. They are usually poor, in debt and seeking to improve their income and living conditions….For women and children who have been sexually exploited there may be the added factor of shame. It becomes even more

\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}
difficult to identify victims of trafficking in the instances where children accompany parents or relatives in migration, as children often have little or no say in the decision.\textsuperscript{13}

Whether or not migrants have been trafficked, they may face increased vulnerability through the act of migration. ILO-IPEC’s secondary data review of migration in Cambodia stated that labor migration is a major factor that can contribute to an increased vulnerability to trafficking.\textsuperscript{14}

The sex work sector itself has been noted as a mobile sector by various researchers.\textsuperscript{15} Women move in and out of sex work as well as venues and locations. Not all trafficked women remain in brothels. Women who were initially trafficked into sex work may work off their debt and enter other forms of sex work or employment.

2. \textit{Understanding trafficking}

The definitions of trafficking have been carefully developed by various international bodies to encompass and represent the complexity of the exploitation victims may face. However, MOWVA’s stakeholder analysis of 2,880 women for their Counter Trafficking Information Campaign concluded that the term “trafficking” was not “understood in any depth.”\textsuperscript{16} Also, inhabitants of a trafficked woman’s home area may not know whether the individual migrated voluntarily or involuntarily,\textsuperscript{17} and they are unlikely to be aware of trafficking that occurred after the woman left the village.

B. \textit{The Scope of the Problem}

1. \textit{Internal trafficking}

The accuracy of available statistics on the scope of sex trafficking and sex work in Cambodia has recently been a topic of much debate. A USAID study conducted in 2002 and 2003 observed 5,317 sex workers in Cambodia and made a nationwide estimate of 18,256 sex workers.\textsuperscript{18} Of the observed sex workers, 65.5 percent were Khmer and 32.8 percent were Vietnamese. Furthermore, 20.2 percent were classified as trafficked, 876 by their indentured status and 198 because they were underage.\textsuperscript{19} The report stated that approximately 60 percent of underage sex workers in Cambodia are Vietnamese and 40 percent Khmer. Age was estimated by researcher observation and venue management personnel reports. Management reports were used as the principal measure of the existence of underage and indentured workers in the findings.

This report is the most exhaustive survey of recent note. However, it is worth mentioning a response to this report that argued that the study’s totals represent an undercount based on the methodology employed and considerations such as whether management estimates of underage and indentured girls would be truthful.\textsuperscript{20}

\begin{itemize}
\item Harrison, (2004), p. 5.
\item Ministry of Women’s and Veteran’s Affairs, \textit{Counter Trafficking Information Campaign Stakeholder Analysis of Six Provinces}, (2004), p. 5.
\item Madden, (2004), p. 2.
\item Underage was defined as under 18 at the time of the appraisal.
\end{itemize}
An older survey which also counted minors was conducted by the Commission on Human Rights and Reception of Complaints of the National Assembly. This survey counted 14,725 brothel-based sex workers from the period of June 1996 to January 1997. Of this total, 2,291 were reported to be under 18 years of age. Of those, more than half were between the ages of 9 and 15, and of this group, 78% were reported to be Vietnamese.

The methodology for gauging age and ethnicity was described as “visit[ing] the brothels and informally question[ing] the brothel owners and prostitutes, asking them about the number of prostitutes in the brothel and about the composition, nationality, age, and background of those prostitutes.” The same concerns in terms of the reliability and verifiability of the USAID report’s estimations of age are relevant for the Commission on Human Rights and Reception of Complaints’ survey.

2. Cross-border trafficking to Thailand

The research team was unable to find reliable estimates of the scope of cross-border sex trafficking to Thailand. IOM’s 1997 study of trafficking to Thailand concluded that no reliable statistics existed. A 2004 ILO study stated that an estimated 88,000 women had been trafficked to Thailand, but did not specify its information source or the nature of that trafficking.

An ILO-IPEC report on labor exploitation in the Mekong Sub-Region wrote that “sending communities of women” were clustered particularly in the northwestern region of Cambodia, through many crossing points in Banteay Meanchey, Koh Kong, and Siem Reap provinces.

Systematically collected data about Cambodian victims of trafficking to Thailand has been compiled by the IOM/MoSALVY Return and Reintegration Project. However, the returnees are mainly children and appear to be involved in begging or labor, rather than sex work. For example, 641 women and children from Cambodia were assisted by the Return and Reintegration project from September 1st to 31st December 2003, 40.7% of whom were defined as trafficked persons. Of those identified as trafficked persons, the majority are children aged between 6 and 13 years. This may be because women tend to be trafficked into “non-visible” trades such as prostitution or domestic labor. Children working in the streets are more visible and thus easier to detect and arrest.

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22 Ibid, p. 2.
26 Ibid, p. 10.
In addition, IOM reported that between 25% and 33% of Cambodians being deported from Vietnam are estimated to be victims of trafficking, but again, the majority of these deportees are children.27

For those trafficked across the Cambodian border and returning from either Thailand or Vietnam, the problem appears to be localized, that is, the women and children who are trafficked come from particular areas. Most of the returnees who were trafficked to Thailand come from Ou Chrov district in Banteay Meanchey province—96% of returnees from this district originated from Poipet Town.28 People trafficked to Vietnam tend to originate from Svay Tiap, Kompong Ro and Chantrea districts in Svay Rieng Province.29

C. The Nature of Trafficking in Cambodia

Accounts of the nature of the trafficking industry range from a well-organized network of organized crime to a loosely organized but pervasive phenomenon. A small-scale 1998 study of trafficking along the Thai-Cambodian border concluded that the recruiting process was widely varied and not highly organized.30 In a 2000 study of sex trafficking in the region, sociologist Louise Brown noted that the Cambodian sex industry was so pervasive and Cambodian women so vulnerable that trafficking did not need to be tightly organized in order to function.31

MOWA/IOM research done in 2001 and 2004 suggested that villagers were “generally highly aware of the problem of trafficking and that many have already been exposed to UNICEF and other agency television spots dealing with trafficking.”32 However, as stated earlier, the research also concluded that local knowledge of trafficking was often not comprehensive. In addition, the studies conclude that trafficking “is not only instigated by outsiders, but that it is also commonly instigated by people who are known personally, such as neighbours, boyfriends, and relatives.”33

Despite this finding, the MOWA study concluded that villagers were not likely to report cases of trafficking within their village. Reasons stated in the focus groups included the issue

33 Fordham (2001), p. 6. Note that this report is looking at all forms of trafficking and not sex trafficking in particular.
being none of their business, fear of creating conflict within the village, or opening themselves to the risk of revenge from the family who had been reported.34

It is unclear at which point in the trafficking process the majority of internal trafficking takes place—that is, recruitment, transportation, or destination. Increasing attention is being paid to blind migration, defined by IOM as “un or ill informed migration that puts the migrant potentially at risk of trafficking.”35 IOM's study of trafficking to Thailand discussed patterns of recruitment and distinguished between a one-step pattern, that is, “targeting ‘fresh’ girls directly from the villages” and a two-step pattern--targeting women “who are already working as prostitutes, dancers, or beer-girls.”36

Women desperately looking for incomes are vulnerable to being attracted or coerced into the sex industry, even if they find another form of income first. Mr. Touch Samon, Deputy Director of Social Affairs for the Reintegration Department of MOSAVY, stated that increasing numbers of young women who come looking for work in the city and find part time or low paying factory jobs are easily persuaded or tricked into sex work through their search for higher paying jobs.37 The Behavioral Surveillance Survey of 2001 included 570 brothel-based sex workers from Phnom Penh, Kompong Som, Kompong Cham, Battambang and Siem Reap. About half of the women, 46%, said sex work was their first employment.38 Twenty percent had worked first in karaoke bars and 15% in factories. As Brown's regional study noted, “Once the girl is away from home and outside the protection of her family and community she is increasingly vulnerable, and it is only a short step from there into the world of the sex trade.”39

In addition, the IOM study of trafficking to Thailand argued that trafficking also occurred in the brothels themselves, since sex workers “are easy targets for recruiters who have connections to other brothels within Cambodia or in Thailand.”40 This was confirmed by a 2004 Center for Advanced Study research report on female sex workers in Cambodia.41

D. Vulnerability Factors

1. Common regional factors

There are a number of factors that increase an individual’s vulnerability to trafficking. The most common regional factors will be briefly listed and a few explored in greater detail in the Cambodian context.

