

The Nature and Scope of the Foreign Child Beggar Issue (especially as related to Cambodian Child Beggars) in Bangkok



Photo © Ayako Tsuda

By Friends-International

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Finally, the researchers wish to make it clear that nothing in this report is intended to denigrate the enormous efforts that are already being undertaken to assist Cambodian women, children and youth both in Thailand and Cambodia.

Friends-International and UNIAP
August 2006

List of Terms Used in this Report

BATWC	Bureau of Anti-Trafficking in Women and Children, MSDHS, RTG
COMMIT	Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
DSDW	Department of Social Development and Welfare, MSDHS, RTG
FI	Friends International
IDC	Immigration Detention Centre, Immigration Department, RTG
IOM	International Organization for Migration
GMS	Greater Mekong Sub-region
MOSAVY	Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, RCG
MOWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MPC	Missing Persons Centre, The Mirror Foundation
MSDHS	Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, RTG
NBR	Non-Blood Relative
PTC	Poipet Transit Centre
RCG	Royal Cambodian Government
RTG	Royal Thai Government
RTP	Royal Thai Police
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
UNIAP	United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-region

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beggars on Bangkok's streets are as varied as the locations where they are found, and prompt diverse questions and concerns from different government agencies, international organizations, NGOs and other advocates. Virtually everything about their presence and status is controversial, and many opinions are expressed -- but few concrete facts and little research is available about their origins, movements, earnings, and daily lives.

Assumptions such as beggars are predominantly human trafficking victims firmly controlled by well-organized gangs; grisly stories of deliberate mutilation of child beggars; children forced into 'worst form of child labor have been circulated and accepted widely with little questioning of facts supporting these assumptions. This study attempts to address some questions for a better understanding of the begging situation in Bangkok and surrounding areas. Some of these questions include: Are the accounts of violence and raw economic exploitation against beggars, leaving them unable to support families back in Cambodia, accurate? Are beggars menaced upon return to Cambodia, and forcibly returned to work in Thailand? And what is to be made of assertions that beggars are earning and pocketing significant amounts of money, manipulating and exploiting the sympathies of givers.

Building upon a previous research report "A Study on Children in Beggar Networks and Problem Solving by State Agencies Aiming to Indicate Supports for Thailand." by the Missing Persons Centre (MPC) of The Mirror Foundation, Friends-International and UNIAP Thailand launched this research project to better understand Cambodian child beggar networks in Thailand, with the specific aim of contributing to strategic responses to the problem. This research provides greater insights into the begging situation in the streets of Bangkok by examining how, by whom, and from where, the networks are sustained. By providing a firmer base of information, the research hopes to contribute to the development of longer term strategic interventions.

It should be noted that due to time constraints, research on the Cambodian side was limited, and therefore the focus of this report is on the Thai side.

A major finding is a large majority of Cambodian child beggars are not trafficked or working for gangs, but are often coming to Thailand with their parents, other relatives or a friend of the family. 112 (80.1%) children came with their biological mothers or relatives while 28 (19.9%) children came with a Me Kyhol or "non-blood relative." Researchers also found that while babies and toddlers (age 0-3) involved in begging on the streets constituted 41% of the overall group of 140 children.

Approximately 55% of the Cambodian families claimed to come from Poi Pet, the district that borders with the Thai border town, Aranyaprathet, that serve as a border-crossing and gateway to Bangkok. Another 16.4% were from other areas of Cambodia's North-west region, including Battambang, Siem Reap, and Banteay Meanchey.

Another important finding is migrant beggars' apparent control over their lives on the streets. For the children who provided information on a number of issues such as transportation, housing etc., 82.2% says they took the public bus from the border to Bangkok or surrounding areas; 94.2% lived in rented housing with access to electricity and water and 98% says they had free time from work. When asked about their feelings about begging, 69% stated they were happy, but when the question was re-phrased, asking whether they liked begging, 57.4% responded they did not. This ambivalence continued as the children expressed the primary reason for their satisfaction was that they were earning money for their family and relatives, while at the same time close to 80% of the children said that they did not want to continue begging indefinitely. Furthermore, all of the children expressed happiness in the hope that their involvement in begging would eventually come to an end. The study did not support assumptions that many children are deliberately mutilated (to increase the level of sympathy they can garner from passer-bys). Eight out of the 140 children interviewed had some disability, but none reported that

the disabilities had been deliberately inflicted, and the researchers report that the physical evidence supported this finding that children were not being deliberately mutilated.

The presence of children also remains an important incentive for the public to give. Older children evidently did not inspire similar response, and it appears the upper age limit for children begging on streets seems to be approximately 15 years old. Only two of the 140 children interviewed were over the age of 15, leaving an open question of where (and what type of work) these older children are doing when they are no longer begging on the streets.

Another major finding regarding Cambodian beggars is the level of earnings they earn from their daily activities. 22.6% of the children responding to earnings stated they received 251 to 300 baht per day, which is more than 25% higher than Bangkok's daily minimum wage of 184 baht per day. Another 18.9% stated they earned between 751-1000 baht, and several children reported earnings of more than 1000 baht per day. The children in this survey reported that they were present in areas that were frequented by expatriate foreigners, and areas that were almost exclusively all Thai, indicating that giving patterns were generous across the board.

Regarding patterns and attitudes on giving to beggars, 382 out of 401 respondents stated that they gave money to beggars. Almost 10% gave money every time they saw a beggar, while another 41% gave money to beggars at least twice a month. While most gave between 1-10 baht each time, a significant percentage (20.7%) of the respondents gave between 11-20 baht every time they donated. Rationales for giving to beggars were varied, but the research revealed that over 84% of those giving to beggars were influenced by whether the beggar had a disability, and 72% stated that it was a feeling of sympathy that compelled them to provide money to beggars. Finally, while views about possible solutions were divided among various options, a clear majority (68.8%) of donors to beggars feel that solving the dilemma is first and foremost the responsibility of the concerned governments.

Focusing on the networks that enable Cambodian beggars to move to Thailand and operate, the researchers found heavy involvement of a group of persons who can generally be categorized as *Me Kyhol*, a Cambodian term for facilitators and leaders that have a wide variety of characteristics and roles in helping migrants as part of the network bringing beggars to Bangkok. This network of *Me Kyhol* appears to be composed of largely de-centralized Cambodian facilitators, who provide a variety of services to migrant beggars, and are less controlling than the "gang boss" that has been assumed to control migrant beggars. These *Me Kyhol* are also indistinguishable from *Me Kyhol* that facilitate journeys for illegal (and /or legal) migrant workers and, in some cases, turn out to be "traffickers."

Through the research, the research team also identified another group of children – Cambodian/Vietnamese children who sell flowers and other small items. The limited information that the research team did gather raised concerns about the vulnerability of these children and possible links among children selling flowers or candies in some areas of Bangkok, children selling flowers or candies in Pattaya, the sex industry, and 'gangs' or networks

The abovementioned findings of the research team were discussed in consultation meetings with key government departments and non-governmental actors in Thailand and Cambodia on 6 October 2006 and 23 January 2007 respectively. The consultation workshops further developed practical recommendations to address the issue of Cambodian child beggars in Thailand. The resulting recommendations are a testament to the commitment and effort of the Governments of Cambodia and Thailand on this issue and reflect their preparedness to approach the delicate challenges that are associated with improving the current situation. Many of these challenges are centered on the key issues of migration, vulnerability, victimization and human trafficking, livelihoods in Cambodia vs. Thailand, procedures dealing with and services provided to vulnerable migrants, special issues connected to children, and many others. For further details please see the *Recommendations* section on page 66.

I. Introduction

Beggars on Bangkok's streets are as varied as the locations where they are found, and prompt diverse questions and concerns from different government agencies, UN offices, and NGO advocates. Virtually everything about their presence and status is controversial, and many opinions are expressed -- but few concrete facts and little research is available about their origins, movements, earnings, and daily lives and existence in Thailand.

The incomplete nature of information about foreign beggars on Bangkok's streets provides fertile ground for assumptions on their situation that may not always fully be supported by facts. For example, what evidence exists for the commonly heard assumption that these beggars are predominantly human trafficking victims firmly controlled by well-organized gangs, on whom they are wholly dependent for housing, transportation, and sustenance? Are the grisly stories of deliberate mutilation of child beggars supported by real case studies? Who exactly is compelling children to perform work that can be easily classified as a 'worst form of child labor?' Are the accounts of violence and raw economic exploitation against beggars, leaving them unable to support families back in Cambodia, accurate? Are beggars menaced upon return to Cambodia, and forcibly returned to work in Thailand? And what is to be made of assertions that beggars are earning and pocketing significant amounts of money, manipulating and exploiting the sympathies of givers who are predominantly Thai?

Questions and uncertainties quickly outstrip the body of knowledge held by networks seeking to help the beggars. The key issues are rapidly jumbled together: victimization and human trafficking, vulnerability, migration, livelihoods in Cambodia vs. Thailand, procedures dealing with and services provided to beggars, special issues connected to children, and many others. Clearly, much more needs to be known in order to come up with viable solutions. The problem statement for this research project states that the "...public visibility of beggars is in direct contradiction to the dearth of information available about their lives. The prevalence of Cambodian beggars, alongside the exploitation they face, makes them an issue that both Thailand and Cambodia must address. But without a solid, accurate information base, no action plan can respond adequately or accurately to the problem."¹

However, there are some aspects of the situation which are not in doubt. The first is that the observation that the predicament of child beggars is thoroughly intertwined with that of adult beggars. So while this research project's focus is mainly on child beggars, issues affecting adults must be taken closely into consideration. For this reason, this report's coverage and recommendations go beyond children, and include Cambodian adult beggars, migrant workers, and trafficking victims.

Second, it is apparent that the issues of human trafficking and migration are very clearly meshed together. The situation is not as simple as unsuspecting children across the border in Cambodia being abducted by gangs seeking beggars for Bangkok's mean streets. The lack of economic opportunity in Cambodia (and other related factors) contrasts with the prospect of earning a decent income as a beggar in Thailand, and provides an impetus for migration to take up this kind of work. For this reason, the situation of child beggars must be analyzed from the perspective of migration, the obstacles to movement, and the vulnerability that accompanies persons with undocumented status in Thailand.

Third, it is clear that beggars are almost inevitably undocumented, illegal foreign migrants who are regularly subject to arrest, incarceration, and deportation. But even the matter of deportation is complicated. On one hand, the RTG has commendably developed policies that screen arrested beggars for indications that they are victims of human trafficking, and provides special services for those individuals who are so identified. But on the other hand, left largely unaddressed is the dilemma of how to handle the situation of beggars who are not identified as victims of human trafficking, but who almost all observers agree are vulnerable migrants at risk of human trafficking in the future.

1 Cambodian Beggars in Thailand: A concept paper on interventions and solutions: UNIAP Thailand; 2005; page 45

UNIAP Thailand and Friends-International launched this research project to undertake a comprehensive review of Cambodian child beggar networks in Bangkok, with the specific aim of informing strategic responses to the problem. This research provides greater insights into the begging situation in the streets of Bangkok by examining how, by whom, and from where, the networks are sustained. By providing a solid base of information, it will be possible to draw political support and organize effective, targeted, and long-term solutions. Three aspects of the beggar networks were chosen as central to understanding how the networks function: first, the beggars' backgrounds, origins and motivations; second, the beggars' daily experiences in Bangkok, and the extent to which they are controlled, or independent, going to the heart of the trafficking issue; and third, a better understanding of who gives money to beggars, and what their motivation and rationales are for supporting beggars.

