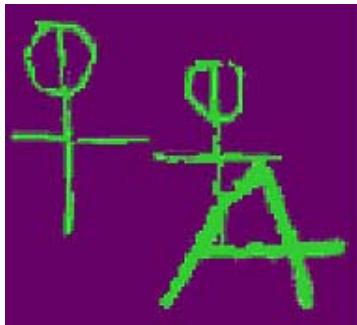


*I come to beg in the city because...*

*A study on women begging in Phnom Penh*



# Womyn's Agenda for Change



**I come to beg in  
the city because ...**

March, 2002  
Phnom Penh-Cambodia

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# *Forward*

Cambodia is a country facing many problems and one of the big problems is the increasing of poverty and more particularly the feminisation of poverty. Women are in charge of families' well-being and food supply so they have to find the alternative choice to earn money to sustain the family and one of the choices is to become beggar. Today, the number of the beggars in Phnom Penh is increasing, and most of these beggars are women. This epidemic is of importance to Womyn's Agenda for Change (WAC), as it deeply affects Cambodian women.

Womyn's Agenda for Change works with sex workers, garment workers, grassroots women and women in crisis to understand the issues that affect women in order to be better informed about development intervention that can improve the lives and condition of Cambodian women. We support/facilitate an empowerment process to these women by providing opportunities for them to share their experiences, to learn from one another, and by conducting trainings and workshops.

In March 2002, a WAC team started to do research with beggars in order to understand the reasons and factors that push and pull women to become beggars and to learn about the challenges they face. The focus of this research is on gender, poverty, and gender in equality.

The research team was surprised by how the female beggars spoke openly about the factors that push them to leave their homes and families. Going into the project, we thought that poverty was the primary reason that these women came to the city to beg. But other factors such as domestic violence, landlessness, spousal neglect, and especially debt were critical factors as well. This information changed the team's approach to the research project.

Finally, we strongly hope that this research will help people to understand more about the issues that Cambodian women contend with, especially beggar women.

# *Acknowledgement*

We would like to thank all the female beggars who have given us the opportunities to talk with them and interview them. We would also like to thank Ms. Rosanna Barbero, WAC Coordinator, and Ms Margherita Maffii, WAC consultant, and all the WAC volunteers.

# *Acronyms*

WAC	Womyn's Agenda for Change
CHC	Cambodia Health Committee
ACLEDA	A bank in Cambodia which provides credit to people
A	Measurement of land 1 A = 1,000m <sup>2</sup> (10m x 100 m)
Ha	Hectare-Measurement of land 1Ha = 100, 00 m <sup>2</sup> (100 m x 100 m)
USD	United State Dollar
Chi	Weight of gold 1 Chi = 35 USD = 0.004 gram
R	Riel- Cambodian currency 3,900 R = 1 USD
Thang	Measurement for rice paddy 1 Thang = 24 Kg
Toa	Measurement for rice paddy 1 Tao = 12 Kg, 1 Thang = 2 Tao
Ton	Measurement for rice paddy 1 Ton = 1,000 Kg
PHN	Phnom Penh- the capital of Cambodia
Wat	means pagoda
Psar	means market

# *Part One: Research Description*

## **1. Introduction**

According to the result of the research on "Garment workers in Cambodia" of the Womyn's Agenda for Change-WAC we know that the majority of the workers are young women aged under 25 years old and that they come from the poor families in the rural area. After they have worked in the factory those workers are very thrifty with their expenses in the city so that they can save some money to send to their families in the villages.

The farm work in the village has not been productive because of drought and flood disaster and that makes the parents of those workers put a lot of expectation and dependency on the money their daughters send home every month. Among 150 of the factory workers WAC team have interviewed, they come from many provinces but the majority from Prey Veng and Svay Rieng. After the first field visit to the villages where most workers come from in Prey Veng we could see the real situation of the farmers and we have decided to choose Prey Veng to be the target province for another research of WAC call "Women and Rice" research, which focuses on the agriculture.

The team from WAC went to the villages-commune-district where most workers come from and talked with their parents. They also tried to get some information related to the reason why those people decided to send their children, who are girls of young ages, to work in the factory in Phnom Penh. The villagers responded that:

- In the families which have daughters who can work, parents decided to send them to work in the factory because if they don't do this they will face famine and will die because in the rural areas at the moment they don't have enough water for cultivation and beside farming there is nothing else for them to do.
- For the families that have very young children, parents decided to migrate to the city to find job as construction workers, rubber plantation workers, land carrier-digger or beggars in order to earn money to support their families. The options that some villagers chose to come and beg in the city impressed WAC team very much so we decided among the team to start doing the research on beggar for the first time.

As mentioned in the forward that WAC also works with the sex workers and grassroot women, from experiences with those women we found out that the problems they are facing quite similar. Women are the most vulnerable people and

easily exploited in many situations no matter if they are sex workers, garment workers, women in rural area, or beggars. Sex workers, garment workers, women in rural area, and/or beggars have similar factors pushing and pulling them such as landlessness, violence, debt, and especially poverty. These dynamics show the links that all the women in poverty always face in their lives. In return, these women face discrimination from their surroundings and other people have placed them in the bottom of society.

## ***2. Objective of the research***

- To understand the reasons and factors that push those villager who decided to choose begging as their jobs
- To get to know what problems do they face when they choose this job.

## ***3. Research Methodology***

Discussed among the team

- To identify the locations where most beggar come to beg
- To identify the number of the beggars to be interviewed. We decided to interview 30 female beggars. We interviewed only the beggar who agreed to respond to us.
- To think about some gifts we can provide them as they spend their time to response to our question. For gift we provided them things such as: instant noodle, can fish, pickled radish. Sometimes we invite them to have breakfast with us or drink some juice.
- To collect the information which focuses on Gender and Poverty and Gender Inequality. We don't use a questionnaire or checklist to try and get the information from the beggars but when we meet a beggar we start to have dialogue with them and try to learn from them about their lives, as they are the ones who know all the problems happened.
- Case studies in Khmer and English were written down after the information collecting finished.

## ***4. Problems encountered during the research***

This research on beggars was fully conducted by Cambodian WAC team. Although we have been involved in research as part of the team to collect the information, this is the first time that we process the study from beginning to end. We still view this study as learning and understanding process for us to build up our capacity

in research project. This is a good learning experience for us though some problems occurred while we were collecting the information such as:

- The location that we identified and supposed to have many beggars there were few beggars instead.
- When the team met the beggars some of them agree to let us to interview them but some other refused because they are afraid that we are the agents to police or the staff of any institute which work is to gather the beggars in the city. They think that we pretend to be staff of an NGO and want to gather and put them in the police station or another center. So our team had to find other beggars. We would like to take this opportunity to share some difficulties we face during our research as follows:

On the first day our team decided to go to Chbar Ampov market and test our interviewing as we thought that this market would have many beggars. Our expectation resulted in the negative because that day was the holy day and many beggars come to beg at the pagoda or in front of the Royal Palace. We spent a long time walking around the market and finally we met an old woman aged about 65 years old who was begging. Our team introduced ourselves, where we work and our purpose. When she saw us, she was very scared but responded that she came to beg because of poverty and having no children to look after her. She also said she didn't want to beg and right now if we want her to go back home, she would go and she insisted we do not bring her to the police station.

We spent along time talking with her and finally she agreed us to interview her and afterward we invited her to go and have breakfast with us. She didn't refuse our suggestion but when we asked her to order something to eat she responded she wasn't hungry because she already had breakfast. Though she answered like this but we know that she not yet eaten anything so we tried to find a way to get her having breakfast with us. Last minute she agreed to order Chinese noodle to eat and then we interviewed her.

After we interviewed her, we tried to find other beggars but all of them denied to let us interview them, they stating that they were in a hurried to find their neighbours to go back to the village because they had left their children at home. Some said they were not beggars but that they were trying to find their husband who gotten lost in the market. We know that they were beggars because before we decided to interview them we observed and saw that they were begging for money from other people.

## ***5. Research location***

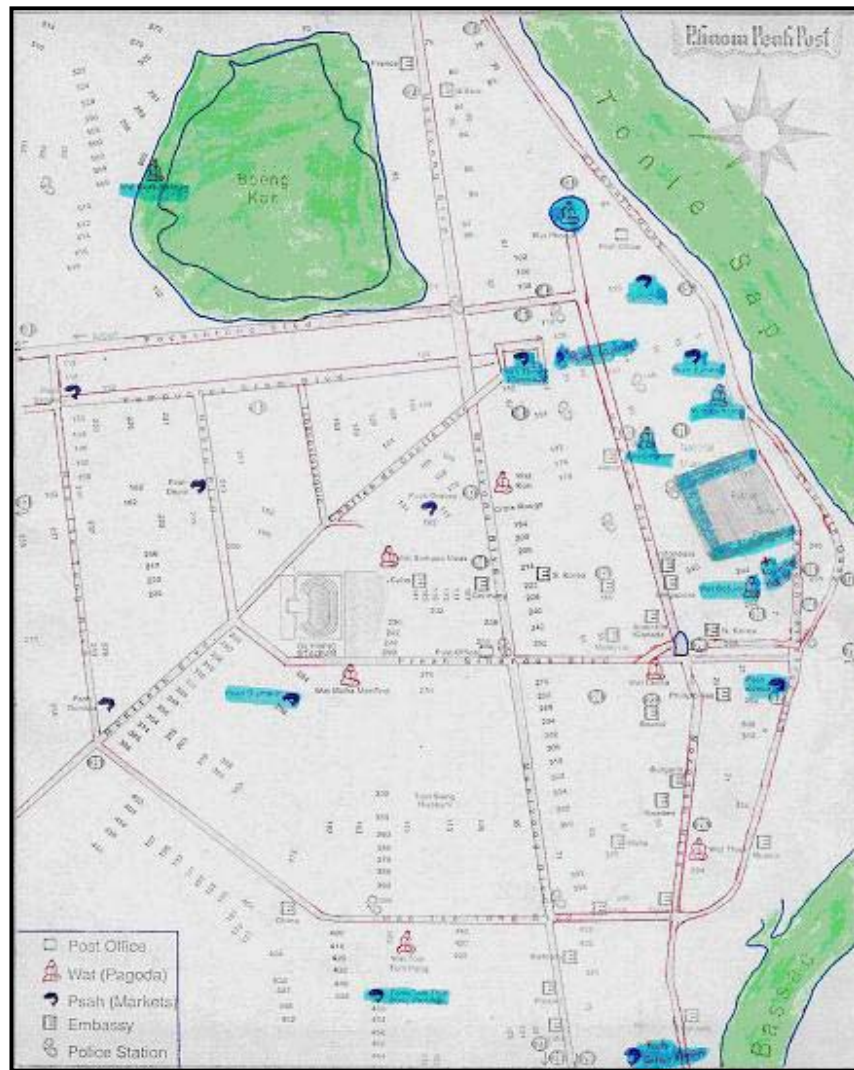


*I come to beg in the city because...*

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We targeted areas for the research including: Chbar Ampov market, Beoung Keng Kang market, Olympic market, Tapang market, Central market, Kandal market, along the riverside, in front of Wat Botum Vatey.

