



Survey of Khmer Young Migrants Working in or Around Rung Kluang Market Aranyaprathet – Thailand

A document prepared by Peuan Peuan (Friends Thailand) – June 2010

Rung Kluang Market in Aranyaprathetyaprathet (Sakeow Province, Thailand) on the Thai/Cambodian border is a major centre of both young migrants and working children and youths. A survey undertaken by the Peuan Peuan team in July 2010 reported 611 working children (under 15) in the area around the market, with 47% of them not attending school.

The Peuan Peuan team in Aranyaprathetypretet began work in November 2009, and has initially focused on supporting children to school and vocational training, safe migration advice and supporting families for income generation.

The objective of the present survey was to have a better understanding of the group of young Khmer migrants working in or around the Rung Kluang market.

This survey was completed following the Friends International standard research procedures, with the team receiving training on how to conduct interviews in a way that respected beneficiaries' rights. The survey was conducted in June 2010 by the Peuan Peuan team in Aranyaprathet. Participation was voluntary and information was collected via questionnaires. 70 Khmer working youths (15-24 years old) were interviewed for this survey.

What work do you do, and what are your daily earnings?

The most common forms of employment were mobile selling (sunglasses, belts, etc) which 14% of respondents were engaged in, repairing shoes (14%) and working in the fish market (11%). The mobile sellers said they earned around 200THB per day, whilst the workers in the fish market earned around 120THB. The next most common forms of work were selling food (9% of respondents) and ironing clothes (9%) which brought in 100THB and 125THB respectively. Other work mentioned included scavenging (with reported daily earnings of only 75THB), washing dishes, working on stalls and pushing carts. Of the 70 respondents one young person reported being engaged in sex work – citing daily earnings of 500THB.

If the uncharacteristically high earnings from the young person engaged in sex work are discounted, then the average daily earnings for youths working in the market are 137THB per day.

This amount is lower than the Thai minimum daily wage (163 THB per day¹ in the Sakeow province) but can be regarded as attractive for Khmer youth. There is no national minimum wage in Cambodia but it is interesting to know that sewing factories usually pay their worker \$45-\$60 / month (approx. 54 – 84 bath / day)

What is your home province in Cambodia?

The three main areas that youths were migrating from were Battambang (16 young people, 22%), Banteay Meanchey (20%) and Kampong Cham (16%). Battambang is fairly close to the border and Banteay Meanchey is the province in which Poipet/Aranyaprathet is situated. Kampong Cham is to the east of Phnom Penh, and it is the home province of a majority of vulnerable youth in Phnom Penh. Therefore we assume that it may be that the young people from Kampong Cham have migrated initially to Phnom Penh, before moving on to Poipet/Aranyaprathet.

Where are you now living/sleeping?

41 young people (59%) were staying on the Thai side of the border in Aranyaprathet, with 41% staying in Poipet on the Cambodian side.

Only 4 of the 70 respondents were renting a room on their own. Among youth sleeping in Aranyaprathet, 46% of stayed in a room provided by the employer and 27% did rent a room with their friends. 72% of youth sleeping in Poipet stayed with their families.

How long have you been working at Rung Kuang?

40% had been working at the market for more than 3 years, and 26% for more than a year. Only 9 young people had been in the area for less than a month.

Have you previously been working in Cambodia or Thailand (outside of Aranyaprathet and Poipet)?

44 out of 70 young people had previously worked in Cambodia, and 21 youth (30%) had previously worked in Thailand, 5 of them as beggars. 70% of respondents had never worked in Thailand before.

Are you experiencing problems currently?

40% said that they felt they were currently having problems – with the main issues being; health problems (27%), finding work (20%), family problems (20%) and poor working conditions (18%).

¹ <http://www.boi.go.th/english/how/demographic.asp>

Do you have plans to move on from Rung Kluang?

73% said they plan on remaining in Aranyaprathet/Poipet. Of the 19 young people who were thinking of moving 10 were planning to go to Thailand or Phnom Penh to find work in construction or factories, and 9 said they wanted to go back to their home town

POINTS TO NOTE

- 21% of respondents have been working at the market for a year or more, and 40% for more than 3 years. 73% planned on staying in Aranyaprathet/Poipet. These figures suggest a high degree of stability in the young working population in this area, certainly linked with the income generated which is higher than Cambodian standards for similar types of jobs.
- Almost 1 in 3 of the young people spoken to cited health problems as an issue. This suggests an area of need for this group.
- 30% of youth interviewed had experienced working in other areas of Thailand which suggests that further migration from the border is common.

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