The research project organized key informant interviews in Cambodia and Thailand to better understand the process of movement and origin of beggars. Courtesy of the MSDHS, the project received wide-ranging access to a group of 182 Cambodians (140 children, 42 adults) placed in three major RTG shelters, and conducted surveys and held informal discussions with this group. The project sent out mobile field teams to engage with beggars and interview them on the streets of Bangkok. Finally, the research team surveyed a total of 401 Thai nationals about behavior in giving donations to beggars. The research took place between September 2005 and February 2006.

A major finding is a large majority of Cambodian child beggars are not trafficked or working for gangs, but are often coming to Thailand with their parents, other relatives or a friend of the family. 112 (80.1%) children came with their biological mothers or relatives while 28 (19.9%) children came with a *Me Kyhol* or "non-blood relative." Researchers also found that while babies and toddlers (age 0-3) involved in begging on the streets constituted 41% of the overall group of 140 children.

Approximately 55% of the Cambodian families claimed to come from Poi Pet, the district that partners with the Thai border town, Aranyaprathet, to serve as a border-crossing and gateway to Bangkok. Another 16.4% were from other areas of Cambodia's North-west region, including Battambang, Siem Reap, and Banteay Meanchey.

Focusing on the networks that enables Cambodian beggars to move to Thailand and operate, the researchers found heavy involvement of a group of persons who can generally be categorized as *Me Kyhol*, a Cambodian term for facilitators and leaders that have a wide variety of characteristics and roles in helping migrants (see discussion starting on page 15 for more details on this important group) as part of the network bringing beggars to Bangkok. This network of *Me Kyhol* appears to be composed of largely de-centralized Cambodian facilitators, who provide a variety of services to migrant beggars, and are less controlling than the 'gang boss' that has been assumed to control migrant beggars. These *Me Kyhol* are also indistinguishable from *Me Kyhol* that facilitate journeys for illegal (and /or legal) migrant workers and, in some cases, turn out to be 'traffickers.'

Another important finding is the migrant beggars appear to have greater control over their lives on the streets than previously assumed. For the children who provided information on transportation, a surprisingly high 82.2% claimed they took the public bus from the border to Bangkok or surrounding areas. Among the children responding to questions on accommodation, 94.2% replied they lived in rented housing, and their housing had access to electricity, water. 98% of the children who responded stated they have free time from work. When asked about their feelings about begging, 69% of the children who responded stated they were happy, but when the question was re-phrased, asking whether the children like begging, 57.4% responded they did not. This ambivalence continued as the children expressed the primary reason for their satisfaction was the fact they were earning money for their family and relatives, while at the same time expressing happiness in the hope that their involvement in the begging profession would eventually come to an end. Not surprisingly then, the myth that many children are deliberately mutilated (to increase the level of sympathy they can garner from passer-bys) was not

supported by the findings. A total of 8 of the 140 children interviewed had some disability, but none reported that the disabilities had been deliberately inflicted, and the researchers report that the physical evidence supported this finding that children were not being deliberately mutilated.

Evidently, the presence of children remains an important incentive for the public to give. Older children evidently did not inspire similar response, and it appears the upper age limit for children begging on streets seems to be approximately 15 years old. Only two of the 140 children interviewed were over the age of 15, leaving an open question of where (and what type of work) these older children are going when they are no longer begging on the streets.

Another major finding regarding Cambodian beggars is the level of earnings they earn from their daily activities. A total of 22.6% of the children who answered the question about earnings stated they received 251 to 300 baht per day, which is more than 25% higher than Bangkok's daily minimum wage of 184 baht per day. Another 18.9% stated they earned between 751-1000 baht, and several children reported earnings of more than 1000 baht per day. The children in this survey reported that they were present in areas that were frequented by expatriate foreigners, and areas that were almost exclusively all Thai, indicating that giving patterns were generous across the board. Given the relatively lucrative nature of begging in Thailand compared to the economic opportunities available in Cambodia, efforts to reduce migration for begging will face significant resistance unless the high amounts of money beggars can expect to reap are somehow reduced. Policy approaches must be subtle – on one hand, an effort to educate those giving to beggars is important, but care must also be taken to avoid a potential anti-beggar backlash in urban Thailand, when working Thais learn (and perhaps resent) the high level of earnings that beggars are receiving.

This finding was borne out of the research on attitudes on giving to beggars, which found that 382 out of 401 respondents stated that they gave money to beggars. Almost 10% of these donors gave money every time they saw a beggar, while another 41% gave money to beggars at least twice a month. While most gave between 1-10 baht each time, a significant percentage (20.7%) of the respondents gave between 11-20 baht every time they donated. Rationales for giving to beggars was varied, but the research revealed that over 84% of those giving to beggars were influenced by whether the beggar had a disability, and 72% stated that it was a feeling of sympathy that compelled them to provide money to beggars. Finally, while views about possible solutions were divided among various options, a clear majority (68.8%) of donors to beggars feel that solving the dilemma is first and foremost the responsibility of the concerned governments.

Legal processes, bilateral agreements, and procedures have been developed between Thailand and Cambodia on human trafficking and the management of migration. However, while these interventions provide important guidance, without recognizing that migration and trafficking are inseparable issues they are insufficient without a clear action plan encompassing both the Thailand and Cambodia sides of the problem, and bringing committed partners ready to tackle the problem.

Accordingly, the research team developed specific recommendations to address these and other findings, and responding to challenges they encountered and problems raised by key informants. These recommendations, which begin on page 66, are the core of a plan of action that should be taken forward by the Government, UN, NGO and international community partners who have committed themselves to finding a solution for plight of the Cambodian beggars.

II. Definition

Migration is defined by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as the following:

“A process of moving, either across an international border, or within a State. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, uprooted people and economic migrants.”

Trafficking in Persons is defined in Article 3 of the 2000 UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons. That definition provides that “(a) ‘Trafficking in persons’ shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs; and “(b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) are established.”

Trafficking in Children as defined in Article 3 of the 2000 UN Protocol also consists of the following definitional elements, i.e. that the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of Article 3 of the 2000 UN Protocol, and that “child” shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.

Unsafe migration is defined as a situation in which the movement of persons is insecure, particularly for persons who are undocumented, because of any unscrupulous behavior of border officials, traffickers and others and/or a lack of information with which to make choices and assess risk.²

² Taken from IEC materials produced for Friends International/Mith Samlanh Safe Migration Project, Kompong Cham Province and Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

III. Objectives, Methodology and Background of the Research Project

In 2005, UNIAP Thailand and Friends-International agreed to launch a research project to comprehensively review and research the situation of Cambodian beggars in Thailand, with a special focus on children beggars. UNIAP is both an implementing partner and donor to this project. Friends-International is an implementing partner, and in addition to support from UNIAP, has also received financial support for this project from Danish Church Aid for these research efforts.

This project builds on the research efforts by the Missing Persons Centre (MPC) of The Mirror Foundation that were conducted with UNIAP support between October 15 and December 15, 2004. The result was a report entitled “A Study on Children in Beggar Networks and Problem Solving by State Agencies Aiming to Indicate Supports for Thailand.” That report laid the foundation for a more comprehensive understanding of issues concerning Cambodian child beggars in Thailand. Specifically, the report draws upon information and resources provided by RTG departments, NGOs, previous research papers, newspaper articles and observations of those involved in the begging trade, including those who give to beggars. The report outlines RTG procedures for dealing with beggars, analyzes the progression of news articles on beggars, and documents observations about beggars near nine Bangkok “Sky Train” stations as well as three public areas in Bangkok with significant foot traffic, which are Lumpini Park, Banglumpu and Chatuchak. The report has two major objectives, which are to provide more information for public awareness campaigns about the harmful effects of well-intentioned donations to beggars, and to encourage the creation of a multi-disciplinary network to address the situation.

The MPC report raises some key issues and questions. The first is the identification of children who come from poor families living close to the Thai-Cambodian border as the group most vulnerable to trafficking for begging purposes. Secondly, the report discussed abusive practices thought to be used by traffickers against trafficked children, such as physical mutilation to increase profitability of a child beggar, physical abuse of children who do not meet their daily quota of earnings, abduction of children, and the renting or purchase of children for begging. The MPC research also notes the occurrence of the phenomenon of ‘fake mothers’ who beg with infants to generate more money. Finally, the report alludes to the existence of beggar gangs, or mafias, who are thought to traffic and control the beggars.

This current research project of UNIAP Thailand and Friends-International not only expands upon the findings of the Missing Person’s Centre report, but also sheds new light on previous assumptions and findings, and highlights new trends.

Specifically, the objective of the UNIAP-Friends report is to inform strategic responses to the problem through a comprehensive review of Cambodian beggar networks in Thailand. The research focuses on examining the nature and extent of the begging problem in Bangkok in order to enhance the body of information about the issue. Three aspects of the beggar networks were chosen as central to understanding the networks: first, who gives money to beggars; second, the beggars’ daily experiences, the extent to which they are independent, or part of a chain; and third, the beggars’ origins and motivations. The research involved both qualitative and quantitative methods, including a basic literature review, surveys, observation and key informant interviews.

The project partners aimed to develop research findings that will guide and support the efforts of the Thai and Cambodian governments, national and international NGOs, UN agencies, and the international community to develop effective, targeted, and long-term solutions to the situation of child beggars in Bangkok. The focus on children was decided upon because of the high percentage of Cambodian nationals found among child beggars in Thailand, based on an initial literature review undertaken by UNIAP Thailand.

The research project was conducted from September 2005 to February 2006. Research activities were divided into 3 main areas:

1. Carrying out an in-depth review and analysis of existing research and documentation in order to identify gaps that need to be filled;
2. Designing and implementing appropriate surveys and questionnaires for use in the shelters, on the streets of Bangkok and in areas of origin of the beggars in Cambodia;
3. Collating, documenting and discussing findings, and selecting appropriate actions for next phase.

Finally, this research project is designed as the first phase of a longer-term plan to provide solutions for other illegal/undocumented migrant children in Thailand including those from Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam.

A. Research Methodology and Obstacles Encountered

The primary target group of this research is Cambodian child beggars, and Cambodian children selling items (such as flowers, sweets, etc.) on the streets of Bangkok. Often these two groups overlap, when beggars also engage in selling. The secondary focus group is composed of persons accompanying the Cambodian child beggars, which in many cases is shown to be the child's mother or other relative.

With ongoing assistance and support from UNIAP Thailand, nine researchers were selected and trained by Friends International in basic social work skills and data collection methods, under the supervision of the research coordinator and with the assistance of one staff from the Cambodian NGO Mith Samlanh. The researchers included eight bilingual Thai-Khmer speakers (from Surin and Buriram provinces in Thailand) and one Khmer researcher. The researchers were divided into three teams.