Impoverishment, limited education opportunities, dysfunctional families, social marginalization, statelessness, membership in an ethnic minority, consumerism/materialism, a low regard for females, the demand for sexual services, corruption and weak political will and legislative systems, are all commonly mentioned factors in the region.42

Poverty is often cited as a root cause of trafficking. A study commissioned by the NGO Group on the Convention on the Rights of Child contained a useful discussion of how

37 Remarks made during informal interview.
42 See Harrison, Brown, Tumlin, Archavanitkul.
poverty contributes to vulnerability by creating part of a population that is “chronically disadvantaged economically, and for whom there is little access to opportunities for an alternative source of income...a group for whom mere survival can precipitate their involvement in the sex trade.” It also posited that poverty “creates a situation where many children will not be in education, and/or where many will be involved in the labor market.”

Brown's study argued that family problems were a more important factor than poverty in pushing girls into sex work, stating, “Troubled families are the breeding grounds for sex workers. And troubled families in poor, marginal, and crisis-ridden communities generate the most reliable supply of cheap girls.”

An ILO-commissioned review of child trafficking in the region stated a correlation “between past history of sexual abuse and future sexual exploitation” that was widely reported by countries in the region. Brown's regional study concluded that “rape as an entry ticket into prostitution” was a common pattern found in countries “as far apart as the Philippines, Bangladesh and Cambodia.”

2. **Vulnerability factors in the Cambodian context**

In 2003, a Coalition to Address Sexual Exploitation of Children in Cambodia workshop asked a small group of rescued minors to rank the three most important reasons girls are trafficked into the sex industry. In their own words, the most important reasons were as follows: “Parents being poor and needing money,” “Illiteracy,” and “Wanting a job and immediately believ[ing] someone who promises a good job.”

The 2004 IOM study on care for exploited children noted that “[e]conomic issues of poverty, financial difficulties, debt and food shortages are cited by families as the main reasons for renting and trafficking their children.”

MOWA/IOM’s stakeholder analysis concluded that debt and debt bondage had become an important root cause of trafficking in the Cambodian context. According to their analysis, debt bondage was “not viewed by those surveyed as trafficking and a human rights violation. It constitutes the last resort in a survival strategy where the normal means to meet basic needs has broken down.”

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Unstable families were mentioned as a vulnerability factor by many studies. Family risk factors characterized by IOM's 1997 trafficking study include the following: a girl’s parents are separated, or are divorced and remarried; one or both parents are dead and the girl lives with relatives or friends; one or both parents are drug addicts, alcoholics or gamblers; and a woman is divorced or separated from her husband.

Despite the paucity of the data it does appear clear that in Cambodia the ethnic minorities do not face a greater risk of trafficking than the majority population. Most of the sex workers in Cambodia are ethnically Khmer. Cambodia’s ethnic Vietnamese population may be an exception to this and be significantly at risk, but this is currently impossible to gauge due to a lack of differentiation between ethnic Vietnamese and Vietnamese nationals in available research.

The 2002 Survey on Health Seeking Behavior of Women Working in the Entertainment Sector in Phnom Penh conducted by CAS stated that for many of its respondents, “losing their virginity was an important factor leading them into indirect sex work.” The report discussed the role of social and cultural norms around this factor and concluded that women who had lost their virginity and were unmarried had “low social status and value.” Conversely, these women faced fewer social taboos against sexual activity, their virginity having already been lost.

The 570 direct sex workers in the Behavioral Surveillance Survey of 2001 were asked to identify their first sexual partner. The most common partner reported was a husband, 45.9%, followed by a boyfriend, 20.9%, and then a client 30.1%. In other words, 66.8% of the respondents had lost their virginity prior to their entry to sex work.

3. Voluntary versus involuntary entry

Expectations for women to contribute to family income and the lack of income generating opportunities increase the vulnerability of Cambodian women. Sex work can be a lucrative form of employment. The mean income for the brothel-based sex workers in the 2001 Behavioral Surveillance Survey was $81--more than twice the starting salary of a factory or government job.

Young women are often caught between conflicting ideals. As IOM's 1997 study noted, “Although daughters should ideally stay in the protected environment of the family and village, they are also expected to contribute to family income, which might force them to leave this environment.” This sense of filial responsibility is summed up well in the Khmer saying: “A son does not feel responsible to take care of his parents, whereas a daughter, even when she works as a prostitute, will still think of her mother.”

50 See for example, Mealea, Brown, and White.
52 See Steinfatt and the National Assembly Commission on Human Rights and Reception of Complaints.
Women who enter sex work “voluntarily” are not classified as trafficked, but they are arguably equally vulnerable to women at risk of being trafficked. A lack of alternative income generating options pushes many women towards sex work. The 1997 study by IOM argued: “Although the term voluntary entry into prostitution suggests free will, it does not always mean a free choice among the economic alternatives for those women who decide themselves to enter prostitution. Most often these women entered because of dire economic needs within a specific social context.”

Despite the problems inherent in comparing surveys conducted with varying methodologies, three studies will be briefly discussed below.

A survey was conducted in 1994 by CWDA staff with 399 sex workers in Tuol Kork, 213 of who were from Cambodia and 186 from Vietnam. 56% of the respondents stated that they were not aware that they would be sex workers when they left their homes with someone else. 65% of the women said that friends or neighbors brought or sold them to a brothel.

A rapid appraisal conducted by Human Rights Vigilance of Cambodia in 1995 interviewed 310 respondents, 91 of whom were sex workers, in 11 provinces and Phnom Penh. The study concluded that 55% of the sampled sex workers were trafficked. Their findings indicated that 45% of the trafficked women were deceived by pimps or abducted into prostitution, and 40% were sold by parents or immediate relatives.

Adhoc’s 1999 study, Research on Causes of the Prostitution in Cambodia, surveyed 793 brothel-based sex workers, 667 Cambodian women and 121 Vietnamese women. The study classified 77.5% of the respondents as having entered sex work voluntarily and 22.5% involuntarily.

Many women were identified by these studies as having entered sex work voluntarily. The notion of voluntary entry requires further research. As mentioned earlier, local understanding of what constitutes trafficking is still unclear—it is possible that some women do not realize that they have been trafficked if they were not forcibly abducted or sold by someone else. For example, in the 1999 rapid assessment of children in prostitution in Vietnam done for ILO, the author stated that 45% of the child prostitutes interviewed "decided themselves to work as sex workers," adding, "its should be noted that this is the decision they had to make when being asked by employers to serve the customers, not the decision to go to the city for work since for the latter, most of them thought they would have a legal job." In addition, cultural notions of agency in decision-making and issues of shame need to be explored.