Figure 1: Map of Phnom Penh shows the places where beggars beg



# *PART TWO: THE REAL LIFE OF BEGGARS*

## *Case Study 1*

I am forty-three year old; I live in *Chrork Skor village, Svay Chek commune, Rum Doul district, Svay Rieng province*. I have two sons, one is seventeen year old and the other one is fifteen year old. I am a widow.

I just came to beg in Phnom Penh with three other villagers and my oldest son early this month (March 2002). I came because of natural disaster and flooding three years ago.

Because of this, our living standard became poor and sometimes I had no money to buy food and rice for my sons to eat. Day by day we were living in bad conditions so I decided to mortgage my 20A of land to the Cambodian Health Committee (CHC) organization for 500,000R and I have to pay 20,000R every month in interest [which correspondent to 4%]. But every month I couldn't afford to pay this interest so I borrowed 3 chi of gold from a moneylender and for every 10,000R I pay back, they get 2,000R/month interest. My debt become much more and I could not earn enough money to release me from it so I decide to sell my land, my cows and my buffaloes but the money that I collected from those sales still was not enough. Now I still owe CHC 200,000R more. Before I left to beg in the city, I borrowed 15,000R from the villagers to pay for transportation and I have to pay 3,000R in interest but they will get it when I come back home.

Every night, we sleep near the gate of *Kunthak Bopha's* hospital which is near the Royal Palace. In a day, my son and I together can earn only 2,000-3,000R and we use 1,000R for buying food and what is leftover we keep and save to pay for the debt.

Finally I would like to appeal for NGOs and government to help us because we are in trouble and we are also unable to earn money to send our children to school.

## ***Case Study 2***

I am seventy year old, I live in **Bang Ray village, Angkor Sar commune, Mesang district, Prey Veng province**. I live alone because my husband and my children died in Pol Pot regime.

Before the Pol Pot regime I had a lot of land because I have many children but when my children died my land was taken away. Now I have only 5A of rice land but I am unable to plant rice on this land because I am too old and have no money to buy crops or fertilizers. So I give my land to other villagers to plant on it and they share the product with me when they harvest it but the product that I get from them is not enough because it is only a little and I need to eat a lot.

In my village, when someone distributes something to the villagers, the commune and village chief never ask the poor to go to get it - they just ask the rich or someone who is living in good conditions to get it and the poor miss out. I get angry with them.

Because I cannot get enough rice to eat and I am angry with the chiefs in my village I borrowed 50,000R without interest from the villagers to travel to beg in Phnom Penh. I travelled with other villagers because I was scared to go alone as I didn't know the location well in the city and also I didn't know anyone there. I just came here around 5 days ago. At night I sleep somewhere near the Royal Palace.

Everyday, I can earn from 2,000-3,000R but I eat a lot and am also sick so the money that I earned I use for buying food and medicine and what is leftover I keep and save, but it is not much.

If no one stops me from doing this, I will beg until I die because if I don't beg who will feed me?

In these five days, I have been begging in Toul Tom Pong market, Boeung Keng Kang market, and Chbar Ampove market.

### ***Case Study 3***

I am sixty-five year old. I am a widow. I live in **Kampong Trabek village, Kampong Trabek commune, Kampong Trabek district, Prey Veng province**. I have a daughter and two sons. They are all married. My two sons live in Siem Reap province and Phnom Penh with their families. My daughter, whose husband died last year, has gotten sick and has come to live with me with her three children.

When my daughter was sick I decided to mortgage my land (1 ha = 1.5 chi of gold) to get the money to buy medicine and pay for her treatment. She didn't get better and passed away last month and left three grandchildren for me to look after. They are studying at primary school.

Before when I had energy I planted morning glory and sold it in the village and I also raised pigs and chickens. Now that I'm old I can no longer dig and plant vegetables. I just came to beg in Phnom Penh 15 days ago. The reason that I came here is because I have no rice land to plant and also have no money to buy food or rice to feed my grandchildren or care for their other basic needs.

Every night, I sleep near Psar Thmey (central market) with other beggars. Sometime the gangsters pretend to sleep with me and touch my pocket because they want to get my money. One night when I felt asleep somebody took my money and I lost 5,000 R.

I decided to beg in Phnom Penh and left my grandchildren at home with nobody taking care of them. I will come back to my homeland during Khmer New Year and I don't know yet weather I will come again or not. I think that next year I will be able to repay my debt and take my land back. I will ask for money from my son to repay the mortgaged so that I can farm my land during the rainy season.

### ***Case Study 4***

I am forty-seven year old; I live in **Prey Poun village, Prey Poun commune, Kampong Trobek district, Prey Veng province**. I am a widow; my husband died last year because he had high blood pressure. I have 5 children, 2 daughters and 3 sons.

When my husband was alive, my children and I never migrated because my husband always went to the fields for food foraging (such as getting fish from the lake near the field and grubs and snails from the rice fields), and we helped each other with transplanting. But after he died the living standard in my family dropped because I had to feed my children alone and they were still young and I had no land to use because I mortgaged my land (25A) to a moneylender for seven Chi of gold to cure my husband because he was sick. Now we have no money to release this land from them. Fortunately, the moneylender didn't charge interest but they don't allow me to use the land so they use my land for transplanting and harvesting until I can pay back the seven Chi of gold.

I just came to Phnom Penh around seven months ago with my youngest daughter who is five year old. My other children live in the village and the oldest ones look after the younger ones. While I am away if they have nothing to eat sometimes they ask for food from our relatives or the other villagers.

My daughter and I can earn only 2,500-3,000R a day and we always go home whenever we earn 30,000R (about once every month) because if I do not go back home my other children will have nothing to eat. When I go back home I bring rice for them.

I borrowed 10,000R to come to Phnom Penh from a villager who charges 30% interest/month. I do not wish to beg for long because it is very difficult for me and also I feel very embarrassed when I raise my hand up to people and say "Could you give me 100R to buy food to eat?" During the night we stay under the Japanese bridge with other beggars who I know from begging at Central Market.

In the rainy season I will go back home to do harvesting and transplanting for the villagers and they will give me 2,000R a day with 3 meals.

### ***Case Study 5***

I am thirty-four year old, I am a widow and I have a daughter who is five year old. I live in **Maringh village, Tropang Srae commune, Mesang district, Prey Veng province.**

My husband was a solider and he died from malaria. Nowadays, I have 30A of rice land but I have not been able to do transplanting on this land because of drought for the past two years. There is nothing else I can do besides farming, and when my rice land cannot produce a crop I also have nothing to eat. Last year my living conditions were very bad so I decided to borrow money from a moneylender in my village (around 40,000-50,000R) to buy rice and food and every month I have to pay them 8,000-10,000R in interest [about 20% interest] and now I am still in debt.

Because of this debt, I decided to beg in Phnom Penh with my daughter but I do not beg myself. I ask my daughter to beg because I feel very embarrassed and worried that people will not give me any money because I am young and am not disabled.

When my daughter goes to beg I always wait for her at a place we both know. In a day, she could earn around 1,000-2,000R and we use 1,000R to buy food to eat together and at night we stay in front of the hotel near *Norodom* school. When we stay there I am also afraid that someone might rape me but I have no choice.

I have been in Phnom Penh around two weeks. Before I came, I borrowed 5,000R without interest from the villagers for transportation and we will stay and beg until after Khmer New Year (when we can earn a lot of money) and then we will return home with our savings to pay off some of our debt.

## ***Case Study 6***

I am forty-one year old and my husband is thirty-nine year old. We got married in 1979 and we have four children (two sons and two daughters). We live in **Angkor Sar village, Angkor Sar commune, Mesang district, Prey veng province.**

I came here (to Phnom Penh) with my husband and my ten-year-old son and five year old daughter who both beg. My other daughter lives in the village with my oldest son and daughter in law.

The reason that we came to beg in Phnom Penh is to earn money to release my 40A of farmland from the moneylender as I mortgaged it to them for 3-4 Chi of gold to get money to cure my husband who was sick. Now they plant rice on my farmland. They told us that whenever we have the money we can get this land back. Every year, our lives depended on the rice production which we collected in harvest season and we also relied on my husband who worked as a construction worker. But he got sick and he lost his job and now we earn nothing every year.

Now my husband is better and he is trying to find another place to work but he is currently unemployed. So nowadays our livelihoods depend on our little children.

We had no money to travel to Phnom Penh so we borrowed 30,000R from the villagers but the interest is very high because in a month for 10,000R they charge us 3,000R.

We just came here three days ago and everyday I always bring my children go to beg at Tapang market and when we reach there I let them to go alone and I just walk around but don't beg. At lunch we go back to the place that we are currently staying (e.g. in front of the Royal Palace) and buy rice and food to eat together and afterward we come back again to Tapang market.

Both of my children can earn from 1,000-2,000R together and we use 1,000R to buy food and the leftover we keep and save.

We think that when we can save around 50,000-60,000R from what our children earn we will go back home and buy some rice and food to support our children who stay at home because if we do not buy them food they will have nothing to eat.

### ***Case Study 7***

I am forty-five year old and my husband is forty-eight year old. We have four children (two sons and two daughters), and we live in **Payuong village, Theay commune, Ba Phnum district, Prey Veng province**. One of my daughters is married already and my other three children are single.

I had 1Ha of rice land and 150 m<sup>2</sup> of village land (10m x 15m), which my house is on, but when I got sick, I sold my rice land to get money to cure myself. After my daughter got married I had nothing to give to her to run a small business so I mortgaged my village land to the moneylender for 100 USD to buy a motor for my son in-law to run a motordup (motor taxi driver) business in the village and they charged me 20% interest. But now my son in-law can't afford to release us from this debt because sometimes in a day he can't earn any money from his business and the debt has increased to 270 USD. His wife wants to hang herself because of this debt.

Because of this, my husband, my little children and I decided to come to Phnom Penh to beg but my daughter and her husband stayed in the village. In the city, during the daytime we always come to beg along the river and my husband and I together can earn around 2,000-3,000R on a normal day but during national festivals or holy days we can make a lot of money.

We just came to beg about a month ago and during the night we asked permission from the police to stay at *Phreah Kam Long* (name of the place that the people go to pray for some wishes) in front of *Utna Lorm* pagoda.



### ***Case Study 8***

I am eighty-two years old, I am a widow and I have five children (two sons and three daughters). They are all married but very poor and four of my children live in different house in the same village. We live in **Reab village, Reab commune, Pea Reang district, Prey Veng province.**

I am too old but I still help to feed my 5 grandchildren and one of my daughters who is thirty-three year old because she is infected with a disease she caught from her husband who was a policeman. Her husband died for 4-5 years ago from the disease. Today her body looks very thin and she looks seriously ill.

I have 5A of farmland but unfortunately for the last three years I haven't been able to plant rice on this land because of draught and flood. I am not able to sell/plant anything to feed my daughter and my grandchildren so I borrowed 50,000R from a villager to buy some food, rice and some medicine for my daughter and my children to eat and they charged me 30% interest/month. I borrowed the money one year ago but I am still in debt because I am unable to repay them and if I decide to sell my farmland I would be out off debt but I want to keep this land for my grandchildren.