Preliminary discussions were held with the RTG, notably the MSDHS, and with NGOs with expertise in working with beggars on the streets of Bangkok (especially the Mirror Art Foundation and Mercy Centre) in order to determine whether there were limitations which would affect the choice of methodologies for each of the three research areas. Adjustments were made to the methodologies based on counsel received from these key informants, but as expected, other limitations arose during the project implementation phase that required some of the methodologies to be further adapted.

While the primary focus of this report is Bangkok, data collected at the Pak Kred Reception Home for Boys revealed that there were a number of Cambodian child beggars found begging in the Pattaya District, Chonburi Province (approximately 150 kilometers south of Bangkok). Therefore, the research team decided to incorporate the Pattaya-based beggars as part of the target group. It should also be noted that while collecting information on the streets, the research team encountered non-Cambodian child beggars and street sellers. Anecdotal information collected from exchanges with these children has been included in brief in appropriate parts of this report as a point of interest for future research.

1. Research Area 1: Background of Cambodian Child Beggars

Questions to be answered by research in this area included the following: What is the age of beggars who are placed in Thai shelters? Where were they found in Thailand before being brought to the shelter? Were they accompanied while in Thailand, and if so, by whom? Where do they originate from in Cambodia? And how did they come to Thailand?

Methodologies used in this research area included interviews in Cambodia with successfully reintegrated returnees, interviews with recently rescued beggars in Thailand, including community assessments, and focus group discussions and/or group discussions. Other research methodologies included key informant interviews with staff from NGOs, development organizations, government departments, immigration

officers and police. These key informant interviews were particularly helpful in clarifying information received from interviews with the beggars.

There were a number of limitations and obstacles that were encountered during the research process. Data collection in Cambodia proved difficult due to several factors, including the following:

- Due to issues of confidentiality, information on the places of origin for beggars repatriated before the research period began and the places of origin for beggars repatriated during the research period was unavailable to the research team.
- Information provided by some of the child beggars and accompanying adults in the shelters during the research period was followed-up by one of the research team with the assistance of the staff of Mith Samlanh, Goutte D'Eau and the Poipet Transit Centre, but the amount of time required was more than expected (creating difficulties for the research team) and often it was found the beggars were not available for follow-up activities.
- Time constraints resulting from a heavier than expected workload in Bangkok meant that the Research Coordinator was unable to dedicate the time required to train and adequately support and supervise a research team in Cambodia.

The researchers note that these constraints were partially overcome by carrying out informal discussions with some of the children, and accompanying adults, while they were either in the Nonthaburi Home for the Destitute and/or on the streets.

Since it was deemed essential that the research team be able to speak Khmer, there were also difficulties in locating personnel with the appropriate training in research and/or social work. Ultimately, finding Khmer-speaking personnel with those technical skills was not possible, and a decision was made to favor finding team members who met the language requirement. As a result, members of the research team were learning technical skills on the job, making the data collection slower than expected. Since the sheer volume of data to be collected and analyzed was significant, the whole team had to become involved in order to complete the task.

However, the large amount of time spent by team members in the shelters and on the streets, combined with the team's strengths in linguistic skills and understanding of the culture of the beggars, enabled the team to develop results that Friends-International and UNIAP Thailand believe present a fairly accurate representation of the situation for beggars in Bangkok. This is a tribute to both the team's dynamism, and the important training inputs provided to the team by UNIAP Thailand and Friends-International during the project.

2. Research Area 2: *Day-to-Day Lives of Cambodian Child Beggars*

Questions to be answered by research in this area included the following: Where do the beggars work? What times of the day/night do they work? Where do the beggars live and what are their living conditions like? How much money do they earn daily? What are the beggars' daily expenditures? And how do they feel about begging?

The methodology that was used by the researchers focused on establishing a relationship with beggars through the provision of services (i.e. healthcare, games, non-formal education, and life skills information) and then moving to conduct interviews with the beggars, whether they are on the streets, in their communities, or at a RTG shelter.

The researchers surmised from discussions with MSDHS and NGO staff that interviews on the streets with the beggars would be difficult. The research methodologies were therefore adapted to account for this anticipated obstacle. The MSDHS was kind enough to grant permission to the research team to have

on-going access to the three main shelters where rescued Cambodian child beggars are regularly taken. These shelters operate under the supervision of the Bureau of Anti-Trafficking in Women and Children (BATWC) and the Bureau of Social Welfare Services (for Baan Raitipung) under the Department of Social Development and Welfare (DSDW), Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS). These shelters are Nonthaburi Home for the Destitute (Baan Raitipung), Pak Kred Reception Home for Boys (Baan Phumvet, a.k.a. Baan Pakred), and Kredtrakarn Protection and Occupational Development Centre (Baan Kredtrakarn). (Please see page 20 for a more detailed description of these shelters.)

This meant that much more focus was placed on working with rescued children than originally intended. During the initial stages of project implementation, it also became clear that this approach was more appropriate because almost all of the children on the streets were begging with an adult, who in most cases did not want the child to interact with the team. Even if the team was allowed to interact with the child on the street, usually it was only for a short time before the child was required to continue begging, thereby preventing the team from having a meaningful engagement (from the research perspective) with the child. Moreover, it was found that both the children and the adults on the street were afraid that the team would inform the RTP of their location.

There were other obstacles in interviewing beggar children on the streets of Bangkok, including the relatively high level of mobility of the beggars, the efficiency of the RTP in clearing the streets of beggars, and sheer size of the city of Bangkok in which beggars could operate. All these factors created made it difficult to visit the beggars on a regular basis on the streets, and form relationships with them. Research was still carried out on the streets but it was much more qualitative than had originally been intended.

At an early stage, there was a definitional difficulty related to what constitutes ‘begging.’ This is because it became clear that a significant number of Cambodian children were selling flowers and other small items such as candies and tissues. This type of work could be either their main occupation or an occasional occupation in addition to begging. Furthermore, the researchers observed that it appeared that the ‘networks’ that sustained this kind of work were not entirely separate from those which sustained the beggars. It was therefore decided to include these children in the data collection.

In view of the initial research assumption of the existence of begging gangs, safety was a concern for the research team, particularly for the team members working on the streets of Bangkok. During one evening early in the research period, the research team clearly observed one man following them while they were working on the street. The identity of this man, and his purpose in following them, was never established so no concrete conclusions can be drawn from this encounter. However, it is worth reporting as an obstacle to the research because it caused a sense of concern for security within the team, and this concern was further exacerbated by the anecdotes shared by staff of partner organizations with research team members.

As the research proceeded, it became clear that because many of the children were accompanied by an adult, more research focus should have been placed on the relationship between the child and the adult.

Research with children also poses its own particular challenges. Out of 140 children who were rescued from begging and placed in the shelters, and were targeted by the research team, it must be noted that 57 were under the age of three and therefore, mostly too young to answer questions. The remaining 83 children were aged between 3 and 18, but the level of individual children’s understanding of the questions, their motivation, and their ability to answer the questions did not always meet the standards of precision and consistency hoped for by the research team.

More often than not, the beggars that the researchers had encountered on the streets were eventually rounded up by Thai authorities and sent to one of the three MSDHS operated shelters. At these shelters, the researchers were able to form better, more sustained relationships with the beggars, and consequently

gather more data than they could on the street. Data collection in the shelters occurred over four months beginning on October 17, 2005 and finishing on February 24, 2006. A total of 182 Cambodian children and some women were interviewed during the research period. This number included 102 children under the age of 12 present with an accompanying adult in the Nonthaburi Reception Home of the Destitute; 45 boys under the age of 20 present in the Pak Kred Reception Home for Boys and 35 women and girls from the ages of 3-44 present in the Kredtrakarn Protection and Occupational Development Centre. A total of 165 out of the 182 Cambodians was under the age of 18, and 140 had been found begging and/or selling flowers or other small items.

A team of four researchers organized basic education and sporting activities with children rescued from the streets residing in the three DSDW shelters. Activities were aimed at providing basic education to the children, whilst forming a relationship with them in order to be able to collect data more effectively. The schedule for these activities remained flexible and depended heavily on activities already planned by DSDW shelter staff.

Data was collected using lists of persons housed in the shelter given to the research team by DSDW staff, questionnaires designed for the children (please see Appendix 1), informal discussions with the children, and well-designed participatory methodologies such as the “10 Seeds Technique”, a modified PLA tool useful for gathering qualitative information on various issues.³

This research also took into account child rights issues. All children were informed that they were being asked questions for research purposes, and that they were free not to answer. All children who participated were first required to give informed consent to participate in the research project. Some of the accompanying adults in the Nonthaburi Reception Home of the Destitute were also interviewed on an informal basis, and additional small group discussions were held to garner additional anecdotal information.

One final obstacle involved arrangements at the Baan Raitipung/Nonthaburi Home for the Destitute, which provided that accompanying adults who did not want the children to participate in the research were able to prevent their children from interacting with the team. As a result, the research team was not always able to complete questionnaires with all the children. When faced with this situation, the research team was compelled to seek whatever information they could through informal discussions with the children, and longer background discussions with shelter staff.

Although the focus of data collection was shifted from the original focus of children on the streets to children in shelters who had already been rescued from the streets, it was decided that a team of three researchers should observe and when possible, interview or have informal discussions with the child beggars on the streets in order to gather qualitative information on where they worked and lived, and how they traveled between places. This team was also responsible for conducting key informant interviews in areas where the children begged. Data collection and observations on the street occurred over a three-month period, starting in early November 2005 and continuing until the end of January 2006.

In selecting the locations for these street observations, the team based their choices on locations previously identified by The Mirror Foundation report, discussions with staff from the MSDHS, The Mirror Foundation and the Mercy Centre, and on information provided by children and accompanying adults in the shelters. The team began observations in 17 different locations: Chatuchak Weekend Market, Omnoi-Omyai, Rangsit, Siam Square, Pratunam, Saladeng Station (BTS Silom), Lumpini Park Perimeter, Sukhumvit (from Soi 4 to Phrom Phong BTS), Hua Lampong, Bang Na, Samrong, Paknam, Victory Monument, Ramkamhaeng, Ratchada, Bang Yai and Soi Rawadee (Nonthaburi)

After initial observations, the team decided to narrow their focus to areas which were apparently more popular with Cambodian beggars such as Omnoi-Omyai, Rangsit, Siam Square, Pratunam, Sukumvit

³ For more information on this methodology, see *The Ten Seed Technique* by Dr. Ravi Jayakaran.

(from Soi 4 to Phrom Phong BTS), and Samrong. The team's focus was narrowed even further after January 1, 2006, when it became increasingly difficult to find Cambodian child beggars in either Omnoi-Omyai or Samrong.

The team was able to establish relationships with some of the beggars they met on the streets and as a result, they were able to visit some of the beggars' houses on different occasions. Those beggars visited at their houses by the team were all children with accompanying adults. All of these children and adults subsequently ended up in the shelters.

The team completed an observation sheet each time they conducted a street observation, noting the street location and the time of day. The researchers also took detailed notes on all conversations they had with beggars and key informants.