E. Research on Geographic Sources of Trafficking in the Region

As with other aspects of trafficking in Asia, there is a scarcity of in-depth information regarding national geographic locations for trafficked women in the various countries in the region, with the exception of Thailand. Since cross-border migration is more accurately tracked and draws more attention from state officials in host countries, international trafficking patterns are clearer, though precise numbers are still unavailable. In Asia, there are vivid migration patterns for women trafficked across national borders into sex work. For example, many sources report that large numbers of women from Burma, Southern China, Vietnam and Cambodia are brought to Thailand, whereas Bengali and Nepali women are mostly sent to work in India. Understanding where these women come from in terms of the specific regions, provinces and districts within their source countries is a much more difficult task.

Some studies have allowed for some general conclusions to be made about the geographic—and more often social—origins of trafficked women within their home country. It is currently very difficult to distinguish between geographic origin and other factors contributing to vulnerability. Brown's study on trafficking in the region discussed the recruitment/trafficking process in Thailand in some length, and explained that most recruiters target ethnic minority women from hill tribes in the northern part of the country. In the discussion, however, it is made clear that these women have become preferable targets for trafficking as they tend to be poor, uneducated and from communities with high rates of unemployment and drug addiction. Non-hill tribe Thai women working in the sex industry also tend to come from the rural northern and northeastern part of the country, where poverty rates are significantly higher than in the south. The U.S. State Department Trafficking in Persons Report for 2004 also identifies the northern region of Thailand as a main place of origin for trafficked women, and indicates that people from other countries who flee their home countries in search of economic opportunity are likely targets for Thailand-based traffickers.

It is evident that marginalized or displaced people are targeted by traffickers as they tend to be less financially secure and have fewer employment opportunities than the majority. Ethnic Chinese women living in Malaysia make up most of the women trafficked out of the country. Nepali women from a low caste or from Himalayan ethnic minority groups are said to be the common victims of Nepal’s India-oriented trafficking flow. In Burma, studies indicate that trafficking victims often come from the Yai Thai community, and that refugee camps along the Thai/Burmese border are also common recruiting grounds for traffickers. Minors from Laotian, Chinese and Indian ethnic minorities have also been identified as "particularly vulnerable" to trafficking. Geographic proximity to major trafficking hubs like Bangkok is also a factor in vulnerability to trafficking. Women from Yunnan province in southern China make up a large portion of trafficking victims sent to Thailand and also to other parts of China. Coupled with high poverty and low education rates, Yunnan’s proximity to Thailand makes it a convenient target region for recruiters and traffickers.

Being close to a major city or trafficking hub, however, does not always dictate the amount of trafficking that happens in a given region. In the Philippines, for example, many women working in urban brothels are recruited from the shantytowns in or around the city, yet the majority of the country’s sex workers and trafficked women hail from rural areas and the northern part of the country. In Laos as well as Vietnam, women also tend come from rural areas. Their location within the country does not dictate whether or not they are particularly vulnerable to trafficking, but it does influence where they are sent once they are trafficked. Northern Vietnamese women and girls, for example, are sent to China to be sold as brides, while those from southern areas end up in Cambodia’s brothels. This does not imply, however, that women tend to be trafficked to the nearest trafficking hub—many Southeast Asian women wind up in Europe and sometimes even Africa or the Americas.

F. Research on Origins of Trafficked Women within Cambodia

No national-level origin study for victims of sex trafficking has been conducted in Cambodia. Origin data has been reported by various qualitative research studies on sex work and trafficking, but apparently no research has been done on why certain provinces occur frequently as provinces of origin.

The Human Rights Vigilance study in 1995 concluded that sex workers usually come from a different province than the one in which they are employed. A 2004 Center for Advanced Study research report also noted that respondents rarely engaged in sex work close to their native area.\(^\text{71}\) The Vigilance study stated that most of the sex workers came from Kompong Cham, Battambang, Svay Rieng, Phnom Penh, Prey Veng, Kandal, and Takeo. The most common provinces of origin for participants in the 1999 Adhoc study were Kompong Cham, Prey Veng, Kandal, Phnom Penh and Svay Rieng.

Because of the unreliability and scarcity of research on internal trafficking, a number of groups have chosen to classify provinces at risk of trafficking by using other indicators.

In 2001 MoWVA and IOM identified the following six provinces as being high risk for trafficking: Kompong Som, Banteay Meanchey, Svay Rieng, Prey Veng and Koh Kong. The stated criteria for this identification was provinces bordering other countries or near-border provinces, as well as cross-cutting, which was defined as locations commonly traveled through while being trafficked. Data for the justification of these criteria was unavailable.

In 2004, ILO-IPEC reviewed secondary data on internal migration patterns and identified target "sending" and "receiving" migration provinces for its anti-trafficking efforts. The research team employed an eleven point evaluation criteria to rate and identify eight provinces according to need or severity of migration and trafficking sending issues. The criteria consisted of labor migration, formal and informal education levels, employment opportunities in the province, natural disasters, poverty level, infrastructure, population, existing programs and service providers, as well as proximity to major [migrant] receiving areas.\(^\text{72}\) The most at-risk provinces were Prey Veng, Banteay Meanchey, Siem Reap, Kompong Som, Kampong Cham, Battambang, Svay Rieng, and Kandal. At a March 2004 workshop they designated 4 of those provinces as prime “sending areas:” Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, Kompong Cham and Banteay Meanchey.

The OPTIONS Program, a consortium of NGO's led by World Education, responded to the 2003 request for proposals of the Global Education Initiative of the U.S. Department of Labor. The request identified seven provinces as "containing significant numbers of children at risk of the worst forms of child labor, particularly trafficking and CSE (commercial sexual exploitation);" these provinces were Banteay Meanchey, Otdar Meanchey, Battambang, Siem Reap, Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, and Kampong Cham.\(^\text{73}\) The OPTIONS Program selected target provinces from that list by evaluating the following criteria: migration level, poverty statistics, food security, and girls' education rates. These criteria applied to provinces where OPTIONS partners already worked: namely, Prey Veng and Kompong Cham. Banteay Meanchey also met the criteria, was identified as both a key source and destination area for trafficking, and had, in addition, a number of groups working with trafficking victims.

\(^\text{71}\) Mealea (2004), p. 25.
\(^\text{73}\) The Department of Labor sent a mission to Cambodia in December 2002, but the research team was unable to identify how they selected the seven at-risk provinces.
National-level research into sex workers’ place of origin is needed, as well as further research into provinces and districts that have been classified as high risk by various groups.

IV. The Survey

A. Topics and Terms of Analysis

1. Defining trafficked respondents

For the purposes of the survey, respondents were classified as trafficked if they reported force or deceit as a reason for entry into sex work or if they were clearly identifiable as minors when they entered sex work. Respondents were classified as minors if they are currently minors and also by comparing current ages with reported length of time in sex work. Only participants who were unquestionably minors by use of this second method were reported. For example, a 19 year old woman who said she had been in sex work for 1-2 years was not counted as a minor at entry—as she could either have been a minor or of legal age at entry. Some minors at entry may thus have gone unclassified.

Participants were asked how long they had spent in sex work, with answer options of "1-6 months," "6-12 months," "1-2 years," or "more than two years." It would have been unrealistic to ask respondents to give reliably precise time parameters beyond two years. However, this made it impossible to calculate the age of entry of sex workers who had worked for more than two years and who were older than twenty at the time of the survey. Therefore, the calculated number of trafficked participants in the sample does not include women over 20 who may have entered sex work as minors more than two years ago.

Finally, women who were trafficked by other means according to the U.N. 2000 Protocol (such as an abuse of a position of power or vulnerability) were not identified. The number of respondents classified as trafficked should thus be considered a working minimum rather than an absolute total.