I decided to beg in Phnom Penh to earn money to repay to the villager, and also save money to buy good medicine to cure my daughter. I've only been here for around 10 days with two other villagers and at night we stay together near the gate of Cambodiana hotel.

Sometimes I can earn enough just to buy food to eat but sometimes I can earn around 1,000-1,500R per day, so I can save 1,000R a day. On a holy day I can earn around 5,000-6,000R.

I am worried about my daughter and my grandchildren in the village so every time someone goes to the village I send 500R or 1,000R to my daughter to buy food to eat.

When I save a lot of money I will hire the villagers to plant on my farmland and if I can't earn money anymore I will go back home to take care my daughter and my grandchildren.

### ***Case Study 9***

I am seventy year old, I am a widow and I have two sons who are forty-five and forty year old. They are both married and renting houses in Phnom Penh (for \$10 per month) and they both work as motordup (motor taxi drivers), and one of my daughters-in-law is a fried banana seller. When my sons went to Phnom Penh they left their children in the village for me to look after. I live in **Chihe village, Koah Soutin commune, Koah Soutin district, Kampong Cham province.**

I have no farmland or house land but my relative allowed me to build a cottage to live with my four grandchildren on their land. When it is raining or windy I always ask my grandchildren to go to stay under my neighbour's house because I am afraid my house will falling down. Sometimes my grandchildren and I ask for the rice left over from a meal from the villagers to eat because we have no money to buy rice and other food.

I borrowed 100,000R without interest from the villagers to buy food and to pay for sending my grandchildren to school because of their parents are very poor. Both of my sons are not kind to me even though I feed and take care their children and both of their wives look down on me because I am poor and have no house or land. I never buy a big fish to cook; I just buy a small one. When the villagers found this they blamed me and said, "You will have no energy and also be sick if you only eat small fish".

I decided to beg in Phnom Penh and left my oldest grandchild who is eighteen year old to look after his brothers and sisters at home. I pity them because I left them alone with nothing for them to eat. Before I left my relatives collected 5,000R to give to me to travel to the city.

I just arrived twenty days ago and in a day I can earn around 300-500R because I do not dare to beg and also feel very embarrassed in front of other people. During the night I stay at my relative's house which is near the National Assembly. They are also poor.

I am not sure when will I go back home because I have not yet been able to save any money.

I want to talk to Hun Sen (Cambodian's Prime Minister) to ask him to help me to build a new house, but I think it is very difficult to get to talk to him.

### ***Case Study 10***

I am sixty-three year old. I live in **Trapeang Veng village, Trapeang Reang commune, Chum Kiri district, Kampot province**. I am a widow, my husband died during the Pol Pot regime and I have no children. Now I live alone.

I came to Phnom Penh to beg two days ago. I came here alone because in the village that I live no one wants to come to beg in the city. I have 5A of farmland but the rice productivity from harvest season last year was not enough for me to eat for a whole year even though I live alone. Last year I used approximately 8Kg of seedlings on this land but the rice paddy which I got from this was only 60 Kg. Sometimes when I have nothing to eat my relatives give me some soup or rice to eat but I don't want to rely on them so I came to Phnom Penh to beg. I did not tell them I was begging but said that I wanted to visit Phnom Penh to see how it has changed since last time I had been there (a long time ago). When I told them this they collected 500-1,000R each to give to me to travel to Phnom Penh. The reason that I told them a lie was that if I told them the truth they would not have allowed me to come to beg. But what else can I do to support myself as there is nothing to do in the countryside besides farming?

In the city I have no relatives so at night I sleep near Central Market with other beggars who I met whilst begging. In a day I can earn around 1,000R and I use 500R to buy food to eat. In the place that we stay sometimes gangsters come and steal the beggar's money whilst we are sleeping. But I have not yet experience this. I plan to go back home during the rainy season because in this season I can plant my rice.

### ***Case Study 11***

I am thirty-one year old. My husband and I are now divorced because he has a new wife. I had two sons but they died. I live in **Svayming village, Ang Ta Sou commune, Svay Chrum district, Svay Rieng province.**

I came to beg in Phnom Penh with my nephew four-five months ago. The reason I came here is because there is no work for me to do in the village as I became blind in one eye after one of my relatives poked me in the eye with a piece of sharp wood over a conflict. Afterward I mortgage my 20A of farmland to another villager for 500,000R to pay for medicine to cure my eye but it didn't get better and as a result I'm disabled. But fortunately I was able to get back my farmland as I worked as wage laborer in the harvest season. Now I have asked my other relatives to plant rice on this land and we share the productivity.

In the village I live with my sister who has many children. Her family's living conditions are very difficult even though I share the rice that I get from my land with her. So I decided to borrow 200,000R from a villager to buy rice, food and other basic needs to support my sister. They did not charge me interest as they realized I am disabled and a widow. Because of this debt I came to beg here with my nephew to earn money to repay them back even though they do not charge me any interest, because I don't want to owe them for long.

Every night I sleep near the instant noodle factory at Chak Ang Re area with my nephew. I brought him with me to lead me and beg with me and I keep the money and pay for his food.

I do not yet have any plans to come back to the village because there is no work for me to do there. If I do farm work I need to hire people as I am alone and disabled.

## ***Case Study 12***

I am forty year old. I have four sons. I live in **Doun Ouv village, Trapeang Reang commune, Chhum Kini district, Kompot province**. When I was married my husband always used to get drunk and beat the children and me. About a year ago my husband married a new wife and he now lives in Sihanouk Ville. My older son looks after cows for people in the village, they pay him 3 Thang of rice per year for his labour. My second son lives with other people in the village and he studies there, the third and the youngest one came with me.

My reason for coming to come to Phnom Penh is to collect the rubbish and sometime I beg for money to buy food. I have been in Phnom Penh for two years. I first came when I was still married to earn money to support my husband. This time I have been in Phnom Penh for two months. I haven't any farmland, no home, nothing. Before I had farmland but my husband sold it for his wedding with his new wife. He hit me with dish and I went to hospital and when I was in hospital he sold the farmland. I don't know how much he sold it for.

At night I usually sleep at Saravorn Pagoda near the national museum, and sometime Neakavorn pagoda along the road to the National airport Russian Boulevard. Sometimes when I am begging there is a car and the people inside come out and try to gather the beggar, but I don't know who they are and why they want to catch the beggars. I try to escape from them.

### ***Case Study13***

I am forty-eight year old and I live in **Tang Russey village, Pot Sar commune, Bati district, Takaev province.**

After the Pol Pot period I married a soldier and we have two children, one son who is twenty year old and is a monk in the village, and a daughter who is twelve year old and is studying in the village too. But now I am a widow because my husband died from malaria when he went to Pailine near the Thai border to clear forest.

I have no farm or house land, even when my husband was alive we lived with my sister and I always help her to transplant or harvest rice and we shared the productivity but after my husband died my sister asked me to have food together with her because she found my living is very difficult after my husband died. Day by day, our living is become low because there are many members in the family and the rice productivity that we got is not enough to eat for a year and we also can't earn more income beside farming. Because of this I decided to come to beg in Phnom Penh in order to earn money to support my sister and also to support my daughter's studying. I came to beg in Phnom Penh five days ago. I stay near central market with other beggars and in a day I can earn around 1,500-2,000R and I used around 1,000R to buy food to eat.

I will go back home to help my sister to harvest and transplant during rainy season and after I finish this I will go to work for the villagers to harvest and transplant as they will give me 3,000R a day with two meals (breakfast and lunch time). And after harvesting I will come to beg again because in the village there is no work for me to do besides farming.

### ***Case study 14***

I am sixty-six year old. I live in **Prek Pou village, Preak Pou commune, Srei Santhor district, Kampong Cham province**. I live alone because my husband and my daughters died in the Pol Pot regime.

I have 5m of farmland but I haven't been able to plant rice on this land because I am too old so I allowed the villagers to use this land and they share some of rice they produce with me when they harvest it. The rice that I get from them is not enough for me to eat for a year even when I am alone. So I decided to borrow 200,000R from the moneylender to buy some food and rice and to pay for my other basic needs and also pay for transportation. In a month they charge me 20% in interest.

Because of my debt I decided to come to beg in Phnom Penh to earn money to release me from this. I just came to beg in Phnom Penh for the first time with other two villagers three days ago, but no one forced or asked me to come here.

On the second day of arriving in the city, the other two villagers and I were cheated by a man who was thirty year old. He was at the riverside when we were begging and he invited us to go to Wat Phnom to get some rice and 300,000R from his relative who had just arrived from America. When we reached the Wat Phnom he asked us if we had any money to buy a ticket to go to get this present and three of us collected 40,000R to give him and afterward he told us to wait for him and we waited for him for a long time but he never came back.

This is the first times that my neighbours and I came to beg and live in Phnom Penh, we didn't know where could safe for us to stay so we decided to stay in front of someone house near Psar Chas [old market] during at night but we are very lucky because a lady who is staying alone who is live near Psar Chas also have asked us to stay with her during at night but for food she didn't provide us because she is very old too. In a day my sister in-law and I walk to go to beg in front of the Royal Palace and from morning until evening I can earn around 800-1,000R and I used 500R to buy rice and food to eat. I plan to go back home during Khmer New Year.

### ***Case Study 15***

I am fifty-five year old. My husband is sixty year old. We live in **Prohout village, Trapeang Srae commune, Mesang district, Prey Veng province.**

We have eight children, three daughters and five sons but 4 of them are married (2 daughters and 2 sons) and the 4<sup>th</sup> son lives in Chress village, Chress commune, Mesang district, Prey Veng province with his wife.

We had 30A of farmland but now we only have around 20A left because we gave 5A to each of our married children to farm but the one who lives in Chress village didn't take his share of the land.

Every year my family live depends on the rice productivity which we collect from harvest season but about three years ago we didn't plant rice on the 20A of land that was left because of drought. When we collected nothing from harvesting season our family lived in bad conditions. And in April last year my husband and I decided to borrow 150,000R from ACLEDA to buy chickens and pigs to raise and every month they charge 30% interest and every month we couldn't earn enough money to pay for the interest so three months ago we decided to borrow 550,000R more from the moneylender to pay for the ACLEDA interest and we used what was left over to buy food and to pay for basic needs to support our family. We borrowed the money without interest and they didn't ask us to mortgage our farmland because they told us that the farmland that we have left would not sell for enough to pay back their money; so instead they asked us to sign a contract stating that in 7 months if we have no money to pay them back they will double the money that we owe them. So we are worried that soon, if we can't pay it back, our debt will double.

In the village my husband was a Khmer traditional instrument player but now he has stopped doing this because he didn't earn more money from this career. Because of these, my husband and I decided to come to beg in Phnom Penh with five other villagers and my sister in-law to earn money to repay back to the moneylender. In the village there is no work for us to do besides farming.

We just arrived here about two months and we left our children to live alone and our 5<sup>th</sup> son who is eighteen years old and studies at the primary school. He climbs palm trees to make palm water to sell to support his sister and brother when we are away.