3. Research Area 3: *Public Attitudes and Behaviors toward Cambodian Child Beggars*

Questions to be answered by research in this area included the following: Does the public give to beggars? How much do they usually give? Why do they give? Are there some alternative ways to help beggars, and if so, what are they?

Research methodologies employed included a written survey and key informant interviews.

Unfortunately, the research team had difficulties in recruiting volunteers which, when combined with time limitations encountered by the research coordinator, made it impossible to carry through with the original plan to conduct a survey of foreign (non-Thai) respondents.

One team of two researchers conducted interviews among the Thai persons met at random on the streets (in areas where beggars are active). The interviews were conducted according to a questionnaire (please see Appendix 2) developed by the research team. A total of 401 persons were interviewed on the street, and all of the interviews were conducted from December 6 to 28, 2005. The sampling method used was random sampling which gives maximum confidence intervals of $\pm 5\%$ with a 95% confidence level. This means that if a given percentage of the sample gives a certain answer to a survey question, it can be concluded with 95% certainty that the true population percentage lies within $\pm 5\%$ of this percentage. For example, one of the survey questions asks whether the respondent is aware that some beggars are forced to beg. If 50% of the sample answer 'yes', the population percentage has a 95% probability of lying between 45% and 55%.⁴

Sixteen different locations were chosen for the interviews to take place. The criteria for selecting a location was first, because it is an area where many beggars are operating, and/or second, it is an area which many people transit on foot for shopping or for work. The selected areas included The Mall Bangkok, Rangsit, Kaset Bangken, Fashion Island Minburi, Ramkhamhaeng University 2 /Bang Na, Don Muang, Victory Monument, Chulalongkorn University and Siam Square, Saladeng/Suan Lum Night Bazaar, BTS Nana, Ratchada/Muang Mai market, Pa Phrom Erawan, Big C Pratunam, Samrong, Pakanong, and Klong Toey.

B. Background to the Report

1. Situation in Cambodia

In terms of migration and human trafficking, Cambodia is both a destination and sending country. However, in relation to Thailand, Cambodia is primarily a sending country. The literature review indicates that many Cambodian women, children and men migrate and/or are trafficked into Thailand into a variety of sectors. Women and girls are found working primarily in the sex industry, domestic

⁴ Confidence interval calculated using sample size calculator at www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm where Z = Z value (e.g. 1.96 for 95% confidence level), p = proportion picking a choice (.5 used for sample size needed), c = confidence interval, expressed as decimal (e.g., .04 = $\pm 4\%$).

work or fish processing industries, while children are primarily involved in begging and/or street selling. While there is less information about migration and trafficking of men, it is found that they end up primarily in off-shore fisheries, construction work or agricultural labour. There is also information that women, children, and men migrate and are trafficked for other forms of forced labour including light industry sweatshops and farm work.

Cambodia remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with overall life expectancy of merely 57.4 years of age. Recent economic development has only resulted in a widening of the gap between the rich and the poor, as evidenced by a Gini Index of 40.4, which is one of the highest in the region. Between 85-90% of the population live in rural areas where the poverty rate is much higher than in urban areas. Not surprisingly, rural households account for almost 90% of the poor. The country's demographic structure is predominantly young, with 42.8% of the population aged 15 years or under and 61% under the age of 25.⁵ The relative youth of Cambodia's people is explained by high birth rates, coupled with a severe decimation of the population during the many years of conflict and fairly low life expectancy. In addition, about 60% of the population has not completed primary education, with twice as many women than men never attending school. As a result, the country's skills base remains low, and serves as a significant drag on development efforts.⁶

In summary, poverty in Cambodia today is characterized by low income and consumption, poor nutritional status, low educational attainment, limited or no access to public services including school and health services, limited access to economic opportunities, vulnerability to external shocks, and exclusion from economic, social and political processes.⁷

As the economic divide between rural and urban areas within countries and between countries in the Mekong Sub-region widens, particularly between Thailand and its neighbors, the push and pull factors for migration for economic purposes are increasing.

In Cambodia, push factors include landlessness, poverty, household debts, natural disasters, and disease/lack of access to health facilities.⁸ These factors are on the rise⁹ and are exacerbated by images of Phnom Penh (for internal migrants) or Thailand that the rural populace can view on television, or by stories of opportunity and good fortune told by returning friends or relatives. These images and information provide hope to poor Cambodians that migration can result in a good income and better living conditions. The importance of short and long-term migration for labor in Thailand is increasing, particularly in Northwest Cambodia where it is estimated that in some communities, up to 70 to 80% of the economically active populace is working in Thailand. A snapshot survey conducted with approximately one in 10 children in the training centre of Mith Samlanh¹⁰ found that 26 of the child respondents had been to Thailand for work, and most had been more than one time. Another 17 of the surveyed children expressed a strong interest in migrating to Thailand.

⁵ National Census, 2000

⁶ EC Country Strategy Paper: Cambodia 2004-2006; World Bank, 2006; <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/cb.html>

⁷ EC Country Strategy Paper: Cambodia 2004-2006; World Bank, 2006; <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/cb.html>

⁸ Maltoni, B. (2005), Page 27.

⁹ Also see World Bank, 2006, Page 62, Box 1.

¹⁰ Mith Samlanh is a Cambodian NGO working with street children, their families and communities, and implementing a program of 13 interlinked projects, all with the ultimate goal of reintegrating street children and youth into Cambodian society. The snapshot survey was carried out in the training centre where around 380 youth aged 15-24 years old attend vocational training courses.

Added to the push factors present in Cambodia, and the evident desire of many to migrate, comes the issue of the movement of Cambodian children to Thailand. Information shows that often these children are accompanied, and that their departure is known to their families. So it is clear that another factor to consider when looking at the issues of trafficking and migration is the Cambodian family structure and interpersonal relationships. Cambodian family structure and familial relationships extend farther than in the West, and are correspondingly more complex. Households are often made up of extended family, including grandparents, uncles, aunts, first cousins, nephews, and nieces.¹¹ In rural households, neighbors or other community members are also considered kin and are often included in the household. Furthermore, terms such as *Yey/Ma Yey/Ta* (Grandmother or Grandfather), *Ma/Mae* (Mother) and *Pa/(Au) Pok* (Father), *Pou/Om Proh* (Uncle) or *Ming/Om Srei* (Aunt), *Bong* (older sister/brother) are commonly used to refer to both blood relatives and/or to people to whom a special bond is felt. Furthermore, the term *Bong* may also be used with acquaintances and strangers as a sign of respect.¹²

Informal adoptions are also fairly common practice throughout Cambodia.¹³

Case Study 1 -- KEY INFORMANT: Cambodian Woman, 26 years old

My Aunt had two sons of her own but really wanted a baby girl. A poor woman offered her baby to my Aunt. The poor woman thought this would be a good way to ensure that the child had a better future than she could offer. My Aunt gave the woman some money. My cousin is now 13 and does not know that she is adopted. She is treated the same as the other children in the family. Community members and family who know about the adoption view it as a positive thing; the child gets a good upbringing and my Aunt gets a daughter. The burden is also taken off the poor family.

A child who has been informally adopted is usually referred to as a *kohn jenh joem*, which literally translates as a “child that gets fed.” The reasons for adoption are varied: sometimes the child’s biological parents have died¹⁴, in some cases the child is abandoned¹⁵, and in other instances the child is given by the birth parents and/or their relatives to the new family.

The complicated nature of these relationships is important in assessing the situation of a child that moves to Thailand because there is a blurring between relatives, respected elders, and persons who could be classified as ‘service providers’ who assist movement or provide other migration-related services. Classifying a ‘trafficker’ in this situation also becomes more complicated.

Case Study 2 -- Trafficked or *Kohn Jenh Joem*?

Huan is 35-years-old. She was taken to the Home for the Destitute in December 2005 by the raid and rescue team of the MSDHS after being found begging on the streets of Bangkok. Huan has 2 children with her but both are not her biological children. One is a 5-year-old girl with a severe facial disfigurement and the other is a 5 month old baby girl. Huan has looked after the little girl since she was 15 days old -- the girl’s mother (a fellow Cambodian beggar who has begged with Huan in Bangkok for a long time) agreed to give the girl to Huan in exchange for about 1000 baht. As for the 5 month old baby, the girl’s mother gave birth in a hospital in Thailand but could not pay the hospital bill and so subsequently was detained and deported by authorities. In Poipet, Huan gave the baby’s mother 2000 baht to help pay medical costs in exchange for the baby.

¹¹ Nepote, 1992, p. 105

¹² Nepote, 1992, p. 164

¹³ Nepote, 1992, p 115, 117

¹⁴ The Cambodian Prime Minister, Hun Sen, and his brother both have *Kohn Jenh Joem* like this.

¹⁵ Two other key informants both stated they had *Kohn Jenh Joem* who had been abandoned and stated that it is common practice in Cambodia.

Adding a further level of complexity are Cambodian perceptions of what is known in Khmer as the *Me Kyhol*. While much confusion still exists surrounding the generally accepted terminology used for the issues of human trafficking and migration, most literature in the English language relating to trafficking in Cambodia translates ‘trafficker’ as *Me Kyhol* in the Cambodian language.¹⁶ This is surprising given that in the same reports, people are also asked to give their perceptions of what characteristics define a *Me Kyhol*. Perceptions vary widely, and range from the *Me Kyhol* as someone who “helps people earn money” to “a person who takes people to find job in Thailand” to “a person who leads the way, like the leader of a flock.” Is a *Me Kyhol* therefore, a person who helps someone earn some money, or a person who leads the way, or a trafficker?

A recent research project carried out by the Centre for Advanced Studies for the World Bank on land issues provides the following insight into perceptions of the *Me Kyhol* in Cambodian society.¹⁷

The *Me Kyhol* as a leadership figure in village level civil society

Sometimes interviewees used the term *mé kyhol* to refer a person who leads dissent.

The term is widely known and used in Cambodian society. Literally, *mé kyhol* is translated as ‘leader of the wind’ (Collins, 1998: 27) or ‘mother of the wind’ (Margallo & Lath 2002: 85-87). Collins describes word “*mé Kyhol* was a category of individuals who were considered to have leadership skills or potential.” This type of individuals can convincingly and informally take the lead or mobilize a group of people to do certain things. Collins also argues that, “[t]he *mé kyhol* is an expression of community solidarity at the grassroots that is connected to a unique concept of participation and feeling about legitimate authority.” (Collins, 1998: 29)

Collins identified a number of observed common characteristics of *mé kyhol*. Firstly, duties fulfilled by *mé kyhol* tend to be temporary and connected to a specific project or task. The *mé kyhol* would go back to being an ordinary person once the task is complete. Secondly, the *mé kyhol* is observed as having “salted spit” (*teuk moat prae*), which means that because of their wisdom, intelligence, and experience when they speak people will listen to them attentively. The *Mé kyhol*, thirdly, tends to become directly involved in the work they organize rather than just playing a supervisory role. Finally, the most significant characteristic of *mé kyhol* is ‘his daring’ which means that the *mé kyhol* takes the risk of rising as an informal and temporary leader to accomplish a specific task which will benefit the community.