Many existent studies with sex workers in Cambodia do not attempt to classify age at entry at all. Instead, a point in time assessment of age is made by external observation or a statement of the age of the sex worker given by the sex worker herself or her employer. In other words, the only women classified as being trafficked as minors are those who are minors at the time of the study. The method employed in this study still yields only estimates of age, but attempts to give a fuller picture of the sample than a point in time assessment.

Some researchers have used indentured status as a criterion for classifying a woman as trafficked. However, not all indentured sex workers are trafficked. As discussed in III. A., it is possible to indenture oneself in order to secure a loan. An initial survey question, "Are you working off a debt?" was field tested, but was identified as a difficult question to ask in the brothel setting, as it could implicate brothel owners and therefore put participants at risk. This question was thus removed. Direct questions about whether participants had been bought or sold were not included for the same reasons. It is worth noting that a brothel owner who overheard the facilitator ask the respondents about their reasons for entry into sex work responded by evicting the survey team from a brothel in Kompong Som.

2. Estimating age

The difficulties in assessing the numerical age of sex workers were discussed at length by Steinfatt. Participants may not know their own exact age—as Steinfatt noted, “[I]t is not

74 For example, Steinfatt (2003).
uncommon for rural and less educated people in Southeast Asia not to be certain of their own age. In addition, various ways exist of calculating age in Southeast Asia. Some infants are considered zero years old at birth; others are counted as one year old at birth; some people consider everyone to turn one year older at the Lunar New Year in April, and others follow the Roman calendar. Finally, the sensitive nature of age in a sex work venue may lead participants to deliberately attempt to obscure their age.

The research team’s method of calculating age was partially based upon a technique suggested by Steinfatt—asking the respondents to mark the Khmer animal year of their birth. The Khmer calendar cycle uses the same animals as the Chinese one; however, the Khmer lunar new year and the Chinese new year vary by several months, and national staff at Pact Cambodia asserted that the animal year turns over at the lunar new year. A table was created showing the dates of the Khmer cycle (Table 4.1). Since asking the animal year question on its own only provides an animal in the twelve year cycle, respondents were also asked to write their age. Two assumptions were made: firstly, that respondents were more likely to know the animal year of their birth than their exact age and, secondly, that respondents were unlikely to misstate their age by more than 6 years (the large majority of respondents stated ages within 0 to 2 years of the age indicated by their animal year). The age of respondents was calculated by choosing the animal year closest to the respondents' stated age. For example, if woman X wrote her age as 19 and also listed her animal year as the Tiger, making her 17-18, 19-20, 21-22, or 22-23 years of age, the research team classified her as 18, the year of the Tiger closest to her stated age.

3. **Circumstances around entry**

In order to further explore the circumstances surrounding respondents' entry into sex work, respondents were asked about their decision to enter sex work, travel companions en route to the first brothel of their employ, and enlistment in sex work. Below are the direct translations of these three questions and the response options, which were the same for all three questions:

*Who decided that you would become a sex worker?*
*Who did you travel with when you first went to sell sex?*
*Who made the agreement with the brothel owner when you first entered sex work?*

Responses were as follows:

*By myself*
*Father or mother*

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75 Ibid, p. 21.
Respondents were asked to check all that applied. The "other" category, neak dawtay in Khmer, is a general word for non-relatives and can include neighbors, friends, acquaintances, or strangers. Some respondents apparently interpreted the Khmer phrase chosen for "by myself," kluan ayng, as meaning "myself" rather than "by myself." For example, Woman A marked that "another relative" and "by myself" decided that she would enter sex work, possibly indicating a joint decision. In these cases we tallied the other agent listed in the joint reply rather than the individual herself. Twenty women (4.8%) listed themselves and another agent for the question regarding decision-making. Two women listed themselves and another agent for the question regarding enlistment.

Decision and enlistment were not used as factors in identifying whether respondents had been trafficked, as they are not sufficient indicators in and of themselves. As discussed in the Introduction, under the UN definition trafficking may take place at various stages in the process of exploitation, specifically during recruitment, transportation, harboring, or receipt of the person being exploited. If a woman is told that she is being taken to a waitressing job, she is already considered trafficked when she arrives at the brothel. Whether once she realizes what has occurred she gives in and consents to the work straight away or is locked in a room without food for three days is irrelevant. In other words, she can decide for herself and enlist herself and still be classified as trafficked, depending upon the circumstances that preceded her arrival at the brothel. Also, consent is irrelevant for minors: even if a young woman decides to enter sex work without outside influence, makes her own way to the brothel, and enters into an agreement with the brothel owner entirely on her own, she is classified as trafficked if she is under 18 when she enters sex work.

4. Other definitions of survey terms and data adjustments

Divorced
The category “divorced” for the topic of marital status corresponds to the Khmer term leing leah and may refer to formal and informal divorces as well as separations. It should also be noted that long term cohabitation may be considered marriage, and that many marriages and divorces are not legally registered in Cambodia.

Family
The term used for family in the question about family problems was krom kruasa. This Khmer term normally implies the parents and siblings of a person rather than their spouse and children, but may also include other family members who live within the home—it literally means “family group.”

Material poverty
In the initial response options for reasons for entering sex work, an attempt was made to distinguish between respondents with families and respondents on their own. One response was “my family was too poor” (krom kruasa krei kraw beik) and another was “had no one to [materially] support me” (kmien neak ti bung). However, a number of respondents (52 women, 12.4% of our sample) marked both boxes, indicating the lack of support category was less precise than the team had hoped. The two response categories were therefore merged into a single category, "material poverty."77

Defining distance

77 Each doubled response was subsequently counted as a single response.
The research team created charts displaying distance between source location and current place of employ using the categories “home province,” “neighboring province,” “two provinces away,” and “more than two provinces away.” The category “home province” means the respondent’s province of origin. The category “neighboring province” is defined as any province sharing a border with the respondent’s province of employ. The category “two provinces away” is defined as every province bordering the neighboring provinces to the province of origin. All other provinces fall under the category “more than two provinces away.”

B. Vulnerability Profile Findings

Table 4.02 displays selected significant findings of the survey data. General findings about women's age, length of time in sex work and work locations are displayed first, followed by findings about women's circumstances prior to and during entry into sex work. Origin is discussed in Section C.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>All Respondents (n=420)</th>
<th>Trafficked Respondents (n=132)</th>
<th>Non-Trafficked Respondents (n=288)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of time in sex work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-6 months</td>
<td>96 (22.86%)</td>
<td>18 (13.64%)</td>
<td>78 (27.08%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 2 years</td>
<td>168 (40%)</td>
<td>78 (59.09%)</td>
<td>90 (31.25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of provinces of employ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One province</td>
<td>255 (60.71%)</td>
<td>69 (52.27%)</td>
<td>186 (64.58%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of brothels of employ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One brothel</td>
<td>224 (53.33%)</td>
<td>60 (45.45%)</td>
<td>164 (56.94%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schooling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three years or less</td>
<td>338 (80.48%)</td>
<td>101 (76.52%)</td>
<td>237 (82.29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading and writing ability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No ability</td>
<td>219 (52.14%)</td>
<td>67 (50.76%)</td>
<td>152 (52.78%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy ability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No ability</td>
<td>180 (42.86%)</td>
<td>55 (41.67%)</td>
<td>125 (43.40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status prior to entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never married</td>
<td>146 (34.76%)</td>
<td>60 (45.45%)</td>
<td>86 (29.86%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced/separated</td>
<td>169 (40.24%)</td>
<td>44 (33.33%)</td>
<td>125 (43.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental status prior to entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had children</td>
<td>175 (41.67%)</td>
<td>37 (28.03%)</td>
<td>138 (47.92%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family problems prior to entry into sex work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt</td>
<td>204 (48.6%)</td>
<td>77 (55.33%)</td>
<td>127 (44.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food shortages</td>
<td>201 (47.86%)</td>
<td>75 (56.82%)</td>
<td>126 (43.75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness</td>
<td>174 (41.43%)</td>
<td>62 (49.97%)</td>
<td>112 (38.89%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced or dead parents</td>
<td>177 (42%)</td>
<td>57 (43.18%)</td>
<td>120 (41.67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcoholism</td>
<td>128 (30.5%)</td>
<td>60 (40.45%)</td>
<td>68 (23.61%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for entry into sex work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deceit</td>
<td>68 (16.19%)</td>
<td>68 (51.52%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force</td>
<td>28 (6.67%)</td>
<td>28 (21.2%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material poverty</td>
<td>324 (77.14%)</td>
<td>83 (62.88%)</td>
<td>240 (83.33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of virginity</td>
<td>85 (20.24%)</td>
<td>24 (18.18%)</td>
<td>61 (21.18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-maker for entry into sex work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By herself</td>
<td>306 (72.86%)</td>
<td>54 (40.91%)</td>
<td>252 (87.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-relative</td>
<td>87 (16%)</td>
<td>46 (34.85%)</td>
<td>46 (34.85%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel companion en route to first brothel of employ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By herself</td>
<td>268 (63.81%)</td>
<td>45 (34.09%)</td>
<td>223 (77.43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-relative</td>
<td>104 (36.11%)</td>
<td>54 (40.91%)</td>
<td>50 (17.36%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