Every day I always go to beg in front of the Royal Palace with my neighbours and my sister in-law but my husband doesn't come because he feels very embarrassed beg from other people and for everyone who is surrounding him to see it, so he just stays and waits for me to buy him food to eat.

In a day, I can earn 1,000R but on every holy day King Norodom Sihanouk (king of Cambodia) always comes and gives 500-1,000R to all the beggars so on that day we can earn much more money and also we can save more money too.

At night time we stay together along the park near the Building area and in these last 2 months we have not been home to visit our children because we have no money to travel and buy food for them and we are not yet sure about our plans to go back home.

### ***Case Study 16***

I am sixty-two year old. I am a widow because my husband died ten years ago from high blood pressure. I have 10 children but three of them died in the Pol Pot regime and now I have only seven children left (2 daughters and 5 sons), 5 of them are married. I live in **Pey Kuy, Trapeang Srae commune, Mesang district, Prey Veang province.**

Before I had a lot of farmland but now I have only 20A left because I gave some of the farmland to my 5 married children to plant rice for their families. I can plant rice in the rainy season but not in the dry season because there is no water. In a year we can collect around 10 Thang of rice produce but it is not enough to eat for a year because we have many members in our family.

Last year I borrowed 5Chi of gold from my relative to build a new house because my house was very poor and for that 5Chi they charged me 20,000R interest a month but I cannot earn enough money to pay back this interest so I decided to come to beg in Phnom Penh. I came with other 5 villagers and my sister in-law. At night we stay together in the Building area.

I came here 2 months ago. In a day I can earn around 2,000R and I use 500R to buy food to eat and the leftover I keep to repay back to my relative. I always go home when I can save approximately 30,000-40,000R to pay for the interest and with the money I have leftover I buy some food to support my family and also use it for travelling back to Phnom Penh.

When I am gone my youngest son works on a farm for someone who lives in Neak Leung and in a month they give him 60,000 for his labour and another son who is twenty-one year old lives at home alone to look after the house and study at the village.

### ***Case Study 17***

I am sixty-seven years old. I am a widow and I live alone because my husband and my 2 sons died in the Pol Pot regime. I live in **Prek Por village, Preak Por commune, Srei Santhor district, Kampong Cham Province.**

I have 10 square meter of farmland but I cannot afford to plant rice on this land by myself as I am too old and live alone so I gave this land to other villagers to use and we share the rice production and they harvest it. The rice productivity which I share with them it is not enough for me to eat for a whole year because this land is small. Before when I had energy I used to work as a wage labourer for other villagers and they gave me 2000R with two meals a day but now I have stopped doing this as I am too old.

I came here (to Phnom Penh) two days ago with three other villagers. The only reason I came is to earn money to release me from my debt, as I borrowed 200,000R from the moneylender last month to buy food and rice and I used the leftover money to travel to Phnom Penh. They charged me 20% interest/month. In the village there is no work for me to do besides farming and wage labour.

In a day I can earn around 1,000-1,500R as I am not experienced in begging. On the second day I arrived in the city the other two villagers and I were cheated by a man who was about thirty year old. He was at the riverside when we were begging and he invited us to go to Wat Phnom to get some rice and 300,000R from his relative who had just arrived from USA. When we reached the Wat Phnom he asked us if we had any money to buy a ticket to go to get this present and the 3 of us collected 40,000 to give him and afterward he told us to wait for him and we waited for him for a long time but he never came back.

As this is the first time that my neighbours and I came to beg and live in Phnom Penh, we didn't know where was safe for us to stay so we decided to stay in front of someone's house near Psar Chas [old market] during at night but we are very lucky because a lady who is living alone in a house near Psar Chas asked my sister-in-law and I to stay with her during the night but she didn't provide us with food because she is very old too. I plan to go back home during Khmer New Year.

### **Case Study 18**

I am thirty-two year old and my husband is thirty-one year old. I married him when I was fifteen year old. We have five children (four sons and a daughter) but another daughter died from diarrhoea when she was five year old. We live in **Svay Reang village, Svay Reang commune, Svay Reang district, Svay Reang province.**

Before the Pol Pot regime, my family had 2 Ha of farmland, but now we have only 20A because our land was taken. In a year, I can collect around 10Thang of rice produce from my 20A of farmland, but five year ago I collected nothing because of drought, and my family's living becomes low because of this, so my husband and I decided to mortgage my farmland to an organization called Cambodian Health Committee for 300,000R to buy food, rice and for other basic needs. From this loan and I have to pay back 9,000R a month (3,000R of which is interest). But now my land has been taken by Cambodian Health Committee because I could not afford to make the repayments of the loan and interest for the past 4 years, and they sold it to the rich people in my village. I don't know how much they sold it for because they didn't tell me.

In the middle of March, I borrowed 100,000R from the moneylender to buy rice to eat and to travel to beg in Phnom Penh and some of the money I left with my husband to buy some food or medicine to cure my son if he gets sick, and they charged me 30,000R (30%) interest but if I have no money to pay them back they will ask me to work as a servant at their house.

Day by day my family live in bad conditions because we have lost farmland and there is nothing else for us to do besides farming, and we are also in debt. When other villagers who used to go to beg in Phnom Penh found out about my situation they asked me to come to beg in Phnom Penh with them to earn money to repay the moneylender. They said to me "If you stay in the village you will die because you have nothing to eat and also you will still be in debt so it is better that you should go to Phnom Penh with us to earn money to release you from this debt." Afterward, I discussed this with my husband and he allowed me to come with them (5 people) and with two of my children, one son who is six year old, and daughter who is 5 months old. In the village now when someone needs to dig a canal they always ask my husband to dig it for them, and pay him 2,000-3,000R/day, but on the weekend they will give him more money.

I just arrived this morning and from morning till now (11.30am) I have earned nothing because I don't know the location well. I came to beg in Olympic market with my two daughters but the other 5 villagers beg at Central market and we will

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come back together at night in Central market and stay along the river. I don't know when I will go back home.

### ***Case Study 19***

I am thirty-four year old and my husband is thirty year old. We have been married over ten years and we have two children. Our son is five year old and our daughter is six month old. Since we married until now I am the one who takes responsibility in the family because my husband does nothing besides get drunk and beat the children and me up. We live in **Chrey village, Krang Svay commune, Preah Sdach district, Prey Veng province.**

In the last five years my husband sold 1Ha of farmland for 3 Chi of gold to another villager to buy a motor to run a business as a motodup (motor taxi driver) in Phnom Penh. Afterwards he lived in Phnom Penh alone for two years. I never come looking for him because I didn't know where he lived, and what he was doing in Phnom Penh, and I have never been to Phnom Penh before. After that he came back home without his motor, and with no money. During the two years that he lived in Phnom Penh he never came to visit me or send any money home.

I came to beg here (in Phnom Penh) four days ago. I came to earn money to pay back to the moneylender because in the last five months I borrowed 400,000-500,000R to buy food, rice and to pay for our other basic needs, as my husband does nothing in the village. Every time my husband gets drunk he asked me for money and if I had no money to give to him he always beat me and our children up. When I went to negotiate to borrow from the moneylender they asked me to mortgage my 60A of house land to them because they were afraid I would not be able to afford to pay them back. They told me "If you want the money you have to mortgage your land. If you don't I will lend you nothing." I agreed to their demand. And every month they charge me 100,000R, of which 5,000R is interest.

Since I borrowed the money until now I have never paid them any interest because I earn nothing in the village and my husband is also unemployed. I decided to come to beg in Phnom Penh to earn money to pay for the interest and also to release my house land from them and also I do not want my husband to beat me anymore. Every time I asked my husband to find a job he always beat me and said no. I have divorced my husband five times already but every time he comes back and cajoles me to take him back and I never refuse because I don't want my children to lose their future and also don't want others saying my children have no father.

This is the first time I have come to beg, and I have been here around four days with my children and in a day I can earn 500R and I use this 500R to buy food and rice so I save nothing. At nighttime we stay under the banyan tree which is in front

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of Botum pagoda with other beggars. If I don't try my best to earn money to repay them back, they will get my land.

In harvest season I will go back home to work as a labourer for the rice harvest for other villagers for which they will pay me 2,000R with three meals per day.

## ***Case Study 20***

I am thirty-six year old. My husband is sixty year old. We were married in 1980 and we had eight children (seven daughters and a son) but four of them died from a high temperature when they were a month old. Now I have only four children: a daughter who is nineteen year old and is working in Kab Srov, Phnom Penh, a son who is fourteen year old and is in grade 6, his twin sister who is in grade 4, and my youngest daughter who is in kindergarten. We live in **Pring village, Krang Ta Yang commune, Peam Chor district, Prey Veng province.**

Now we don't have any farmland or house land because in 1982 my husband and I migrated to live in Tang Chove district in Vietnam and when we returned home in 1987 the commune chief had distributed our farm and house land to the other villagers so we got nothing. So I asked permission from my sister to build a small house and live on her land.

I used to rent 1ha of farmland from other villagers to plant rice and after harvest season we collected 3-5 Ton of rice and the owner of the land took from us 1.5 Ton of rice per year. I used the fertilizer that was made by an American company and one sack cost 35,000R but because we often didn't have enough money to buy it we got it from the seller on credit and had to repay them 38,000R. On this 1ha of farmland I use 300-500Kg of seedlings and this cost 700R/kg. But three years ago I stopped growing rice because it cost too much money and my husband didn't help me to pump the water into the rice field and he always beat me up when I asked him to help me to do this or do that. After I stopped planting rice the living conditions in my family become very bad so two years later my husband decided to go to work in the city as a construction worker and he found a job. He sent around 20,000-30,000R home but not often and he told me that the reason that he did not send much money home was because everything in Phnom Penh was very expensive - even food or rice. I thought that I cannot depend on my husband to live anymore or my children will not be able to continue to study to a high level so then I decided to come to Phnom Penh to find work as a woman construction worker but unfortunately I wasn't recruited and because of this I decided to beg to earn money to send it home to feed my children. I left my children to stay at home with their grandmother who is sixty-one year old and is running a small business as a greengrocer in the village.

I first came to beg here a year ago. About nine months after I arrived I went home to visit my children. I stayed at home for two and a half months because I got sick. I didn't have much money to cure myself so I borrowed 500,000R from the moneylender (at 20% interest a month) to buy food, rice to support the family and



medicine to cure myself and as a result I am now better, but I still owe this money to the moneylender. This time I have just been in Phnom Penh for around two weeks. Everyday I go to beg along the river with other beggars and I can earn around 200-1,000R. The reason that I can earn so little is because I am very shy to beg in front of other people and also because I am so young many people do not want to give money to me. At nighttime I stay at Botum pagoda with my husband. In a day my husband and I both sometimes spend over 4,000-5,000R to buy food and snacks and sometimes when my husband and I can't earn income we borrow 1,000-2,000R from other construction workers to buy food and rice to eat. When my husband and I can save around 40,000-50,000R I will go back home to pay the moneylender interest and then I will come to beg again. My husband has stopped beating me up now since he came to work in Phnom Penh. Even though my husband used to beat me until my body was bruised all over or I was unconscious, I did not divorce him because I didn't want to put my children's future in jeopardy and for other people to say that my children didn't have a father.