This term has both positive and negative connotations, Collins notes. Thus, the *mé Kyhol* can also be a guide who takes people across the Thai border illegally for employment; an opposition political party activist who recruits members; or a woman who visits villages recruiting women to work in the city. It is for these reasons that the term *mé kyhol* is sometimes translated as ‘trafficker’ (see Margallo and Lath for examples).

In the cases that Friends-International encountered in the field, the village level leaders did not hold public office or represent an existing formal group. They were *mé kyhol* in Collins’ sense – individuals who are independent of both state and market, and who can be seen as local activists in civil society.

¹⁶ Margallo and Poch, 2002, p. 43

¹⁷ Centre for Advanced Studies/World Bank (2006), *Justice for the Poor? An Exploratory Study of Collective Grievances over Land and Local Governance in Cambodia*, p. 16

Since it is clear that the term *Me Kyhol* is complicated, and heavily dependent on its cultural context, the term will be used directly throughout this report, and will not be translated into English.

2. Situation in Thailand

Thailand is a major destination, sending and transit country for migration and human trafficking. In acknowledgement, the Royal Thai Government has been extremely active in developing a comprehensive range of responses to the problem. The issue of human trafficking was designated as a priority issue on the RTG's national agenda by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra in August 2004, and significant additional resources and political commitments were made to support collaborative, inter-agency response by the RTG.

In Thailand, it is clear that there have been changes in the business of begging. Approximately ten years ago, most observers noted that most beggars on the streets of Bangkok were composed of the elderly, and persons with disabilities. At that time, the majority of beggars were Thai, and among these groups were Thais of Khmer ethnicity, primarily from Surin and Buriram provinces on the Thai-Cambodia border. Many of these beggars were seasonal beggars, primarily poor rice farmers or landless agricultural laborers, who come to beg in Bangkok while waiting for the crop to be ready for harvesting. Another significant group of beggars at that time were homeless adults, many of them elderly, from Bangkok and adjacent provinces, but it was quite rare to find a child beggar at that time.¹⁸

Today, the Thai beggars (whether from urban areas or migrants from rural areas) have been significantly overshadowed by a major influx of foreign beggars, mostly from Cambodia but also some from Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Bangladesh. A set of interesting questions can be asked regarding the Thai beggars. For example, have the numbers of Thai beggars been reduced because of displacement by foreign beggars, or do the numbers of Thai beggars generally remain the same? If the numbers of Thai beggars has been reduced, then what has caused this situation? Is there any connection between these changes and the improvement of the Thai economy? These and other similar questions could be followed up in future research, but are beyond the scope of this project.

Clearly, however, the inflow of foreign beggars can be understood from the growing economic disparity among the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) countries, especially between Thailand and Cambodia. Lacking economic and social support in their own country, many Cambodians obviously see migration to Thailand as clear alternative path to generate earnings. Many Cambodian intending to migrate lack both the education and the skills to apply for jobs in Thailand, making them more susceptible to becoming a beggar to seek a livelihood.

A wide range of beggars are found in Bangkok: mothers with children, unaccompanied children, old men, old women, disabled men, women and children, blind people being led by a child, blind people playing music through a microphone, and others. The new, increasingly common trend seen on the streets of Bangkok is to favor a mother (or mother figure) begging together with a child. A large "street working" population also exists, including children selling roses, garlands, tissues, and candies, and children performing services like polishing shoes. The list of variations of begging and "street working" appear to be endless. Locations where beggars can be present in Bangkok and adjacent provinces are seemingly limitless as well. Some examples include beggars on pedestrian overpasses in crowded tourist areas, in front of shopping malls, close to temples, near restaurants or bars, close to public transportation facilities (sky train stations, sub-way stations, bus stations or terminals), in between cars at traffic lights, at the Chatuchak weekend market, or walking/mobile between various spots. In fact, it can be said that these groups now constitute a part of the mosaic of every day life in Bangkok.

¹⁸ Conversation with Panadda Changmanee, NPC, UNIAP Thailand.

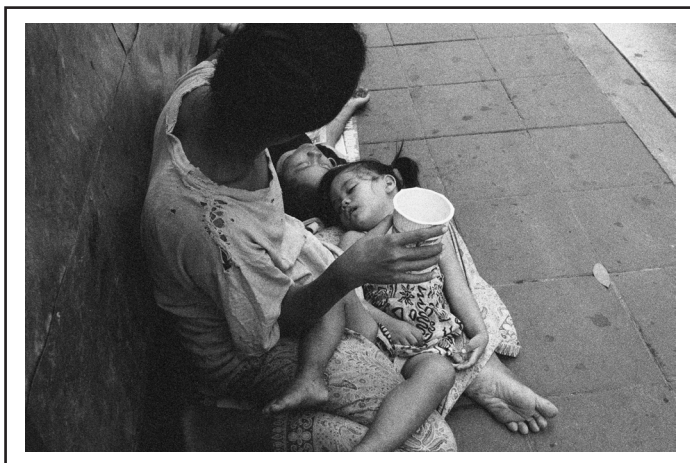


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Photo © The Mirror Foundation

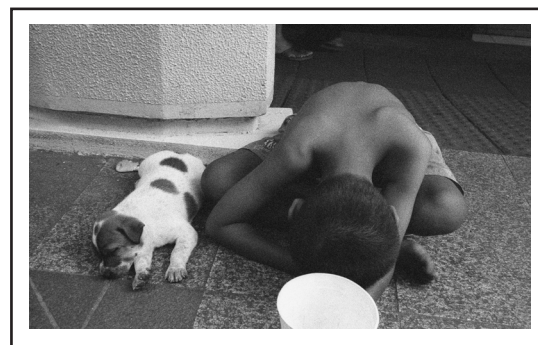


Photo © Ayako

The pull factors for foreign workers coming to Thailand has also increased over in the past years, facilitated by improved communication systems and transportation routes. The offer of formal work permits by the RTG has increased the number of documented migrants, but it can also be seen that a combination of push and pull factors for migration has also resulted in a sharp increase in illegal or irregular migration.¹⁹ Correspondingly, it can be seen that the number of 'services' on offer to facilitate irregular migration (border crossings, transport, accommodation, bribes) has risen sharply, and this is now a booming business for some.²⁰ In fact, the results of this survey suggest that for some unskilled workers or families from Cambodia, even begging on the streets of Bangkok now seems to certainly be considered a viable option

In Thailand, the law regulating begging is the Control of Begging Act of 1937. The text of the law in English is included as Appendix 3. This law forbids anyone to beg. In terms of the definition in the law, begging is defined quite generally. Specifically, it is defined as seeking money from persons with no exchange of work, when the persons who are providing the money are not relatives or friends. Those persons who are apprehended while begging, and who are found to be old, handicapped, sick, lacking the means to support themselves, and/or unable to work must be sent to a RTG social welfare shelter. However, if the person who is begging is found to be of able body and mind, s/he is to be sent to the Department of Employment where they will be provided with assistance in finding employment. Beggars are required to cooperate with officials seeking to help them, and officials are given permission to punish non-cooperative beggars according to regulations. However, there is no indication in the law that it applies only to Thais. In fact, in the law the issue of nationality is not even brought up.

This is important because preliminary evidence shows that Cambodians make up the largest group of non-Thai beggars in Bangkok, particularly among child beggars. A common assumption heard in anti-trafficking policy circles is that these children are trafficked and forced to beg by transnational begging gangs.

¹⁹ Anti-Slavery International, 2003, Page 3.

²⁰ For more details see http://www.iom.int/en/who/main_policies_trafficking.shtml

Between October 1, 1996 and July 31, 1997, 530 foreign child beggars were removed from the streets and sent to detention centers in Thailand. Approximately 504 of them were Cambodian.²¹ An ILO publication confirms this extremely high number: "...since 1997 the number of children caught begging illegally in Bangkok – 95% of them Cambodian – has more than doubled to 1,060."²²

A decade later, the numbers of Cambodian beggars caught by the Thai authorities has remained generally level. For the year 2005, Baan Raitipung reported receiving 515 Cambodians who had been involved with begging. This figure does not include the beggars who may have been sent to the IDC, Baan Kredtrakarn or Baan Phumvet.²³ Much of the prior research has focused on supporting the contention that many of these child beggars are forced into begging, controlled by national or transnational trafficking gangs, and are beaten²⁴, drugged²⁵, and/or mutilated to increase their earning power.²⁶ However, a review of existing reports combined with the findings of this research suggest that we should be cautious in accepting these facts as representative of the more general situation concerning child beggars in Bangkok.

Existing theories regarding human trafficking in general, and begging more specifically, appear to be based more on conclusions drawn from observations rather than factual evidence.²⁷ The 1998 report, *Combating the Trafficking in Children and their Exploitation in Prostitution and Other Intolerable Forms of Child Labour in Mekong Basin Countries*,²⁸ which is also the source document for many other studies, makes several references to begging gangs, but the evidence for their existence seems based only on observation: "...they are all found in small groups, most of whom are found being accompanied by the adults in the distance, appearing as if their businesses are organized into gangs."²⁸ The report also states without reference that "it is also true that children trafficking from Cambodia to Thailand are mostly abducted into the begging business."²⁹ Furthermore, although the report does provide some very interesting information and a fairly representative picture of the methods of recruitment and travel, the reported findings "generally cover a small number of interviews."³⁰

The assumption that 'gangs' control these children may be merely due to the lack of a more precise term to refer to these networks. Later in the same report, a reference is made to Ajayutpokin et al, and notes, "The networks of begging gangs of trafficking in Khmer children to Thailand is also small, operated by one or two persons. The agent who appears likely to be an elderly woman usually acting as a grandmother or a mother of the trafficked children. They stay together like a family but the children are forced to beg from dawn to midnight and are closely controlled by the agent that also begs in the same area" [sic].³¹

In truth, much confusion exists about what terminology should be used when referring to the 'traffickers' and this confusion may actually contribute to the use of the word 'gang' to describe all kinds of 'facilitators.' For example, in chapter 5 of the above report, 13 different terms are used to refer to the various actors in the trafficking process: "brokers", "export traffickers", "traffickers", "import traffickers", "facilitators", "sub-agents", "amateur sub-brokers", "trip managers", "guards", "sub-brokers", "travel arrangers", and "leaders."

21 Archavanitkul, 1998, Page 2.

22 ILO, *World of Work*, 1998.

23 Information provided by the staff of Ban Raitipung/MSDHS to the Friends International researcher.

24 For examples of children forced by beggar gangs and beaten see Pearson, E., 2005, p. 24 and *Asia Regional Cooperation to Prevent Human Trafficking*, 2003, p. 14

25 For examples of children that were drugged see *Asia Regional Cooperation to Prevent Human Trafficking*, 2003, p. 14 and Hudd, S. 2003, p. 12

26 For an example of children that were mutilated see ILO, *World of Work*, 1998.

27 Derks, Henke, Ly, 2006, p. 20

28 Archavanitkul, 1998, chapter 3, section 3.1.

29 Ibid., section 5.3.1

30 Ibid., chapter 2, section 2.3. Nowhere in the report does it state the actual number of children and women who were interviewed by Dr. Archavanitkul and her team.