78 For a list of the provinces under each category, see Appendix C: Additional Source Data.
79 Only selected response categories are displayed. The other answer categories for the topics are displayed in figures in the following pages.
80 Charts comparing the findings for trafficked and non-trafficked respondents have been included in this section; charts displaying data for the respondents in total may be found in Appendix II. Additional origin data is in Appendix III.
1. **Trafficked respondents**

The number of respondents classified as trafficked was 132 women, 31.4% of the total number of respondents (Figure 4.01). Of these 132 respondents, 66 (50%) were minors at age of entry and 89 (67.4%) reported being tricked or forced into sex work.81

![Figure 4.01 Percentage of Trafficked Women out of Total Respondents](image)

2. **Age of respondents**

The ages of survey respondents ranged from 15 to 44, but most respondents were between 17-27 years of age (Figure 4.02). The mean age was 23.3 years.

![Figure 4.02 Ages of all Respondents](image)

81 The percentages exceed 100% because 17.4% women were both minors at age of entry and forced or tricked into sex work.
3. **Length of time in sex work**

Length of time in sex work for all respondents was highest at the ends of the spectrum: 22.9% of respondents had been in sex work for 1-6 months and 40% for more than two years (Figure 4.03). This may reflect the variance between women who enter sex work as a short-term survival strategy and women who are trapped by circumstance and a lack of other viable options.

![Figure 4.03 Length of Time in Sex Work for All Respondents](image)

A considerably higher percentage of trafficked respondents than non-trafficked respondents had remained in sex work for more than two years: 59% to 31.3% respectively (Figure 4.04). This likely reflects the lower levels of autonomy experienced by trafficked women, who must work off the debt incurred by their sale.

![Figure 4.04 Length of Time in Sex Work for Trafficked and Non-Trafficked Respondents](image)

4. **Number of provinces and brothels of employ**

The majority of the respondents, 60.7%, had only engaged in sex work in one province (255 respondents). Although the majority of trafficked respondents, 52.3%, had worked in only one province, they had a higher level of mobility than non-trafficked respondents (Figure
69 trafficked women (47.7%) had worked in multiple provinces, as compared to 109 (35.4%) non-trafficked respondents.

In terms of numbers of brothels of employ, 53.3% of all respondents reported having worked in only one brothel and 41.9% reported having worked in 2-3 brothels (Figure 4.06).

The majority of trafficked respondents, 52.3%, reported having worked in 2-3 brothels. In a similar pattern to provincial mobility, trafficked respondents had comparatively worked in
more brothels than non-trafficked women: 54.6% of trafficked respondents and 43.1% of non-trafficked respondents had worked in more than one brothel.

Comparatively speaking, trafficked respondents had worked in a greater number of provinces and a greater number of brothels, and had remained in sex work longer than their non-trafficked counterparts.

![Figure 4.07 Years of Schooling of Trafficked and Non-Trafficked Respondents](image)

5. **Years of schooling**

The majority of the respondents had received minimal education. No schooling was reported by 50.3% of all respondents and between 1-3 years of schooling was reported by 30.3%. In other words, 80.5% of all respondents had received three years or less of formal education.

The total percentage of women reporting receiving three years or less of formal education was 82.3% for non-trafficked women and 76.5% for trafficked women (Figure 4.07).

6. **Literacy and numeracy levels**

Literacy and numeracy abilities were self-ranked, not tested. The majority of the respondents described themselves as illiterate: 53% of the total. Illiteracy rates were similar for trafficked and non-trafficked respondents (Figure 4.08).
Two hundred and two respondents ranked themselves as somewhat numerate (48.1%). One hundred and eighty of all respondents (43%) described themselves as unable to use numbers. Numeracy levels were similar for trafficked and non-trafficked respondents (Figure 4.09).

7. Marital and parental status at entry

Respondents were asked about their marital and parental status prior to entering sex work. Significant differences appeared between trafficked and non-trafficked respondents. 60 trafficked women (46%) had never married when they entered sex work (Figure 4.10). 44 were divorced (33.3%).\textsuperscript{82} For non-trafficked respondents these categories were inverted: 86 (30%) women had never married and 125 (43%) were divorced.

40% of all respondents (169) were divorced; 35% (146) had never married; 16% (69) were married; and 9% (36) were widows. The rates of divorced and single women were far higher than the national averages found in the 1998 National Census, which stated that 26.6% of Cambodian women have never married and only 4.2% had divorced or separated.\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{82} Note that the term divorced in Khmer (leng leah) refers to divorces as well as separation.

\textsuperscript{83} The research sample includes minors, whereas the National Census counted only women over 18. www.nis.gov.kh, National Census 1998.
Regarding parental status, the majority of women in total, 58% (245), did not have children when they entered sex work. Considerably more non-trafficked respondents had children when they entered sex work than trafficked ones: 48% (138) to 28% (37) (Figure 4.11). This corresponds to the proportionately larger number of trafficked women who had never married, a number of whom were minors and thus less likely to have started bearing children.84

8. Family problems

Respondents were invited to mark any and all of the family problem options which applied to them. Many women marked multiple options: Figure 4.10 displays the frequency of the occurrence of the various problems listed by the respondents.

The four most common problems for all respondents were debt (listed by 48.6% of all respondents), food shortages (47%), a divorced or dead parent (42%) and illness.

84 However, some minors may have already married, had children, and divorced prior to their entry into sex work due to early marriage practices in rural areas.
Trafficked respondents noted a higher incidence of every problem than non-trafficked respondents. Nevertheless, the percentages were significant for both parties.

9. Entrance factors for sex work

The most common factor listed by participants was material poverty, noted by 77% (324) of all participants as a reason for their entrance into sex work (Figure 4.13). 63% (83) of trafficked respondents and 57% (240) of non-trafficked respondents reported material poverty as a reason for entry.

![Figure 4.13 Reasons for Entry into Sex Work for Trafficked and Non-Trafficked Respondents](image)

Deceit was the second most common response for trafficked respondents, reported by 51.5% of the women. Significantly, loss of virginity was given as a factor by 18% (24) of the trafficked respondents and by 21% (61) of non-trafficked participants.