### ***Case Study 21***

I am twenty-five year old. I live in **Trapeang Srea village, Trapeang Srea commune, Mesang district, Prey Veang province.**

I left home and rented a room (30,000R/month) to live in the Building area seven years ago. But after the Building areas was destroyed in a fire, I asked for permission from the commune chief to build a cottage there. Now I have a husband but we are not married, we have just been living together for over four years. My parents don't know because I didn't tell them about this.

My husband works as a shoes shiner. In a day he can earn around 2,000-2,500R but he never gives me any R, he always spends the money to drink wine and buy sex and whenever I tell him to stop this he always beats me up till I have bruises on my body or eyes.

In the last three year, the red cross staff have asked me to go to have blood testing at Phon Leu Chivit organization (Hope of Life organization) and the result came out with I was HIV positive. Even though we knew that we were both have HIV positive we still wanted a baby. Now we have a daughter who is one year old and a five-month-old baby girl and I am also four months pregnant. Both of my children have caught this disease from us.

Before I worked as a lotus fruits seller along the river but I could not make enough profit because I bought the lotus fruit at a high price and sold it cheaply so I decided to stop selling lotus fruits and came to beg at Hun Sen park. In a day I can earn from 3,000-4,000R but the money that I earn sometimes it is not enough to buy medicine to cure my daughter when she has a high temperature. I can save money around 1,000-2,000R per day whenever my daughter doesn't get sick.

I do not want to go back home because I am afraid that the villagers or my parents or relatives will discriminate or look down on me because I have HIV positive.

## ***Case Study 22***

I am forty-seven year old. I am a widow because my husband died from tetanus ten years ago. I have a daughter who is eighteen year old and she married last year and now she lives in the village with her husband. My daughter is not kind to me.

**I live in Klang Kram village, Veang Chas commune, Odongk district, Kampong Speu province.**

Before I had 20A of farmland but in the last three years I borrowed 4 Chi of gold from other villagers to buy food and rice and to pay to cure myself because during that time I got sick, and now I have partly partially paralysed legs. For this loan I mortgaged my farmland, and now the land is gone because I could not afford to pay back the land. I also have 21m x 45m of house land but there are four families who have built houses and live on this land. Now I don't know what has happened on this land because since I left home till now I never go to visit home.

Every year we live depend on the rice productivity but after I mortgaged my farmland to other villager the living in my family become much and more difficult because in the village nothing work for us to do besides farming. Day by day we live in bad condition because of this my daughter and I decided to come to find work in Phnom Penh but in here nothing work for us to do as we know nothing beside begging and also now here for us to stay during night time. We started to beg around one and half year ago.

We stay together along the road every night but one day whilst we sit and beg, the staff from Kolab 4<sup>th</sup> found out they gathered us to live together at Kolab 4<sup>th</sup> center and they train as mat weavers at their centre for four months and then they asked us to leave so we could find our own jobs, but I cannot find another job because I have no capital. My daughter's marriage was arranged by the staff at the centre.

Now I live in Building area with other beggars and in a day I can earn around 200-500R and sometimes when I earn nothing I ask for something from other beggars to eat. I beg at Building market. I am not yet plan to go back home as I don't have money to pay for travelling and also feel embarrass to the villagers and also my relative whilst I am a poor and go home without nothing in my hand.

### **Case Study 23**

I am thirty-seven year old and my husband is thirty-four year old. We married in 1980 but now we are divorced because he got a new wife two years ago, but during those two years my husband often came to sleep and have sex with me and as the result I have a son who is now two months old. Now I have to feed three children (two daughters and a son). My oldest daughter is thirteen and my middle child is three years old. I have no parents because they died in the Pol Pot regime.

I came from **Kro Ngoung village, Romeang Thkaol commune, Svay Teab district, Svay Rieng province**. Now I do not have house land but I have 1ha of farmland and now I have left it with my brother to keep it for my children when I pass away. My brother plants rice on this land every year but he never shares any rice product with me.

I rented a house to live in the Building area in 1992 and every month they charge me 20,000R but now since the Building area was destroyed by fire I have asked permission from the Sangkat chief to build a small house to live in with my children.

Before my husband and I were divorced my husband worked as a construction worker and in a day he could earn 5,000R and my oldest daughter work as lotus fruit or morning glory seller. In the morning we bought the morning glory to sell at the market and in the afternoon we sold the lotus fruits along the river, and we could make a profit of around 3,000R/day. At night I went to the park which in front the Botum pagoda to sell oranges and if someone asked me to go out to have sex with them I always went. I worked like this for 3 years but now I have stopped doing this because I am too old and I have lost my beauty too. I am very lucky because I didn't catch HIV or any other STD from the clients who I went to have sex with. If I didn't sell sex I would not have been able to afford to feed my children, as from the money that my husband earned he gave me only 2,000-3,000R and with leftovers he bought wine to drink so he was drunk every day. When he drunk he always beat me up and sometimes I was unconscious or bruised over my body or sometimes also he would crack my head open even when I was three months pregnant. Sometimes the neighbours came to stop him.

My daughter and I started to beg before the water festival (the year of 2001). The reason that we did this was because we had no capital to buy lotus fruits to sell. Now I have three children that I have to feed them all as I am divorced from my husband. Every evening my daughters and I leave home to go to beg in front of the Royal Palace, because during that time many people come to sit and relax there. In a day I can earn around 600R but my daughter can earn much more than me -

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around 1,000-2,000R/day because she carries my little son and when people see her they pity her.

I feel sorry for my children because they cannot go to school.

### ***Case Study 24***

I am sixty-eight year old. I am a widow and I have a married daughter who is twenty-three year old and she has seven children (a son and six daughters). She married when she was fifteen year old. We live in **Prey Khnes village, Prey Khnes commune, Mesang district, Prey Veng province.**

In the village my daughter and her husband have no work to do besides helping me to farm/grow rice on my 30A of farmland, and in a year we can get around three Tao or rice paddy.

The only reason that I came to beg here (Phnom Penh) is to earn money to support my grandchildren. My son-in-law is unemployed as he can't do hard work because he does not have much energy. My daughter is sick because she is very young but has so many children, so I need money to buy some medicine to cure her.

In the last two months I borrowed 30,000R from other villagers to buy some medicine to cure my daughter and they charged me 6,000R/month interest [about 20%]. I just came to beg here three months ago and I always go back whenever I can save around 40,000-50,000R. Every time that I go home I always bring some rice or food to give my family and with the leftover money I pay the interest on my debts. I always come to beg at Olympic market and at night I stay at Daeum Thkov market which is far away from Olympic market (around 1 Kilometre). In a day I can earn around 800-3,000R but if I meet foreigners they give me much more money (around 500-1,000R each) so on those day I can earn around 5,000R/day.

I will try my best to earn money to support my family and also release me from the debt.

### ***Case Study 25***

I am sixty year old. I live in **Ponley village Angkor Sar commune, Mesang district, Prey Veng province**. My husband died in the Pol Pot regime. I have five children, two daughters and three sons. Four of them are married and youngest son who is twenty year old is a monk.

Before I could collect the rice production approximately 15-20 Thang from my 20A of my farmland and I shared with my children married who live in the same village. But unfortunately, I can't plant rice on this land for three years because there was no water for planting crops so we didn't have enough rice to eat.

In the last three months my son got married but the money that I left it is not enough to pay for his wedding's celebration so I borrowed 100,000R from the moneylender and they charge me 30% interest per month. Because of this I decided to come to beg in Phnom Penh to earn money to release me from this loan. I arrived here [Phnom Penh] yesterday and this is my first time as I have never been here before.

I came with other villagers and at night we stay together at my niece's house which is near Pet Chin [Chinese hospital]. I plan to go back home during Khmer New Year day and after harvest season I will come to beg again as there is no work for us to do in the village besides farming.

### ***Case Study26***

I am thirty-five year old. My husband is thirty-seven years old and his job is contraction worker. We live at **Svay Chroum village, Svay Chroum commune, Mesang district, Prey Veng province**. I have six children, two daughters and four sons. They are students at the village.

Before I have 2 Ha of farmland when my situation in family is bad I decided to sale my farmland to buy something that I use in family as rice and other basic needs. I sold it five years ago and I got money 150,000R, now I have 30A only of farmland. The produce that I got, it isn't enough to eat, this problem had three years ago.

I arrived here (Phnom Penh) ten days ago. The reason that I came is poverty and I have in dept. I borrowed money from the moneylender in the village 500,000R for my daughter's treatment and they charge me 20% interest per month. At the village in rainy season I transplanting and harvesting for the villager, they paid 2,000-2,500R with three meals per day.

In Khmer New Year, I will go home and after I come back because I don't know how can I do at the village so I must come here again for save money to repay the moneylender for release my dept.



### ***Case Study 27***

I am thirty-five year old. I am a widow because my husband died last year from the high temperature and I have two children, the oldest son is fourteen and the youngest daughter is one year old. I live in **Romeas Chhor village, Kou Khchak commune, Kampong Trabaek district, Prey Veang province.**

My daughter now is sick and I have just arrived here this afternoon to get medicine from Kunthak Bopha hospital for my daughter. I had no plan to beg in Phnom Penh. However, when I arrived here, I didn't have any money to buy food or to travel back home so I decided to beg and I want to get some money quickly to go home because if I stay here for a long time, my son won't have rice to eat in the village (I sent him to my mother's house).

I have 50A of farmland and the produce that I get is not enough to eat (25Thang of rice produce) so I borrowed money from a villager and they charged me 30% interest per month. I also used the money for my daughter's treatment and other basic needs. I borrowed the money three years ago and now I am in debt. In the village in the raining season I do transplanting for other villagers, and they pay me 2,500R with three meals per day. My house caught fire six months ago, which adds to my hardship.

I will go home as soon as I get some money. I don't want to stay here for a long time. I want to do farm work in my village because it is nearly the rainy season.

### ***Case Study 28***

I am twenty-seven year old. In 1993 I married a soldier who was thirty-seven year old, but six years ago he became disabled. We have two daughters. One daughter is seven year old and the other is four year old, and I am also seven months pregnant. I live in **Preaek Ampil village, Preaek Ampil commune, Khsach Kandal district, Kandal province.**

I came to live in Phnom Penh with my husband and children because in the village we had no work to do as my husband is disabled and sometimes I can't plant rice on my 1ha of farmland because of drought and we had no money to buy seeds or fertilizer. Because of this, my husband and I had a discussion and decided to travel to Phnom Penh to earn money in order to make a better living. We first came to Phnom Penh five years ago and we found a house to rent at 25,000R per month.

Since we came to live here (in Phnom Penh) my husband has nothing to do besides begging along the river and when he goes to beg he always wears a soldier's uniform. He can earn around 2,000-3,000R/day but sometimes he gives me nothing because he is drunk. He sometimes beats me up with a stick when I ask him to stop drinking but sometimes he just curses me.