31 Archavanitkul, 1998, 5.2.4, found at <http://www.seameo.org/vl/combat/frame.htm>

Furthermore, it may also be that media and donor attention on the issue of trafficking over the last decade has meant that the complex and multi-faceted issue of human trafficking, not only for begging, has been simplified in order to present clear, concise messages to the general public. Derks, Henke and Ly reiterate this finding in their review of current literature, saying that "...such an increase in attention can be easily confused with an increase in the forms or extent of the problem and, concomitantly, an increased need to counter it."³²

On the whole, much existing literature on child beggars appears to show a tendency to rely on secondary or tertiary data. For example, Tumlin states that "Cambodia also faces notably problems of children trafficked to enter begging gangs. About 500 Cambodian children – mostly boys – are known to work for begging gangs in Thailand, a phenomenon also surfacing in Myanmar." Tumlin adds that "...previously, these begging gangs functioned only in and around Bangkok, but child-begging gangs can now be found across the country."³³ Two references are provided for these statements, Cotterill (1996) and Berger and Van de Glind (1999). Berger and Van de Glind's report makes many references to the report of Archavanitkul³⁴ and also to Cotterill's report.³⁵ However, as the Cotterill report is not included in the bibliography of Berger and Van de Glind, it seems likely that this is a secondary citation from the Archavanitkul report (1998).

Although it is not apparent through the literature review, the findings of this current research suggest that patterns of trafficking and migration appear to have changed. When foreign beggar issues in Thailand first started to receive attention, trafficking of women and children for begging seemed to be the more likely scenario. However in recent times, improved and more widely accessible transportation and communication systems has greatly facilitated migrating to beg voluntarily.

Although the terms of reference for the current research were based on the assumption that begging gangs do exist, the researchers' findings suggest that the issue of child beggars is perhaps not that simple. Issues surrounding child beggars are very complex and often confusing. Instead, the findings are more in line with recent research that sees the issue of child beggars and human trafficking as being intertwined with and inseparable from migration issues.³⁶ Therefore, while it is important to identify cases of human trafficking, there are elements of migration policy that also need to be taken into consideration if a full understanding of the situation is to be achieved. Human trafficking and migration are interlinked and cannot be easily separated when considering cases of human trafficking.

Although the governments of Thailand and Cambodia, with the support of many other national and international agencies and organizations, are taking commendable measures to deal with the issue of the begging and human trafficking problem, there are clear difficulties caused by a lack of reasonably accurate statistics and blurred definitions. Without better information, the question of how to most effectively respond to the issue of foreign beggars cannot be fully answered.

In order for Thailand to coordinate and collaborate its efforts more effectively among government agencies, the RTG has developed four domestic Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) related to trafficking in persons. These MOUs provide operational guidelines for key ministries and relevant NGOs to provide assistance and protection to trafficked victims. Thailand has taken a multidisciplinary approach in which key professionals are convened to address individual cases. The multidisciplinary team usually consists of a police officer, social worker, attorney, translator and medical team.

The procedure in cases of a human trafficking case is as follows. Normally after a person has been rescued or arrested by the local police, a quick screening process is carried out to pre-determine whether the person is a trafficking victim. Often this process takes place at the RTG Immigration Detention

³² Derks, Henke, and Ly, p. 19

³³ Tumlin, p. 7 and 9.

³⁴ Berger and Van de Glind (1999) citing Archavanitkul, for example, page 7, page 8, page 32

³⁵ Berger and Van de Glind (1999) citing Cotterill, page 30

³⁶ Asian Research Centre for Migration (2004), Page 3,

Centre (IDC) or at a local police station. If the person is identified as a trafficking victim then s/he will be transferred to Baan Kredtrakarn or Baan Phumvet. Subsequently, the multidisciplinary team will complete the next step of victim identification and take other necessary measures such as arrest and prosecution of the perpetrator, if and when possible. In the case of children, if a female child is identified as victim of trafficking, she will be transferred to Baan Kredtrakarn. If the victim is a male child, he will be transferred to Baan Phumvet.

Baan Kredtrakarn provides accommodation and protection to both Thai and non-Thai women and girl victims of trafficking, and to Thai women who are victims of domestic abuse. The majority of the trafficking victims who are non-Thais at this shelter either escaped on their own, or were rescued from exploitative situations in domestic work, sex work, factory work, or as beggars. The shelter provides the women and girls with basic necessities as well as a variety of services such as counseling, a psycho-social recovery program, non-formal education, recreational and social activities, life skills education, vocational training, family tracing and assessment, repatriation and reintegration, and follow-up activities.

Baan Phumvet is a reception home that provides assistance and care to both Thai and non-Thai boys. Specifically, the home provides accommodation and protection to Thai boys between ages 6 and 18 who need welfare services, and also to foreign boys between ages 6 and 18 years who are victims of human trafficking. The shelter operates under the supervision of the BATWC.

Baan Raitipung is another shelter run by the MSDHS under the Bureau of Social Welfare Services. The main purpose of the shelter is to provide accommodation, basic necessities and other services such as family tracing, skills training, and job placement, to disadvantaged and poor Thais. The shelter accommodates people of both sexes and all ages. Recently, the shelter has begun to receive non-Thai persons and especially, Cambodian beggars who have not been identified as victims of trafficking. The non-Thai group is only temporarily housed at the shelter while awaiting return to Cambodia. The MSDHS runs several similar shelters throughout Bangkok and due to the limited capacity of each of the reception homes, some of the Cambodian beggars have been referred to shelters for the destitute in other areas around Bangkok.

3. The system in Thailand

Based on the provisions under the Control of Begging Act of 1937, the Thai government's method of dealing with beggars has been to remove them from public areas and provide them with support services such as temporary shelter, skill trainings, and employment assistance. In Bangkok, the RTG has designated the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) as responsible for providing the aforementioned services in cases where the beggar has Thai nationality and is not a victim of trafficking. However, the MSDHS has the lead on response to human trafficking, whether or not the victim(s) are Thai or from another country. Therefore, if the beggar is a not a Thai national and/or is a victim of human trafficking, they placed under the care of the MSDHS.

However, the 1937 Act and its support mechanisms were developed to address Thai beggar issues. It is a fact that in recent years there has been increased migration in the region, particularly from Cambodia to Thailand, because many Cambodians perceived Bangkok as having many more attractive economic opportunities. Since the existing Thai legal and operational mechanisms do not address the situation of foreign beggars, almost all who entered Thailand illegally, officers of the RTP and the IDC are obligated to arrest and deport them. But at the same time many foreign beggars have been identified as vulnerable migrants who are at risk of being victims of human trafficking. This issue is of primary concern to the MSDHS, which has been given the lead in the RTG for dealing with trafficking issues. Currently, the RTG is in the process of amending the Control of Begging Act of 1937, in order to provide protection to all beggars.

Once the Cambodian beggars were identified as a group at risk of human trafficking, the Royal Thai Government (RTG) decided to take measures to address the issue. Cambodian beggars are transferred to Baan Raitipung as a temporary solution while the RTG develops a more effective and longer-term strategy.

In November 2004, the MSDHS, working in close partnership with the local police and Juvenile Aid Sub-Division of the RTP, helped pick up 165 beggars. The majority were identified as Cambodian..

In the first instance, beggars are rounded-up by a “raid and rescue” team made up of MSDHS staff and local police. According to accounts from key informants interviewed by the researchers, the beggars are then either taken to police station where the police conduct preliminary screening³⁷ to identify potential victims or they are transported directly to Baan Raitipung/Nonthaburi Home for the Destitute where they are screened.³⁸ In both situations, those beggars who are identified as potential victims of human trafficking, and all unaccompanied children, are transferred to Baan Kredtrakarn or Baan Phumvet. At those shelters, they then undergo further screening to confirm that they have been accurately identified as victims.³⁹

For persons who are not identified victims of human trafficking, they are sent to Baan Raitipung/Nonthaburi Home for the Destitute. At Baan Raitipung, further screening is carried out to assess in more detail as to whether they might be victims of human trafficking. Because of a shortage of Khmer-language interpreters, the screening process is sometimes prevented from achieving full effectiveness and efficiency.⁴⁰ For beggars for whom initial screening is done at the local police station, interpretation services are usually provided by social workers from the MSDHS.⁴¹ If the person is identified as a trafficked victim, he or she will be transferred to either Baan Kredtrakarn or Baan Phumvet. In theory, the social worker responsible for that case then contacts the local police in the area where the victim was exploited so that follow up investigations can be conducted by the RTP.⁴²

Many beggars living at Baan Raitipung for more than a month expressed to the research team a strong sense of frustration and anger at not being allowed to go home to Cambodia. As the chief bread winners of their families, many of these persons had at least several children to care for back in Cambodia, and they worried about them. According to a report by the ILO, female household heads constituted 33% of the sampled households in Cambodia.⁴³ Furthermore, children comprised the majority of the sampled households at 60%.⁴⁴ Some beggars told the research team that their children were forced to borrow money in Cambodia to survive because they had been in the shelter for a month or more and were unable to work and therefore, not able to send any money home.

The IDC is a holding facility for illegal migrants who have been arrested and are awaiting deportation. The processes discussed here deal mainly with those classified as ‘illegal migrants’ who are arrested either by the Tourist Police or by local RTP officers, and then taken to the IDC.

Other Cambodian beggars and illegal migrants who do not end up in the one of the shelters above and are instead taken to the IDC are usually deported within less than a week to the Aranyaprathet-Poipet border checkpoint. While the research team observed that some Cambodian beggars at the IDC were children, most of them were either with their mothers or another accompanying adult. Decisions whether to

37 This information is based on personal observations of the UNIAP Thailand National Project Coordinator, Panadda Changmanee.

38 Khun Kasernsan Kongkaew, Social Development Officer 7, Bureau of Social Welfare Services, MSDHS, Bureau of Social Welfare Services.

39 Khun Ladda Benjatchah, Director of Kredtrakarn Protection and Occupational Development Center, Department of Social Development and Welfare, MSDHS

40 Khun Ladda Benjatchah, Director of Kredtrakarn Protection and Occupational Development Center, Department of Social Development and Welfare, MSDHS

41 Information provided by UNIAP Thailand NPC, Panadda Changmanee.

42 Khun Kasernsan Kongkaew, Social Development Officer 7, Bureau of Social Welfare Services, MSDHS

43 ILO, *The Mekong Challenge -- Destination Thailand: A cross-border labour migration survey in Banteay Meanchey Province, Cambodia*, p. 31

44 *Ibid.*, p. 26

transfer these children to Baan Raitipung, Baan Kredtrakarn, or Baan Phumvet were made on a case by case basis. Because the RTG excludes illegal migrants from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar from prosecution, the RTP has the authority to simply deport them forthwith from the IDC.⁴⁵

A special anti-trafficking unit is organized within the IDC that is assisted by NGOs such as Maryknoll, AFESIP and the Foundation for Women, to screen primarily women and children who are thought to be victims of trafficking. If they are actually identified as victims of trafficking, the victims at IDC will then be transferred to Baan Kredtrakarn or Baan Phumvet. Sometimes as a result of screening, mothers and their children who identified as vulnerable migrants or potential victims are transferred to the Baan Raitipung. All the other men, women and children at IDC are deported on a regular basis to the border.