10. Decision-maker for entry into sex work

By far the most common decision-maker was the respondent herself, constituting 72.9% of the total respondents. The least most common agents were parents, reported by only 2.6% (11) respondents.

The most common decision-makers noted by trafficked respondents were the women themselves: 40.9% (54) (Figure 4.14). The large majority of non-trafficked respondents also reported deciding to enter sex work by themselves: 87.5% (252) women. It is notable that 34% of trafficked women chose "other" as a decision-maker. Further research is needed into the nature of these agents, who could have been recruiters or neighbors, strangers or friends.

Parental involvement may well have been underreported. The research team's Khmer members repeatedly noted that young women were unlikely to choose the option “forced” regarding their reason for entry into sex work even if they had been compelled by their parents. In addition, they regarded parental involvement to be the most likely circumstance underreported, for reasons of family loyalty or shame.

As discussed in Section II, the notion of voluntary entry and decision-making requires further research. It is possible that some women do not realize that they have been trafficked if they were not forcibly abducted or sold by someone else. Cultural notions of agency in decision-making and issues of shame also need to be explored further.
11. Travel companions en route to the brothel

In a similar pattern to decision-making, the majority of women traveled on their own to their first brothel of employ, 64% of all respondents. The most common traveling companion was "someone else," reported by 24.8% (104) of all respondents. The least common traveling companions were parents, reported by only 1.7% (7) respondents.

Trafficked women traveled to the brothel with "someone else" in 40.9% (54) cases (Figure 4.15). The majority of non-trafficked women traveled alone to the brothel: 77.4% (223) respondents.

12. Enlistment at the brothel

Respondents were asked who made the initial agreement with the brothel owner when they entered sex work. When considered in total, the majority of respondents, 59% (248), enlisted at the brothel by themselves; 32.6% (137) were enlisted by "someone else;" and 8.3% were enlisted by other relatives, parents, or husbands/boyfriends.
As might be expected, findings differed for trafficked and non-trafficked respondents (Figure 4.16). The majority of trafficked respondents, 54.5%, were enlisted by "someone else." The second most common answer was "by herself," given by 28% (37) trafficked respondents. The majority of non-trafficked respondents, 73.3% (211), had enlisted themselves in sex work.

13. Family involvement

Women reporting family involvement in their entry into sex work were in the minority. 63 respondents (15%) reported family involvement in at least one of the three categories: decision-making, travel, and enlistment. Forty trafficked respondents (30%) and twenty-three non-trafficked respondents (8%) reported family involvement in at least one of the three categories.
Figure 4.17 examines which family members were involved in the three categories by comparing the incidence of "parent," "husband/boyfriend," and "other relative." Parents were the least commonly reported agent in all categories of family involvement.

For trafficked respondents, the most common family member involved in enlistment and travel was "another relative," the agent noted in 52.2% of family enlistment and 45.5% of family member as traveling companion.

14. All by herself

In contrast to the brief exploration of family involvement, respondents who had decided, traveled and enlisted by themselves were also tallied. Of the 420 women surveyed, 211 said they acted by themselves for all three categories, 50.2%. Twenty-five of these respondents were trafficked respondents; 88% of whom were minors.

15. Narratives

A variety of case studies have been gathered by qualitative studies on sex workers and trafficking victims in Cambodia. Findings from a quantitative study are necessarily abbreviated. Yet even with the limited options of a questionnaire, the diverse experiences of the respondents were apparent. Four sample narratives have been assembled to display that diversity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case 190</th>
<th>Case 401</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Status:</strong></td>
<td>Non-trafficked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Origin:</strong></td>
<td>Bakan, Pursat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age:</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Schooling:</strong></td>
<td>1-3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital status:</strong></td>
<td>never married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family problems:</strong></td>
<td>a divorced or dead parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reason for entry:</strong></td>
<td>material poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Circumstances of entry:</strong></td>
<td>decided alone, traveled alone and enlisted herself in a brothel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time in sex work:</strong></td>
<td>over two years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of brothels of employ:</strong></td>
<td>over 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work locations:</strong></td>
<td>Banteay Meanchey, Pailin, Phnom Penh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case 399</th>
<th>Case 388</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Status:</strong></td>
<td>Non-trafficked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Origin:</strong></td>
<td>Peam Chor, Prey Veng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age:</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Schooling:</strong></td>
<td>4-6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family problems:</strong></td>
<td>a divorced or dead parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital status:</strong></td>
<td>divorced and with children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reason for entry:</strong></td>
<td>forced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Circumstances of entry:</strong></td>
<td>a non-relative decided, traveled with and enlisted her in a brothel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time in sex work:</strong></td>
<td>6 months to 1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of brothels of employ:</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work locations:</strong></td>
<td>Phnom Penh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C. Origin Findings

Respondents' origins were traced to the district level. Provincial findings will be displayed first, followed by district findings, and finally, the findings comparing survey location with origin.85

1. Provinces of origin

Cambodia is comprised of 24 provinces: the designation includes 20 provinces, the municipality of Phnom Penh, and the krong or "towns" of Krong Kaeb, Krong Pailin, and Krong Sihanoukville.

Nine of the ten most common provinces of origin correspond with the ten most common provinces of origin for trafficked respondents, the exception being Kompong Speu, which was the 7th most common province overall (25 cases) but only the 12th most common province of origin for trafficked respondents (5 cases); and Kompong Chnang, which was 13th most common province for all respondents (17 cases) but the 10th most common province of origin for trafficked respondents (7 cases) (Tables 4.04 and 4.05).

4 locations had no respondents at all: Mondulkiri, Ratanakiri, Krong Kaeb, and Krong Pailin. Prea Vihea had 1 respondent and Kratie and Steung Treng had 2 respondents respectively.

Caution should be used when weighing these findings, due to the respective population size of the provinces. Table 4.06 was drawn from the national census of 1998. The five most common provinces of origin for trafficked respondents are also the five most populous provinces in Cambodia. Kompong Cham was home to the largest concentration of survey respondents, 14.8% (62), but is also the most populous province in Cambodia: more than twice as large as the fifth to tenth largest provinces. The second largest concentration of participants came from Battambang, which is less than half as populous as Kompong Cham. Unfortunately, the census data is now six years old, and recent national-level data on provincial populations is unavailable (Figure 4.06). An in-depth examination of source provinces would need to weight origin by up-to-date population data; but this was beyond the purview of this survey.

The research team also examined the correlation between province of origin and province of current employ (Figure 4.18). Less than 4% of the survey respondents were working in their home province. 61 were working in a neighboring province (11.4%), 222 women, 67.1%, were working in a province more than two provinces away from their home province.86

When segregated for trafficked and non-trafficked respondents, (Figure 4.19), the data reveals that 48.5%

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85 Origin data was checked against the November 2004 Gazetteer produced by the Department of Geography and released by the Ministry of Interior.
86 Category definitions can be found in IV. A.
of trafficked respondents and 54.9% of non-trafficked respondents were working more than two provinces away from their province of origin. Similarly small numbers of trafficked and non-trafficked women were working in their province of origin: 5.3% and 4.5% respectively.

Less than 4% of all survey respondents were working in their home province. When considering that the majority of respondents, 60.7% (255), had engaged in sex work in only one province, the data seems to indicate that many respondents never worked in their home province.

In addition, the Phnom Penh municipality was the place of origin for 9.1% of trafficked respondents and 6% of all respondents, thus indicating that entry into sex work is not only occurring as a rural to urban phenomenon in Cambodia. 84% of the participants who originated from Phnom Penh were not working in Phnom Penh.