During that time I thought that I cannot depend on my husband as he is a drunk and had beaten me up every day for the past three years, so I decided to go to the village to borrow 3 Chi of gold from my cousin to run a small business in Phnom Penh as a lotus fruit seller. My cousin asked me to mortgage my 1 Ha of my farmland because they were afraid that I could not afford to earn money to repay them. I agreed with them but now my land has been taken because I have no money to release it from them.

When I got the money from mortgaging my land I went to buy lotus fruits from the market to sell along the river and in the park, and in a day I can make a profit of around 1,000-2,000R. But more recently my business was cut down because there have not been many customers and also I had to use the money to pay for renting our house.

In the last 2 years I have been back to my village to borrow 200,000R from the moneylender to cure my husband, as his leg was painful. The moneylender told me that if I want the money I have to mortgage to them whatever I have, but during that time I had nothing so I went to my mother's house and discussed with her about this. My mother took pity on me and she said she would mortgage her house

land which was 13m x 25m. Every month they charge my mother 40,000R interest but they also said whenever I have money I can get this land back.

I stopped selling lotus fruits a year ago and I went to beg with other beggars at Toul Tom Pong market, Thmei market, Kandal market or Orussey market. Sometimes we walk to beg, but if we have money we go by motor taxi. In a day I can earn around 2,000-3,000R but sometimes I earn nothing.

After the Building area was destroyed by the fire I was left homeless so today I asked for permission from the Sangkat chief to build a small cottage to live in and the Sangkat chief told me that he will send us to live in the Anlong Krongan area but I do not know when we will go there.

### ***Case Study 29***

I am fifty-seven year old and I am a widow. I have five children (two daughters and three sons) and one daughter and son are already married. I live in **Korng Tei village, Sdok commune, Korng Pisei district, Kampong Speu province.**

I have 1 Ha of farmland but I have not been able to plant rice on this land for the past two years because of draught. Last month I borrowed about 10,000-20,000R with no interest from the moneylender who lives in my village to buy vegetables, fish and pay for other basic needs.

I arrived Phnom Penh yesterday. I did not plan to come to beg but I came to find my son who is a cyclo driver to ask him for money to join in the wedding in my village. But unfortunately I couldn't find him and I had no money left to buy food and travel back to the village so I decided to beg to earn money to go back home. At night I stay at my cousin's house.

### ***Case Study 30***

I am forty-eight year old. My husband is forty-nine year old. We live in **Prear village, Svay Chrum commune, Mesang district, Prey Veang province**. We have nine children (seven daughters and two sons). One of my sons is a monk in the village, three of my daughters have gone to work in a factory in Phnom Penh and my other five children are unemployed.

I have 0.5 Ha of farmland but the rice production that I collected from the harvest is not enough for us to feed our children because we have many children and most of them are young and unemployed so on November 2001 my husband and I decided to mortgage this land to other villagers for 100,000R to buy food, rice, and to pay for sending my children to school and they told me that whenever I have 100,000R I can get this land back. The money that I got from mortgaging my land was not enough to support my family for long so in January I borrowed 300,000R from other villagers to pay for living expenses for my family and they charged me 20% interest/month.

In the village we have nothing to do besides farming. Because of this my husband and I decided to come to Phnom Penh and we came 7-8 months ago. We came to Phnom Penh and left my children to live alone. Now my husband works as a construction worker and in a day he can earn around 6,000-8,000R, but sometimes he earns nothing. I always go to beg when my husband earns nothing from his work. In a day I can earn around 2,000-3,000R/day.

Day by day we live in bad conditions since we are in debt because every month we cannot earn enough income to pay for the interest, so last month I asked my three daughters to go and find work in the factories in Phnom Penh but they were asked for 40 USD each to be recruited to work in the garment factory so my husband and I decided to borrow 120 USD from the moneylender to pay for this and they charged me 46,800R interest/month [approximately 10%]. My daughters told me that when they get their salary they would pay this money back.

At night we stay in front of Botum pagoda with other beggars and construction workers. Sometimes while we are sleeping thieves come to steal our money but I have not yet had this experience.

When I can save a lot of money I will go back home to repay all my debts to the moneylenders.

## PART THREE: THE ANALYSIS

After the case studies collection, the research team has decided to put the collected data they got into a database and analyse it. The tables below are outputs from the database and its analysis.

### 1- Places where woman beggars come from

Table 1- Name of provinces, districts, communes, and villages

Province	District	Commune	Village
Prey Veng	Mesang	Trapang Srea	Marigh
Prey Veng	Mesang	Trapang Srea	Pro Hout
Prey Veng	Mesang	Trapang Srea	Prey Kuy
Prey Veng	Mesang	Trapang Srea	Trapang Srea
Prey Veng	Mesang	Angkor Sar	Bang Ray
Prey Veng	Mesang	Angkor Sar	Angkor Sar
Prey Veng	Mesang	Angkor Sar	Pon Ley
Prey Veng	Mesang	Svay Chrum	Svay Chrum
Prey Veng	Mesang	Svay Chrum	Prea
Prey Veng	Mesang	Prey Khnes	Prey Khnes
Prey Veng	Kampong Trobek	Prey Pon	Prey Pon
Prey Veng	Kampong Trobek	Kork Chhrork	Romeas Chhor
Prey Veng	Kampong Trobek	Kampong Trobek	Kampong Trobek
Prey Veng	Baphnum	Theay	Payoung
Prey Veng	Pea Rang	Reab	Reab
Prey Veng	Preah Sdech	Krang Svay	Chrey
Prey Veng	Peam Chhor	Krang Troyang	Pring
<b>Total 17 (56.7 %)</b>			
Svay Rieng	Svay Rieng	Svay Rieng	Svay Rieng
Svay Rieng	Svay Teab	Romang Khnol	Kro Ngoung
Svay Rieng	Svay Chrum	Ang Tasov	Svay Mingh
Svay Rieng	Rum Duol	Svay Chheck	Chrok Skor
<b>Total 4 (13.3%)</b>			
Kampong Cham	Srey Santhor	Prek Po	Prek Po
Kampong Cham	Srey Santhor	Prek Po	Prek Po
Kampong Cham	Koh Sotin	Koh Sotin	Chi He
<b>Total 4 (10%)</b>			
Kampong Speu	Udong	Veang Chas	Kleang Krom
Kampong Speu	Korng Pesey	Sdok	Korng Tey
<b>Total 2 (6.7%)</b>			
Kampot	Chum Kiri	Trapeang Veng	Trapeang Veng
Kampot	Chum Kiri	Trapeang Reang	Daun Ov

Province	District	Commune	Village
<b>Total 2 (6.7%)</b>			
Takeo	Bati	Pot Sar	Tang Russey
<b>Total 1 (3.3 %)</b>			
Kandal	Ksach Kandal	Prek Ampil	Prek Ampil
<b>Total 1 (3.3 %)</b>			

The indication shows that more than 50% of woman beggars among the thirty people we have interviewed come from Prey Veng province, and most come from two specific districts: Mesang and Kampong Trabek.



Figure1: Map of Cambodia

**Notice:** The place covers by the red line shows location of Prey Veng province.

Prey Veng province has few water sources that people can access to. Moreover, Mesang and Kampong Trabek district are the two districts in Prey Veng which no river flows across and people can't access the water supply. So the farm work of

people completely depends on rainwater and people can cultivate the crop only one time a year in rainy season. But for the last few years they could not even grow rice once a year due to drought and flood. During transplanting season, the seedlings need water to grow but at the beginning of rainy season there is no rain and the seedlings are destroyed. Sometimes, the crops are starting to get established but then the flood come and destroy the crop.

In fact, Prey Veng province is one of the provinces in Cambodia that produces rice and most people are farmers; it is also one of the poor provinces too. The farming in Cambodia is subsistence farming and majority of people do wet season rice which needs water to grow crops, draft animal to work in the field. Some families don't have the resources, so they do exchange work with their neighbours but if they have money they can hire labour to work in the rice field.

There are several reasons why Cambodia is faced with drought and flood in these past several years is because of environment degradation, especially forest destruction. Forests have many advantages: attracts the rain, keeps the land in the same shape and keep it fertile. But when the forest has been cut down, the climate change, and there are irregular rainfall and soil becomes infertile.

Besides all of these, Cambodia has opened up their market to the global economic and new seeds were introduced. Chemical fertilizers and pesticides were used instead of the traditional way that people used to do. New seeds need more input and more water to grow and it is productive but the quality of rice is not good and soil become harder and harder every year. Farmers need more capital to buy the new seed's growing which were introduced and the only way to get more money is to borrow from moneylender or NGO's credit program. They also need more water, which they have to buy because rainfall has changed and drought has occurred. This means that people have to take risks to grow rice, and in the end the destruction of natural disaster on their crops make them end up in debt.

All these factors make farming in Cambodia fall down, the living condition of people become worse and worse and economics grow slowly. People's living condition are very important, and when they are faced with difficulties they can't wait to die, they must come to find other work that can earn the money to support their lives and some people especially women have chosen to beg in the city.

## ***2- Age of woman beggars***



Throughout the interviews we can see that beggars are group of people from all ages ranging from 25-82 years old. There is no specific group of people who choose jobs as beggars but people of all ages can become beggars.

**Table 2-Age of the interviewee**

Age in years	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
25	1	3.3	3.3
27	1	3.3	6.7
31	1	3.3	10.0
32	1	3.3	13.3
34	2	6.7	20.0
35	2	6.7	26.7
36	1	3.3	30.0
37	1	3.3	33.3
40	1	3.3	36.7
41	1	3.3	40.0
43	1	3.3	43.3
45	1	3.3	46.7
47	2	6.7	53.3
48	2	6.7	60.0
55	1	3.3	63.3
57	1	3.3	66.7
60	1	3.3	70.0
62	1	3.3	73.3
63	1	3.3	76.7
65	1	3.3	80.0
66	1	3.3	83.3
67	1	3.3	86.7
68	1	3.3	90.0
70	2	6.7	96.7
82	1	3.3	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

People aged from fifty-year-old down is the age of people who are full of strength that can contribute a lot to family economics as well as community. But some of those people are begging in the city and in other urban areas because they have no land to farm and no work to do in the village besides farming.

On the other hand, people aged from fifty-five year old up, who are group of people that have been working hard and contributing a lot for the family and children, but at the end of their lives they don't have their enjoyable time and end up begging in the city to survive and to feed the children or grandchildren.

### **3- Marital status and family situation**

**Table 3.1 -Marital status of woman beggars**

Status	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Widow	17	56.7	56.7
Married	10	33.3	90.0
Divorced	3	10.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

More than 50% of beggars feed the children alone because their husband died during Pol Pot regime or died from diseases such as malaria, tetanus, etc. The death of a husband leaves a big burden for woman and children because when her husband was alive, he got sick and the wife borrowed money with high interest to pay for health care as well as food supply. The money borrowed is used to buy medicine to survive the husband as well as children but not to use for the productive work. This means that woman and her family are already in a lower condition since the time they borrowed money because there is no way to gain profit from the money being used. They will have to only find way to repay the loan.