4. The system in Cambodia

The RCG, until recently, had designated the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MOSAVY) as the focal ministry for human trafficking issues. Currently, the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) is the focal ministry on human trafficking in Cambodia and both ministries work in close collaboration on human trafficking issues. At the local level, the Department of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth (DSAVY) is responsible for implementation of national human trafficking policy. In Poipet, some DSAVY staff has been assigned to work at the Poipet Transit Center (PTC). The International Organization for Migration (IOM) provides staff, technical assistance, and financial support to the PTC.

Currently there are three different types of groups who are being returned to Cambodia via the Aranyaprathet – Poipet border: victims of human trafficking; beggars/vulnerable migrants, and illegal migrants. Needless to say, there is frequently overlap between these three groups.

a. Return and Reception of Trafficked Victims

All victims of trafficking are repatriated via the IOM/MOSAVY Return and Repatriation Project in coordination with the MSDHS. Victims are transferred from Bangkok to the PTC where their case is assessed by a case worker before the victim is either reintegrated into their community or referred to one of the 18 partner NGOs of the PTC. The NGOs provide services to the returnees, involving recovery, education, and training. The table below shows the number of victims assisted by this process over the past three years. The statistics were provided by the Coordination Database Center, MOSAVY.

⁴⁵ Pol. Lt. Col. Chamnan Thanad-nangsue, Immigration Detention Center, Royal Thai Police



Photo © The Mirror Foundation

Box 1

	2003	2004	2005
Total number of victims	120	151 (34% begging, 13% street sellers)	183 (38% begging, 15% street sellers)
Number of victims who were beggars	47 (39% of total)	51 (34% of total)	70 (38% of total)
Number of victims who were street sellers	26 (22% of total)	20 (13% of total)	27 (15% of total)

b. Return and Reception of Cambodian Beggars from Baan Raitipung

Since early 2005 the MSDHS and the MOSAVY, with assistance from IOM, have made progress in extending services (such as more regular return processes) to ‘at risk’ voluntary migrants as well as trafficked victims at the PTC. The Governments have contributed to the return of at least 73 Cambodian women with babies through the PTC. From June 21 to December 2005, the UNIAP assisted both Governments in returning a total of 216 Cambodian adults and child beggars to Poipet on four separate occasions, and since that time, both governments have continued their efforts to return Cambodians to their homes.

During the four occasions when UNIAP provided support to the Governments it was observed by UNIAP Thailand staff that returnees sent to the PTC were quickly received by the staff and screened at the centre. Those who came from areas near Poipet were often either picked up by relatives or immediately accompanied home by PTC staff. Those from other provinces were housed overnight at the PTC while waiting to be accompanied by PTC staff back to their home towns.

The research team observed a different reception process for Cambodian beggars who were returned to the border from Baan Raitipung. As was previously noted, these returnees are not technically considered to be human trafficking victims. When beggars from the Baan Raitipung are sent back to Cambodia, they are met by Poipet DSAVY office staff, which operates separately from the DSAVY staff in the PTC. The Poipet DSAVY then refers any cases which may need intervention of assistance to the PTC. IOM and the DSAVY staff from the PTC are not involved in this process. Following the interviews

and assessments, the beggars are either sent home or accompanied to their home province by a Poipet DSAVY officer if they live outside of Banteay Meanchey province. No further services or follow up is provided to the beggars returned from Baan Raitipung.

c. Return and Reception of Beggars and Illegal Migrants from IDC

On average there are deportations of Cambodians from IDC Bangkok to the Aranyaprathet – Poipet Border several times per week. The researchers observed that deportees were simply dropped off at the Thai-Cambodian border and then escorted by the Cambodian police across the border to a police station where their names are formally recorded. After this formality is completed, all the deportees were released to go home, or wherever they wished to go. At this time, the Cambodian Children and Handicap Development Organization (CCHDO), a Cambodian NGO, waits at the border to “re-screen” the deportees in the event that any of them might be victims of trafficking who were not identified as such at the IDC. The CCHDO estimates that approximately 580 children are deported from Thailand every month.⁴⁶ When comparing information received from the IDC staff for the years 2003 and 2004⁴⁷ with the above-mentioned CCHDO estimate, the research team computes that children represent slightly more than 30% of the total number of deportees from the IDC. The research team learned in a telephone interview with Chamroeun Vireak, the Project Manager of CCHDO, that most of these 580 children are accompanied by an adult, and he added that between 5 to 10 unaccompanied children are interviewed by CCHDO per month.

5. Cooperation between Thailand and Cambodia

Both the Thai and Cambodian Governments have clear policies to address the issue of human trafficking, and have committed to collaborate in combating trafficking in all its myriad aspects.

Specifically, in 2003, Thailand and Cambodia signed an MOU on Bilateral Cooperation for Eliminating Trafficking in Children and Women and Assisting Victims of Trafficking. This MOU sets the groundwork for collaborative approaches in combating human trafficking. However, key aspects of the operation and implementation of the MOU is still in progress. An action plan under the MOU was developed and negotiated between the two sides, and agreed, and special Task Forces (a national Thai Task Force and a national Cambodian Task Force) were created to oversee the implementation of the plan. Furthermore, series of workshops took place in 2006 to discuss different aspects of the action plan such as developing Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for return and reintegration, cooperation in prosecution of traffickers, and other matters.

Cambodia and Thailand also signed a MOU on Cooperation in the Employment of Workers in May 2003, which takes a ‘migration management’ approach and could be used to facilitate the development of long-term solutions to migration. This MOU, which sets out the terms and conditions for legal entry of migrant workers from Cambodia to Thailand, is a significant effort to expand avenues for safe migration, thus theoretically reducing opportunities for traffickers and increasing protection of victims. However, since begging is outside the realm of formal employment, it is not clear that this MOU will have any significant impact on the target group of this study.

More recently, Cambodia and Thailand were among the six GMS countries that signed the regional MOU devised through the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT) process. Among other things, this MOU obligates the signatory Governments to “create mechanisms to strengthen regional cooperation and information exchange”, to “strengthen cross-border cooperation in law enforcement”, and to “ensure cross-border cooperation in the safe return of trafficked persons.”

46 CCHDO Deportation Statistics in 2004 - 2005

47 The IDC staff informed the research team that 23,547 persons were sent back to the Cambodian border in 2003, and 21,658 were sent in 2004.

IV. Research Area 1: Background of Cambodian Child Beggars

Research in this area aims to provide data and analysis on the profiles of Cambodian beggars, with a specific focus on child beggars.

This section provides background information of Cambodian child beggars, based on data collected mainly from child beggars interviewed at Baan Phumvet, Baan Kredtrakarn and Baan Raitipung.

SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS

- High percentage of children come to beg with their mothers or other relatives
- Travel arrangements and living conditions suggest that begging gangs are not involved as previously thought
- The majority of beggars claim they originate from Poipet commune
- There is no preference in terms of the sex of the child for the begging business

A. Location of Cambodians in shelters

Data was gathered for all 182 Cambodian nationals who were placed in the three main MSDHS-run shelters (Baan Kredtrakarn, Baan Phumvet and Baan Raitipung) during the research period. Among these 182 people, 165 were children and 17 were female adults. The table below provides a breakdown of the placement of these children and women in the three shelters.

Box 2

Children under 18 years of age

Shelters	Child beggars and street sellers (all under 18)	Other categories of children under 18	Total
Baan Phumvet	30	11	41
Baan Kredtrakarn	8	14	22
Baan Raitipung	102	0	102
Total	140	25	165

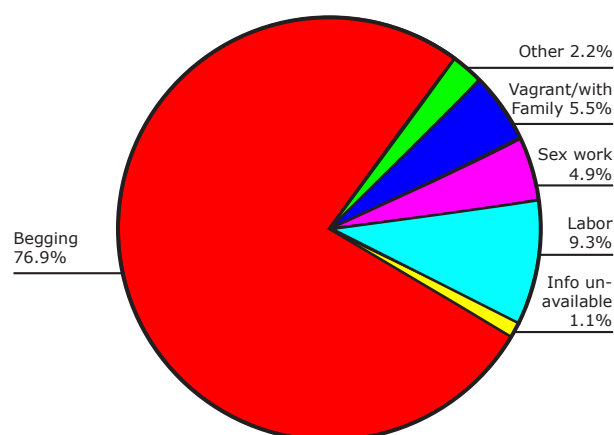
All Cambodians in shelters during research period (excludes mothers of children in Baan Raitipung)

Shelters	Children (under 18)	Over 18s 'rescued' from other sectors	Total
Baan Phumvet	41	4	45
Baan Kredtrakarn	22	13	35
Baan Raitipung	102	0	102
Total	165	17	182

B. Reasons for placement in shelters

Chart 1

Reason for placement in shelters (all ages)



Out of these 182 people, begging is clearly a major income-generating activity. A total of 140 (76.9%) persons were placed in shelters because they had been begging or selling flowers or candies on the streets of Bangkok or elsewhere. Another 17 persons (9.3%) were placed in shelters after they were apprehended from workplaces in the construction, farming or fishing sectors, and nine people (4.9%) were found in work places involving sex work. A total of 10 persons (5.5%) were detained after they were found accompanying their families who had family members working as undocumented migrants. Finally, four persons (2.2%) were found performing other occupations including housework, washing cars, and working in a bar. Clearly there is a varied assortment of work which is undertaken by Cambodian migrants in Thailand's cities.

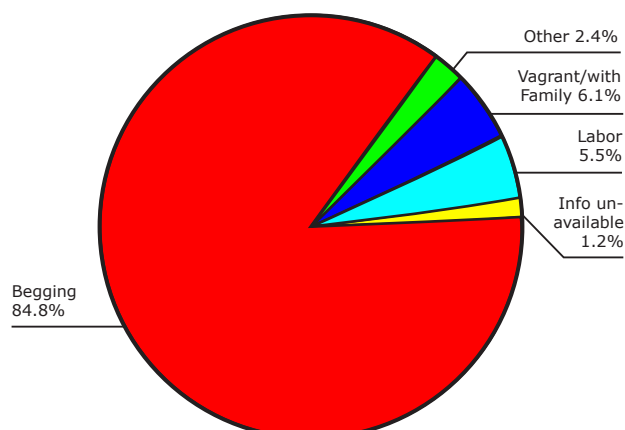
C. Number of children in each shelter and reason for placement

Box 3

Shelters	Child beggars and street sellers (under 18)	Others Categories of Children under 18	Total
Baan Phumvet	30	11	41
Baan Kredtrakarn	8	14	22
Baan Raitipung	102	0	102
Total	140	25	165

Chart 2

Reason for placement in shelters (Under 18)

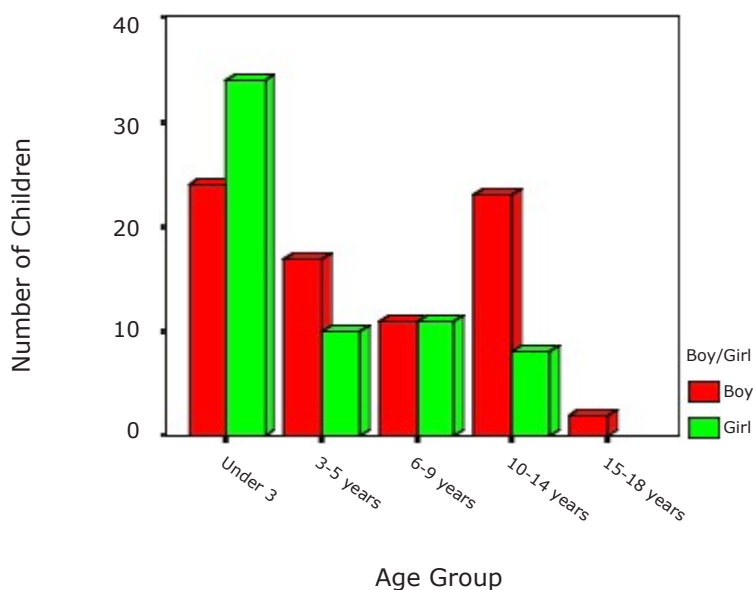


Researchers found that 140 (84.8%) children were begging, or selling flowers or candies, when they were placed in the shelters. Another 10 (6.1%) children reported that they were not working, and that they were arrested at the same time as their parents who were working illegally in Thailand. A further nine (5.5%) children were working in various sectors including farm work, construction, car washing and housekeeping; and finally four (2.4%) children were classified as ‘Other’ but in reality were picked up for stealing and/or selling drugs. The researchers could not get information on two children in the target group, so that information is missing. The reason is one of the children was a baby born to a woman while she was at Baan Kredtrakarn, and the other was a five year old boy who claimed he did not know what he had been doing and so therefore could not answer.