2. **Districts of origin**

Cambodia’s provinces are divided into districts; there are 185 districts in the nation. The data at the district level is thus more spread out; making patterns harder to distinguish. However, there were many district-level clusters of respondents: 50.8% of trafficked respondents came from districts with 3 or more respondents, and 41.7% of non-trafficked women came from districts with 5 or more respondents. Fourteen percent of all respondents came from single occurrence districts.

### Table 4.06 1997 National Census Data on the Ten Most Populous Provinces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Province Name</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Kompong Cham</td>
<td>1,608,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Kandal</td>
<td>1,075,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Phnom Penh</td>
<td>999,804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Prey Veng</td>
<td>946,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Battambang</td>
<td>793,129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Takeo</td>
<td>790,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Siem Reab</td>
<td>696,164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Kampong Speu</td>
<td>598,882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Banteay Meanchey</td>
<td>577,772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Kampong Thom</td>
<td>569,060</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4.07 Most Common Districts of Origin for All Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>No of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moung Ruessei</td>
<td>Battambang</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odongk</td>
<td>Kompong Speu</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolea B’ier</td>
<td>Kompong Chnang</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakan</td>
<td>Pursat</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prey Kabbas</td>
<td>Takeo</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russey Keo</td>
<td>Phnom Penh</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamkar Leu</td>
<td>Kompong Cham</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tram Kork</td>
<td>Takeo</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kien Svay</td>
<td>Kandal</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prey Chhor</td>
<td>Kompong Cham</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 29.3%

Map 4.01 displays the frequency of occurrence of the various districts of origin. It is worth noting that many of the most common districts of origin border national highways and other major routes. Moung Ruessei, Rolea B’ier and Bakan all border National Route 5. Tram Kork lies between National Routes 1 and 2; Prey Chhor borders Route 7; Kien Svay lies between National Route 1 and Route 21; and Chamkar Leu borders Route 71.
The research team compared the districts of origin of the survey sample with one ranking of district-level poverty. ILO created a list of the 30 most impoverished districts by taking the WFP Poverty Mapping survey and multiplying together two factors (total number of poor persons and poverty severity measure). Survey respondents came from 16 of the 30 most impoverished districts by this ranking (Figure 4.09).

In total, 24.5% of the survey respondents came from the 30 poorest districts in the country. For trafficked respondents, 21% originated from the 30 poorest districts. This suggests that may be valid to use a district’s poverty level as one indicator of the vulnerability level of its female population.

Table 4.08 Most Common Districts of Origin for Trafficked Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>No of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bakan</td>
<td>Pursat</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolea B’ier</td>
<td>Kompong Chnang</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russey Keo</td>
<td>Phnom Penh</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krouch Chmar</td>
<td>Kompong Cham</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odongk</td>
<td>Kompong Speu</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prey Chhor</td>
<td>Kompong Cham</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kien Svay</td>
<td>Kandal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 28.8%

Table 4.09 District Poverty Ranking in ILO-IPEC List of 30 Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking87</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>No. of trafficked respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Soutr Nikom</td>
<td>Siem Reap</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Puok</td>
<td>Siem Reap</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Stoung</td>
<td>Kompong Thom</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Peam Chor</td>
<td>Prey Veng</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Preah Sdach</td>
<td>Prey Veng</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Kien Svay</td>
<td>Kandal</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Basedth</td>
<td>Kampong Speu</td>
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<td>Battambang</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<td>Svay Rieng</td>
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<td>29</td>
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<td>Kampong Cham</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Prey Vaeng</td>
<td>Prey Veng</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 103 28

87 1 is the poorest.
3. **Comparing survey locations with origins**

Map 4.02 differentiates between place of origin by the respondents’ survey location and also by their status as trafficked or non-trafficked. Again, clusters are clearly displayed. Many of the respondents come from the populous southeastern provinces of Cambodia, regardless of their current work location.

The correlation between province of origin and province of current employ is divided by the survey location in Figure 4.23. The majority of respondents surveyed in Kompong Som and Banteay Meanchey are working in a province more than two provinces away from their home area: 67.1% and 55.8% respectively.
The distance categorization needs to be considered closely for respondents interviewed in Phnom Penh. Kandal is the only neighboring province, as it entirely circles Phnom Penh. Therefore, provinces classified as “two provinces away” are actually similar in terms of distance to “neighboring provinces” for the other two survey locations. The provinces “two provinces away” are Prey Veng, Kompong Cham, Kompong Chnang, Kompong Speu and Takeo. Half of all Phnom Penh respondents came from these provinces and an additional 9.4% came from Kandal. Thus the majority of the respondents surveyed in Phnom Penh are coming from the populous southeastern provinces of Cambodia, as is clearly displayed in Map 4.02.
V. Summary of Findings

Debt, limited education, lack of income generating opportunities, dysfunctional families and social marginalization are the most commonly noted vulnerability factors in existing literature regarding Cambodian women and girls at risk of sexual exploitation. These factors were reinforced by the responses of the trafficked sex workers who participated in the field survey.

The number of respondents classified as trafficked was 132 women, 31.4% of the total number of respondents. Of these 132 respondents, 67 (50.8%) were minors at age of entry and 88 (67%) reported being tricked or forced into sex work.

The majority of respondents were aged between 17 and 27. 45% of the trafficked respondents had never been married when they entered sex work and 33% were divorced. Inversely, 30% of non-trafficked respondents had never married and 43% were divorced.

Most trafficked respondents had little education and low literacy levels: 76.5% had received three years or less of formal education. 51% reported themselves to be illiterate. This illiteracy rate is only slightly higher than the national female literacy rates reported by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS) in 2000, which indicated that 45.1% of women are illiterate,88 and Unicef’s 2000 female illiteracy estimate of 43%.89

Family problems reported by all respondents prior to their entry into sex work included debt (55%), food shortages (56.8%), a divorced or dead parent (50%), illness (43.2%), and alcoholism (40.5%).

Material poverty was the most commonly given factor regarding reasons for entry into sex work. Deceit was the second most common factor for trafficked participants, reported by 51.5% of the women. Loss of virginity was reported as a reason for entry by 18.2% of trafficked respondents and 21.2% of non-trafficked respondents.

Unlike other studies, family involvement in entry into sex work was noted by very few participants. Parental involvement may have been underreported. The research team's Khmer members repeatedly noted that young women were unlikely to choose the option “forced” regarding their reason for entry into sex work even if they had been compelled by their parents. In addition, they regarded parental involvement to be the most likely circumstance underreported, for reasons of family loyalty or shame. On the other hand, it could be true that most participants entered without the knowledge or involvement of their family.

The majority of the surveyed respondents were not trafficked into sex work. However, their vulnerability profiles prior to entry into sex work were largely the same as the trafficked respondents. As discussed in the literature, the lack of alternative income generating options and the high demand for sex workers pushes many women in the region and in Cambodia towards sex work—as a 1997 IOM study on trafficking to Thailand noted, “Although the term voluntary entry into prostitution suggests free will, it does not always mean a free choice among the economic alternatives for those women who decide themselves to enter prostitution. Most often these women entered because of dire economic needs within a specific social context.”90 Furthermore, not all trafficking takes place at the village level. Women who migrate for work, particularly those engaged in blind migration, are vulnerable

to traffickers once isolated from their homes and family. Women already in sex work are also vulnerable to trafficking.

Arguably, not every Cambodian woman who enters sex work is exploited. But a woman who “voluntarily” chooses sex work does increase her vulnerability to exploitation through trafficking, as does a woman who engages in blind migration.

As regards origin, there was no single province or district of origin that represented the majority of the survey respondents but there were clear origin clusters. 222 women, 67.1%, were working in a province more than two provinces away from their home province. In addition, the data seems to indicate that the many respondents never worked in their home province. Thus identifying target provinces by selecting provinces with high numbers of sex workers is not advisable.