*But after he died the living standard in my family dropped because I had to feed my children alone and they were still young and I had no land to use because I mortgaged my land (25A) to a moneylender for seven Chi of gold to cure my husband because he was sick. Now we have no money to release this land from them. Case study 4)*

*The reason that we came to beg in Phnom Penh is to earn money to release my 40A of farmland from the moneylender as I mortgaged it to them for 3-4 Chi of gold to get money to cure my husband who was sick. Now they plant rice on my farmland. They told us that whenever we have the money we can get this land back. Every year, our lives depended on the rice production which we collected in harvest season and we also relied on my husband who worked as a construction worker. But he got sick and he lost his job and now we earn nothing every year. (Case study 6)*

In another case, woman has to mortgage the farmland to get money to cure her husband's treatment. Once the farmland is mortgaged the family's lives and economic is dropping down because their income depends on farming but there is no land to farm anymore.

In Phnom Penh there are no choices for women to access good work as they have low education or some are illiterate and they have no money. So the options available for them are sex work, factory work which they need to pay for entrance, waste picking, begging, domestic work or construction work. In some workplaces such as factory or construction work or domestic work, they face with gender discrimination at the workplace.

Men can enter the sector of construction work and get paid much more than females. But in fact some men rarely send money home as they think the money they earn is not enough to pay for his living alone in the city. In contrast, women send money home regularly or more often than men to support the family even though they earn less than men. The experiences we got from garment factory research is that female factory workers always send their salary home regularly to support their family and save nothing for themselves. In the same conditions, male factory workers seldom send money home and they save money for themselves every month.

Sex workers decide to sell their bodies in order to earn money to support their families members in the village; she can't wait to see them and herself die of starvation. Similar thing happens with female beggars; in a day most of them earn money less than 4,000R but they still sends money home to pay for the interest on loans and other basic needs of her family despite they have to survive herself in the city too. So we can see that women have more responsibilities toward the family no matter where they are, in the family or away from the family.

*Sometimes I can earn enough just to buy food to eat but sometimes **I can earn around 1,000-1,500R per day, so I can save 1,000R a day. On a holy day I can earn around 5,000-6,000R. I am worried about my daughter and my grandchildren in the village so every time someone goes to the village I send 500R or 1,000R to my daughter to buy food to eat. (Case study 8)***

In another case we also found out that for some couple that live together, woman still takes responsibility to find ways to meet the needs of the household as her husband is drunk, jobless, and gamble. In some families, the husband borrowed money to gamble and the wife has to repay the loan instead of her husband.

*I am forty year old. I have four sons. I live in Doun Ouv village, Trapeang Reang commune, Chhum Kini district, Kompot province. **When I was married my husband always used to get drunk and beat the children and me. About a year ago my husband married a new wife and he now lives in Sihanouk Ville. (Case study 12)***

This means her husband doesn't think about what is happening inside the whole family but just enjoying himself. When woman can't sustain the lives of family members in the village as the crop was destroyed by the flood and drought there is no work to do in the village beside farming, and no resources that they can access, they come to the city to find works.

**Table 3.2- If you married, do you have problems in your family?**

Problems	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	6	60.0	60.0
No	4	40.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Among ten beggars who got married, 60% have the problems in their families and the main problem is domestic violence. Khmer culture has been teaching Cambodian woman many generations and all through her life to respect her husband and not to say or do anything against him. That is why when woman is asked whether she has problems in the family or not, she often responses no she doesn't have any problems. More than that, if she has problems in the family such as domestic violence, it is considered to be shameful and graceful if she tells this problem to the outsiders. This is always the difficult problem to try to understand because she is the one who suffers from all of this violence but she doesn't speak it out. Once people from outside come to ask them, you will not get the rights information about the real situation of women's lives.

**Table 3.3 -If yes, what problems do you have?**

Kind of problems	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Husband unemployed	3	50.0	50.0
Domestic violence, drunk and husband is jobless	3	50.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Government and many organizations have been working on the issues of violence against women and children especially domestic violence. Yet, there are many cases of violence happening including in the beggar family. The below case study shows proof of domestic violence happening in the beggar family.

*Before I had farmland but my husband sold it for his wedding with his new wife. He hit me with dish and I went to hospital and when I was in hospital he sold the farmland. I don't know how much he sold it for.*

*I am 34 years old and my husband is thirty years old. We have been married over 10 years and we have 2 children. Our son is 5 years old and our daughter is 6 months old. Since we married until now I am the one who takes responsibility in the family because my husband does nothing besides get drunk and beat the children and me up. We live in Chrey village, Krang Svay commune, Preah Sdach district, Prey Veng province. (Case study 19)*

Domestic violence is one of the serious problems that is happening in Cambodia at the moment in all kinds of families. Some people say that domestic violence happens because the couple are poor, illiterate which is not true. Domestic violence is something to do with power relationship and who has more control over the other. In Cambodia, as well as in other countries, many cases of violence men are the perpetrator because they have been brought up to think that they are the head of everything and have to have power over everybody. In the case below, her husband used violence against her because he wanted to sell the farmland but the wife disagreed. She knows that if the farmland is sold, how could the family live.

**Table 3.4 -Problems faced by widow beggars**

Kind of problems	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Unable to plant rice because of drought	4	26.7	26.7
I have to feed many grandchildren and support them to study	2	13.3	40.0
I have small land and rice production is not enough to eat	2	13.3	53.3
Unable to send children to school	1	6.7	60.0
Landless and I have to feed five children	1	6.7	66.7
Landless & I have to feed many grandchild	1	6.7	73.3
Landless, need to feed children	1	6.7	80.0
Rent farmland & need to send children to school	1	6.7	86.7
I got HIV and so does my daughter	1	6.7	93.3
Children are starving at home with nobody look after,	1	6.7	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>15*</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

\*Missing cases = 2

Some beggar responded that being alone is very difficult, as she has no husband to help or share her burden. Without the support from the husband she might not able to send the children to school because there is no one left to help earning money to feed the family. It is also difficult to cultivate rice crop because woman with small children have less energy. But they still struggle to earn money so that they can send their children or grandchildren to school. They hope that their next generation will escape from illiteracy famine. Throughout the interview, we found out that most of the beggars told us they are illiterate and that they don't want their children or grandchildren to be illiterate like them.

But in some cases we found that some married woman's situation is much more difficult than being alone because besides all the responsibilities she has in the household she got violence from her husband. Natural disaster, particularly flood and drought in the past few years has affected to the living condition of most of the families' lives in rural area not only the widow beggar's family. All of them face with starvation and they need to borrow money to handle their situation. At the moment, health care and education have been privatised and the children from poor family can't have high education if they don't have money to pay for. It becomes more and more difficult for both children from male-headed household or female-headed household to access to education system with their situation now that they have to give hand to help to earn the living to survive first before considering about studying.

#### **4- Other jobs available for farmers**

**Table 4 -Besides farming, are there any other jobs you can do?**

Kind of jobs	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
Wage laborer	7	23.3	23.3
No	18	60.0	83.3
Animal raising	2	6.7	90.0
Seller	3	10.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Lives of people in rural areas completely depend on subsistence livelihood. During the season of farming they can sell their labours by working on the rice field of other villagers for a wage. If they do transplanting or harvesting work for one day on a rice paddy field they get 2,500-3,000R plus two meals. But after farming season they find no work to do and they need to leave the village and find other jobs to do.

## 5- The situation of farmland

Table 5.1- Do you have land now?

Have land	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	13	50.0	50.0
Yes but mortgaged	9	34.6	84.6
No	4	15.4	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>26*</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

\*Missing cases = 4

Table 5.2 -Have you ever sold your farmland?

Sold farmland	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	5	17.9	17.9
No	23	82.1	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>28*</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

\* Missing cases = 2

Lives of people in rural area depend on the subsistence farming which they grow rice during wet season rice. It means that their land is meaningful to them; if they decide to sell the farmland or mortgage the land means that it is the last option they've to take to survive their lives. In the researches that WAC done as well as many people that we have been talking to, we could see that people in rural area lose their land because they need money to buy health services, to repay the loan, as well as to meet their basic needs.

## 6- Power relationship

Table 6-Whose decision was made to sell the land?

Who makes decision	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
Husband and wife	2	40.0	40.0
My husband without my agreement	2	40.0	80.0
I decided to sell myself because my husband died	1	20.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Power relationship is one of the main problems in Cambodia or inside the Cambodian family as most cases man takes control over the whole family even he doesn't earns

money to support the family. Some of the beggars do not have any farmland or house, some have mortgaged their land and some sold farm land to the moneylender to get money to spend on their urgent needs or repay debts. Related to the decision-making, most of the interviewees said that her husband and she make decisions but if we look at the case study from the gender aspect we could see that there is inequality between men and women in decision-making.

According to the experiences in many research done with women, when she is asked how the decision is made in the family she comes up with the answer that they both contribute ideas to the decision. Once she is asked deeper related to how the money is spent for even with the small things her answers will draw a power relationship to show us that it is not equal for woman to decide and only husband is the one who is powerful. Man thinks that whatever he does or decided is right. When he wants the money to spend on something even without the agreement from his wife he must go ahead. He has power to decide to sell something and on what the money will be spent for. But woman is the only person in the family who knows what the needs of the household are; so if she doesn't have power to decide on what the money should be spent for it will be used in the wrong way and not to meet the needs. In the case below man uses the money getting from selling land on his wedding with the new wife.

*My reason for coming to come to Phnom Penh is to collect the rubbish and sometime I beg for money to buy food. I have been in Phnom Penh for two years. I first came when I was still married to earn money to support my husband. This time I have been in Phnom Penh for two months. **I haven't any farmland, no home, nothing. Before I had farmland but my husband sold it for his wedding with his new wife. He hit me with dish and I went to hospital and when I was in hospital he sold the farmland. I don't know how much he sold it for.** (Case study 12)*

Woman suffers a lot in her life; she has no power in decision makings in the family. If she rejects what her husband wants to do she will be violated and beaten up by her husband. Man thinks that he has power over and can dominate woman and see woman as an object or property that he can play with. He uses his strength to show his power. Moreover, woman herself thinks that she should respect her husband and follow all decisions he made because the Khmer tradition and culture that she grows up have taught her that.

On the other hand, woman who is alone (widow) is usually luckier than married women in term of decision-making as she has no husband to control over her anymore; so she is the one who make decision in the family. But for the married women she never decides to do anything without asking her husband first. She



always discusses with her husband and if her husband refuses she will not do it. This shows that woman has no rights to make decision alone: when she wants to sell land, to mortgage land, to borrow money, to come and beg in the city, to buy small basic needs in the family, or to do other thing she must discuss with her husband.

So if the research wants to look at the power relationship among the Cambodian family, researchers must be flexible in asking questions to get the right information from the real situation of woman. If you ask the question directly and get that idea to use as useful information in the research result, it will not show the actual situation in the lives of woman.

## **7- Debt**

Table 7.1 -Have you been in debt before coming to PHN?

Debt situation	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	20	71.4	71.4
No	8	28.6	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>28*</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

\*Missing 2

Most of the beggars responded that they went into debt because they borrowed money from the moneylender or NGOs that have credit programs in their villages. The money they borrowed was used to cure diseases of their family's members, especially the husband and children but not themselves. Since the health sector became private, poor people cannot access health services. So when their family members get sick they have to send them to a private clinic that requires a lot of money for the treatment.

Moreover the money they borrow is not just to pay for treatment but they mostly spend it on other basic needs in the family. How can they earn money to repay the loan and interest every month as the money that they borrowed is use for surviving and paying for medical treatment? Also there is no work for them to do in rural areas besides farming. When they have no money to pay for the interest to the moneylender, the debt becomes larger. The majority of families in the rural areas have debts and woman is the one who is responsible for fulfilling the needs of her family and she is also the main resource in the whole family.

**Table 7.2-What is the interest rate in %?**

<b>Interest rate (%)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
4	14	46.7	46.7
20	12	40.0	86.7
30	4	13.3	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

If they borrowed money from a moneylender, the interest rate is 20-30% per month but from NGOs the interest rate is 4-5% per month. Can you imagine the loan people borrowed from the moneylender with such a high interest? In three months the interest rate will be equal to the loan. How can poor people escape from this circle of debt? They will find no end for their debts.

For those who borrowed from NGOs, they have to pay monthly interest and once a year NGOs will come to collect the loan. When they don't have money to repay the loan they borrow money from moneylender in the village or sell their farmland to repay the loan but still that is not enough. Below is the case study of a beggar who has sold everything to repay for the loan but she still in debt.

Most of the people in the rural area depend on farming but when their farmland were taken by NGOs or moneylender for repaying the debt, how could they sustain their lives?

*Day by day we were living in bad conditions so I decided to mortgage my land (20A) to the Cambodian Health Committee (CHC) organization for 500,000R and I have to pay 20,000R every month in interest [which correspondent to 4%]. But every month I couldn't afford to pay this interest so I borrowed 3 chi of gold from a moneylender and for every 10,000R I pay back, they get 2,000R/month interest. My debt become much more and I could not earn enough money to release me from it so I decide to sell my land, my cows and my buffaloes but the money that I collected from those sales still was not enough. Now I still owe CHC 200,000R more. Before I left to beg in the city, I borrowed 15,000R from the villagers to pay for transportation and I have to pay 3,000R in interest but they will get it when I come back home. (Case study1)*

### 8- Problems encounter by beggars when living in Phnom Penh

Table 8-What problems do you face when living in PHN?

Kind of problems	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
I was cheated by a man and he got my money	2	7.4	7.4
I got scared and I don't know well the location	9	33.3	40.7
Life here is expensive	10	37.0	77.8
Afraid of gang rape	1	3.7	81.5
My house was burn and I have no house to live in	3	11.1	92.6
Gangster steal my money	1	3.7	96.3
Our lives in Phnom Penh depends on our little daughter to beg	1	3.7	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>27*</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

\* Missing 3

The majority of the beggars do not have any relatives in Phnom Penh. The new-comer beggars whom we interviewed responded that they did not know where could they stay during night time because they just came from the countryside and especially they didn't know well about the location or situation in the city. One old lady told us that she and her sister with other beggars were cheated by a man and they lost a big amount of money.

*In a day I can earn around 1000R-1500R as I am not experienced in begging. On the second day I arrived in the city the other 2 villagers and I were cheated by a man who was about 30 years old. He was at the riverside when we were begging and he invited us to go to Wat Phnom to get some rice and 300,000R from his relative who had just arrived from the USA. When we reached the Wat Phnom he asked us if we had any money to buy a ticket to go to get this present and the 3 of us collected 40,000 to give him and afterward he told us to wait for him and we waited for him for a long time but he never came back. (Case study 14)*

They also express their concern about living in the city, they are afraid of gang rape and robbers stealing their money while they are sleeping as they experiences many gangsters pretend to sleep near them and touching their pockets. Some other beggars express that they are new-comers and they cannot earn enough money to pay for basic expense, as everything in the city is expensive.

*Every night, I sleep near Psar Thmey (central market) with other beggars. Sometime the gangsters pretend to sleep with me and touch my pocket because they want to get my money. One night when I felt asleep somebody took my money and I lost 5,000 R. (Case study 3)*

## 9- Income and expenses

Table 9.1-How much money can you earn from begging/day-in Riel?

Daily earning (riel)	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 500	4	13.8	13.8
500	1	3.4	17.2
1,000	1	3.4	20.6
1,000-1500	9	31.0	51.6
1,500-2,000	3	10.3	61.9
800-3,000	1	3.4	65.3
2,000-3,000	7	24.1	89.4
3,000-4,000	1	3.4	92.8
I have not yet begged	2	6.9	
<b>Total</b>	<b>29*</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

\*Missing cases=1

Table 9.2 -How much money do you spend for food/day

Money spend on food	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
300	1	4.0	4.0
500	6	24.0	28.0
700	2	8.0	36.0
500-1000	2	8.0	44.0
1000	9	36.0	80.0
1500	4	16.0	96.0
more than 2000	1	4.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>25*</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

\* Missing cases= 5

The average amount of money that beggars can earn is around 1,000-1,500R per day but they spend about 1,000R on food for themselves. They earn almost not enough to spend on food. This amount of money can't provide them with enough food to eat

but just for them to survive from day to day. If one day they got sick, how could they get the money to cure themselves? They will die because they don't have enough money to pay for the private health service in the city that are quite expensive.

On the other hand, they left home to find work in order to earn money to support their family and also release them from debt. But with the money they can earn everyday, can it help them to repay only interest, not the loan? How about the other members in the family? How about their children's education, food, and health care? If they want to do something they must spend money. For example, if they want to send money home they have to go by themselves. Sometimes half of the amount of money they send home is used for transportation to get home.

Cambodia has been trying to carry out the poverty alleviation strategy; yet there are many people in the country live under 1 USD daily income. Worse than that more than 50% of beggar live under 0.5 USD per day. This means that lives of more and more people become poorer and poorer everyday.

### **10- Children situation**

Table 10.1 -Did you take the children with you?

Taking children	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	14	46.7	46.7
No	16	53.3	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 10.2 -How many daughters did you take with?

Number of daughters	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	7	77.7	77.7
2	2	22.3	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 10.3 - How many sons did you take with?

Number of son	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	7	100.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>		

**Note:** There are some woman who takes both son and daughter with them.

According to the results of the interview, 46% of the beggars brought their children to come to beg with them. The reason that they brought children some said that they feel very embarrassed when they raise their hands up and beg from other people to give them 100 Riel to buy food to eat. Some other beggars dare not to beg themselves because they felt very embarrassed so they asked their children to beg and they just walk behind him/her. The below case study shows that mother didn't beg by herself but use her children as the tool to earn money.

*We just came here 3 days ago and everyday I always bring my children go to beg at Psar Tapang and when we reach there I let them to go alone and I just walk around but don't beg. At lunch we go back to the place that we are currently staying (e.g. in front of the Royal Palace) and buy rice and food to eat together and afterward we come back again to Psar Tapang. Both of my children can earn from 1,000-2,000R together and we use 1,000R to buy food and the leftover we keep and save. (Case study 6)*

Women are faced vulnerable situation and have less opportunity than men in the society since they were young. Most of the children that the parents brought with them to beg are girls who are very young. Although they are young, they still can contribute to their family. These girls drop out of school and come with their mother/both parents to earn money and support her mother, father and brothers.

*I am a widow; my husband died last year because he had high blood pressure. I have 5 children, 2 daughters and 3 sons. I just came to Phnom Penh around 7 months ago with my youngest daughter who is 5 years old. My other children live in the village and the oldest ones look after the younger ones. While I am away if they have nothing to eat sometimes they ask for food from our relatives or the other villagers. (Case study 4)*

The above case study show us that this little daughter started to earn money to support her family, her three brothers, and her sister since she was five years old. She will never have the chance to enter school and receive education like other girls do. What will her future be if she does not get education? If one day she got sick and cannot go to beg, what will happen to the lives of the people in her family who depend on her?

The other three children left at home, while their mother went to beg in Phnom Penh depend on the food given by relatives and villagers. If nobody thinks about

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them and they forget these three children, how could they survive? These three children also have no chance to enter school as well.

## *Conclusion*

According to the result of the research, it shows that there are many factors forcing and pushing people to migrate to find work or to beg in the city such as landlessness, domestic violence, lack of and no access to resources, irresponsible husband to supporting the family, debt, poverty, widowhood, natural disaster, and unemployment.

Cambodia's economic depends on agriculture with 90% of the people working as farmers. The illegal forest degradation causes the climate change, and people face a lot of natural disaster such as droughts and flooding in the past few years and these cause destruction farmers' crops and make their lives become poorer. On the other hand, the natural resources that people could get access to in the past have become private so people can't access if they don't have money to pay.

Some people mortgaged their land to moneylenders or NGOs to pay their basic needs or to buy health care services. This causes people lost of land, cattle, house, and in the end they have nothing to do for a living in the village. When they have no jobs they choose to come and beg in the city or at the neighbouring countries like Thailand and Vietnam to survive themselves as well as their family members.

In some cases, we can see that some women left their houses to beg because their husbands use his power as husband/man to beat his wife and children up. Moreover, he is irresponsible to support the family but he only got drunk with his male friends, have another woman and some man got HIV infection and spread it to his wife and children. Is this show gender equality? When will the man aware of himself and pity his family? When his body become weaker and weaker because of HIV, who will look after the children after the death of parents? This will become a big burden for the grandparents who are very old and have to feed little grandchildren. In most of the cases woman is the victim of any situation happen in the family and it all happens because woman is the powerless person in the family though she has many responsibilities.

When the husband who is part of any problem happening in the family is irresponsible, it means the woman has more burdens in term of earning money to support the family. In some beggar's family, husband earns money but he doesn't support the family, just using the money to drink with his friends and when he gets drunk, he beats the wife and children up. That's why in a beggar family, like many



women in Cambodia where marriage ties still exist, the wife suffers a lot from domestic violence.

Girls whose parents bring them along to beg in Phnom Penh lose the opportunities to study and in the future they will be illiterate. The future of these girls will be quite similar as their parents because they are illiterate and it will be hard for them to find jobs, as their generation will have a lot of other well-educated people.

Being a beggar has left a stigma for the life. Beggar gets discrimination from people in every corner of life: society, community, as well as her family and kin. Other people can say anything to hurt the beggars' feeling because they are not the ones who are in the situation of beggars'. They don't know how starvation will be like because they have never felt it. This discrimination make the beggars lose self-confidence because through out the interview we could see that they dare not to tell people in the community that they come to Phnom Penh and work as beggar. They hide their faces as beggars from people around them because they know for sure that if people know, they will discriminate them. If people in the community still continue to discriminate against people, particularly beggar this group will continue to hide their faces and people will not know how these beggars suffer in their lives and why their situation is worse like that? Why they decide to choose the job that other people in society don't value?

Women are the most vulnerable people in society but they are the valuable resources who are important to be participated in development of the country. If women face discrimination from people around and they are not valued and recognized it is difficult to develop or change anything in society. Moreover, she is the mother in the family. If she loses self-confident means that it affects to the advice she is giving to her children.

**Figure 2: I come to beg in the city because...**