Many of the survey respondents originated from poor districts in the populous southeastern provinces of Cambodia fanning out around Phnom Penh. Few respondents originated in remote provinces. It is important to note that no trafficking or sex work research in Cambodia has concluded that ethnic minorities face a greater risk of trafficking than the majority population. Cambodia’s ethnic Vietnamese population may be significantly at risk, but this is currently impossible to gauge. Nevertheless, the majority of Cambodia's sex workers are clearly Khmer. This distinguishes Cambodia from various other countries in the region, such as Thailand, where ethnic minorities are more at risk than the majority population.

Comparisons of the sample's "high incidence districts" and a measure of the 30 most impoverished districts in Cambodia indicate that is valid to use a district’s poverty level as one indicator of the vulnerability level of its female population.
VI. Recommendations

The survey findings indicate that women aged 17-27 who are impoverished or in debt, uneducated with low literacy levels, and come from dysfunctional families are vulnerable to trafficking. These women are also at risk of blind migration, which may lead to increased vulnerability. In terms of marital status, divorced women with or without children as well as women who have never married were also identified as vulnerable.

A prevention-oriented approach to trafficking must attempt to identify women at risk of various forms of exploitation in a community and decrease their economic and social vulnerability. Therefore, Pact's WORTH program in Cambodia should target women who fit the above mentioned vulnerability profile and their families. Reducing the vulnerability of these at-risk women will require addressing illiteracy, economic impoverishment, lack of income generating alternatives, and issues of family dysfunction.

The research team recommends that the WORTH program be implemented in selected impoverished districts in the populous southeastern provinces. For example, Kandal, Kompong Cham, Takeo, and Prey Veng all figure in the top five most common provinces of origin (and top ten most common provinces of origin for trafficked respondents).

Target districts could be selected by virtue of being districts of origin for respondents from all three survey locations and also as the most commonly occurring districts in the sample size. Prey Kabbas and Tram Kork in Takeo, Chamkar Leu and Prey Chhor in Kampong Cham, and Kien Svay in Kandal are five districts which meet both those criteria.

An alternate recommendation is that Pact Cambodia considers the survey sample’s “high incidence” districts along Route 5: Bakan in Pursat, Odongk in Kompong Speu, Rolea B’ier in Kompong Chnang, and Moung Russei in Battambang.

The research team recommends that poverty levels and proximity to major roads be considered when finalizing district-level selections.
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Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

1. What is your animal birth year?  
   - Rat
   - Cow
   - Tiger
   - Rabbit
   - Dragon
   - Snake
   - Horse
   - Goat
   - Monkey
   - Rooster
   - Dog
   - Pig

2. How old are you?

91 Sizing of original questionnaire has been altered to accommodate English language translation.
3. When you entered sex work what was your marital status?

- Never married
- Married
- Divorced
- Widow

4. Did you have children at the time you entered sex work?

- Yes, had children
- No, did not have children
5. How many years of schooling do you have?

- **Never entered school**
- **1-3 years**
- **4-6 years**
- **More than 6 years**

6. Do you know how to read and write?

- **Don't know how**
- **Know a little**
- **Know a lot**
7. Do you know how to use numbers?

- Don’t know how
- Know a little
- Know a lot

8. Before you entered sex work did your family have any of the following difficulties?

- Much illness
- Lack of food
- Debt
- Loss of land
- Something else
9. Second page of answer options for family problems, same question as #8 above.

- Domestic violence
- Alcoholism
- Divorced or dead parent
- Gambling
- Something else

10. Why did you enter sex work?

- Deceit
- Force
- My family was too poor
- No one to materially support me
- Loss of virginity
- Other
11. Who decided that you would become a sex worker?

(You may check more than one box)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By myself</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father or mother</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse or husband</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another relative</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Who did you travel with when you first went to sell sex?

(You may check more than one box)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By myself</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father or mother</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse or husband</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another relative</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. Who made the agreement with the brothel owner when you first entered sex work?

(You may check more than one box)

- By myself
- Father or mother
- Spouse or husband
- Another relative
- Other

14. How many hours did you travel to reach the first brothel you worked in?

- Less than one hour
- 1-3 hours
- 3-5 hours
- 5-7 hours
- More than 7 hours
15. How many brothels have you worked in already?

- 1 k Eng: One place
- 2-3 k Eng: 2-3 places
- 4-5 k Eng: 4-5 places
- eRc h 5 k Eng: More than 5 places

16. How long have you worked as a sex worker?

- 1-6 Ex: 1-6 months
- 6 Ex eTA 1 q âm: 6 months to a year
- 1-2 q âm: 1 to 2 years
- Cag 2 q âm: More than 2 years
17. Which provinces have you worked in as a sex worker? (You may check more than one box)

- Banteay Meanchey
- Battambang
- Kampong Cham
- Kampong Chnang
- Kompong Speu
- Kompong Thom
- Kampot
- Kandal
- Koh Kong
- Kratie
- Mondulkiri
- Phnom Penh
18. Another page of province options. Question same as # 17.

19/ et îm mk Bl xt N a Rs l N a n îg X N a?

19. What province, district, and commune do you come from?

[List of provinces, fill-in-the-blank line for district and commune. Assistants wrote for the respondents to help ensure legibility later.]
Appendix B: Additional Figures

Figure A.1 Travel Time to First Brothel for Trafficked and Non-Trafficked Respondents

Minors Figures:

Figure A.2 Marital and Parental Status of Respondents Under 18 Years of Age Prior to Entry into Sex Work

Marital Status
(n=67)

Married, 16.42%
Widow, 0%
Divorced, 16.42%
Never Married, 67.16%

Parental Status
(n=67)

Had children, 5.97%
Did not have children, 94.03%
Figure A.3 Decision-Makers for Entry into Sex Work for Respondents Under 18 Years of Age

By herself Parent Husband/boyfriend Another relative Other

Number of Respondents

*Multiple responses allowed

Figure A.4 Travel Companions en Route to First Brothel of Employ for Respondents Under 18 Years of Age

Went alone Parent Husband/boyfriend Another relative Other

Number of Respondents

*Multiple responses allowed

Figure A.5 Persons Who Enlisted Respondents Under 18 Years of Age at First Brothel of Employ

By herself Parent Husband/boyfriend Another relative Other

Number of Respondents

*Multiple responses allowed
Appendix C: Additional Source Data

Figure x lists the provinces in the distance categories between source province and province of current employ. The “more than two provinces away” category includes all provinces not listed in the first three categories and has not been specified in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Province</th>
<th>Neighboring Province</th>
<th>Two Provinces Away</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kompong Som</td>
<td>Kampot, Koh Kong</td>
<td>Pursat, Kompong Speu, Takeo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banteay Meanchey</td>
<td>Odear Meanchey, Siem Reap, Battambang</td>
<td>Preah Vihea, Kompong Thom, Pursat, Pursat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phnom Penh</td>
<td>Kandal</td>
<td>Prey Veng, Kompong Cham, Kompong Chnang, Kompong Speu, Takeo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.1 Districts of origin for respondents from all three survey locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Kompong Som</th>
<th>Banteay Meanchey</th>
<th>Phnom Penh</th>
<th>No of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Battambang</td>
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<td>Kompong Speu</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Pursat</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prey Kabbas</td>
<td>Takeo</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chamkar Leu</td>
<td>Kompong Cham</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tram Kork</td>
<td>Takeo</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kien Sway</td>
<td>Kandal</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Svay Chrum</td>
<td>Svay Rieng</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tbeung Khmum</td>
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This research project was undertaken with support from the United States Embassy, Phnom Penh.