As has been already noted, the placement of children in the various shelters is not necessarily linked to being identified as a trafficked victim. Those children placed at Baan Raitipung are almost always with their mother or another accompanying adult. Children placed in Baan Kredtrakarn or Baan Phumvet may either be identified victims of trafficking, unaccompanied children, or children who are thought to be unaccompanied because they have been accidentally separated from their mother or other accompanying adult during the raid/rescue processes. For children placed in Baan Kredtrakarn or Baan Phumvet but not identified as victims of trafficking, it is clear that the Thai government is trying to safeguard their rights under the CRC. While the decision has been taken by the RTG to place unaccompanied children in shelters with greater access to care than Baan Raitipung, it remains unclear what services should be provided to this group of children.

D. Age of Cambodian child beggars and sellers in shelters

Chart 3



Out of the 140 children (77 male, 63 female) placed in shelters after being found begging, selling flowers or candies, the largest group is babies/toddlers (a total of 58) of both sexes under the age of 3. In the 10-14 age group there were 23 boys compared with only 8 girls. Interestingly, there are no girls above the age of 15 and only two boys above the age of 15. From the above data, it can be concluded that Cambodian child beggars generally range in age from 0-15 years old, lending weight to a hypothesis that older children leave the begging line of work and seek other employment once they reach a certain age.

Box 4

	Which shelter is the child in?			
Age group	Baan Raitipung	Baan Phumvet	Baan Kredtrakarn	Total
Under 3	58	0	0	58
3-5 years	22	5	1	28
6-9 years	14	5	2	21
10-14 years	8	18	5	31
15-18 years	0	2	0	2
Total	102	30	8	140

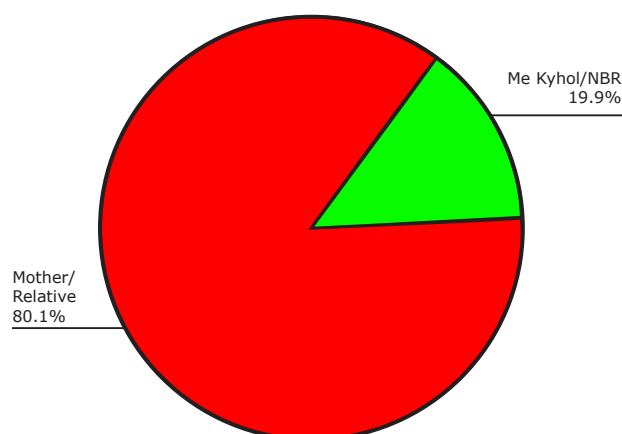
All of the babies and toddlers under the age of 3, which constitute 41% of the entire sample, were accommodated in the Baan Raitipung. The researchers found that almost all of them were with their biological mothers. Only one baby was found not to be with the biological mother (see Case Study 2 *Kohn Jenh Joem*, page 14). The information also shows that children between the ages of 3-5 are mostly staying at Baan Raitipung, again with their mothers. Only 6 children (5 boys, 1 girl) of this age group were housed in the other shelters and just 8 girl beggars were placed in Baan Kredtrakarn.

Many Cambodian families (like those living in the Poipet area, where most beggars are from) tend to have three or more children.⁴⁸ If the mother decides to migrate to Bangkok to beg she can usually only take one or two children of her children with her. Based on the interviews with ten Cambodian women beggars by the UNIAP Thailand National Project Coordinator on March 8, 2005, it was seen that usually women will decide to take the youngest child as she/he is the one who is the most dependent on the parents. This trend is consistent with the findings of this research in which the majority of child beggars are under 5 years old. Another reason for bringing the youngest children is that people are more likely to donate to very young children, and therefore the children are an effective begging tool.

E. Persons accompanying child beggars

Chart 4

Who did you beg with?



The chart above shows the number of the 140 children begging, selling flowers or candies that came with their mother or another relative (including father, aunt, uncle, brothers and sisters) versus those that came with either a *Me Kyhol* or a non-blood relative. 112 (80.1%) children came with their biological mothers or relatives while 28 (19.9%) children came with a *Me Kyhol* or 'non-blood relative'.⁴⁹ However, the research team believes that the difficulties in interviewing the children combined with the common usage of titles like aunt, uncle, brother, and sister for non-blood relatives may mean that the percentage of children actually accompanied by blood relatives may actually be lower than indicated here.⁵⁰

It may also be that the *Me Kyhol* is more of a 'facilitator', 'caretaker' or 'job agent' rather than 'trafficker' in the sense that the children were forced or tricked.⁵¹ These figures do show, however, that the large majority of children are coming with someone they know, and not with begging gangs or traffickers. Furthermore, five of the accompanying adults (all mothers to the accompanied child) told the research team that their husbands had accompanied them to Thailand to work in other sectors such as construction or farming. A further eight adults (again all biological mothers) said that other relatives, notably older children, were working in other sectors in Thailand. Two of the adults said they were married to Thai men and one adult stated that 4 of her 8 children were actually born in Thailand.⁵²

48 Integrated Vocational Training and Income Generation Research Project, ZOA Refugee Care/Poipet and the IOM, 2003, p. 11

49 Given the importance of these statistics to the report findings, the research team was diligent in collecting this data and cross-checked it by asking accompanying adults, other mothers detained in the shelters, shelter staff and the IOM translator/interpreter.

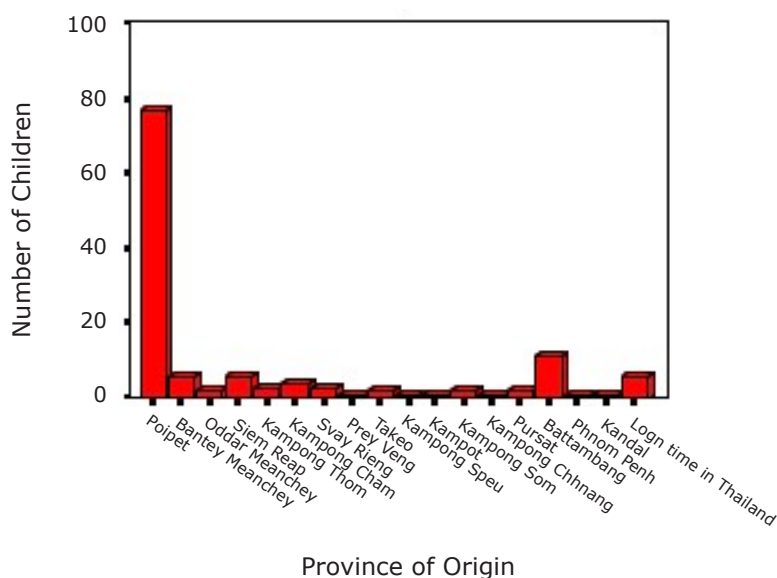
50 Also see Derks, Henke and Ly, 2006, p. 24 for more information on this subject

51 Both of these problems were highlighted in Chapter 1.

52 This figure is probably much higher than indicated here. FI is currently carrying out a needs assessment among the mothers in Ban Raitipung which should shed more light on this issue.

F. Origin of Cambodian beggars in Cambodia and transit

Chart 5



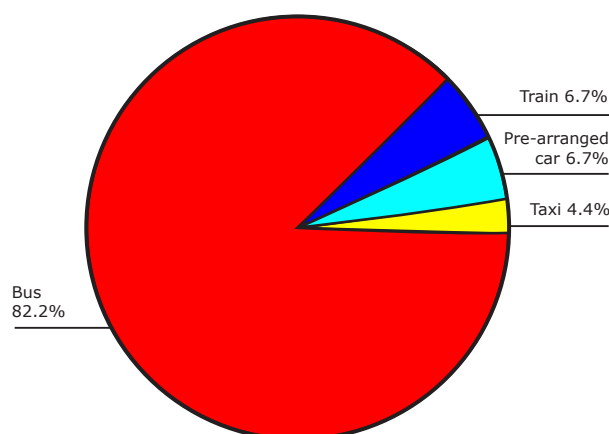
The graph above shows the Cambodian province of origin for the 140 child beggars.⁵³ It is clear that the majority of the child beggars come from Poipet (77 children) or elsewhere in the province of Banteay Meanchey (6 children). In total, these two points of origin account for 59.3% of the children surveyed. Another 11 children came from Battambang, with 6 children originated in Siem Reap. Clearly, Northwest Cambodia is the major source area for these child beggars. Although the other provinces of Cambodia represent very small numbers of children, it is interesting to note that the geographical spread goes as far as Prey Veng and Svay Rieng provinces (close to the Cambodia- Vietnam border) and over to Kampot and Kompong Som on the southern coast of Cambodia. Quite clearly, the economic enticements of working in Thailand are strong enough to draw Cambodians from all over the country to Bangkok. Rounding out the sample were 6 children who told researchers they had been so long in Thailand that they could not remember where their hometown in Cambodia was.

One important point to add is connected to the survey design and interpretation. The survey found that the majority of children responded that they originate from somewhere in Banteay Meanchey province. Migrants from further inside Cambodia often must transit Banteay Meanchey to go to Thailand. The research team therefore notes that there is a possibility that some of these children might have lived in Banteay Meanchey for a short period of time only, having previously migrated from their home province.

⁵³ This includes information on the children under the age of 3 which was collected either from the accompanying adult or from shelter staff.

Chart 6

Mode of Transportation from the Border



The research team notes that 140 children were included in the information collection effort, but since a number of children were under the age of 3, they could not answer any or all of the questions. Among the children who were old enough to answer questions, not all children answered each question. In each case, the research team notes the number of children that answered the question being analyzed.

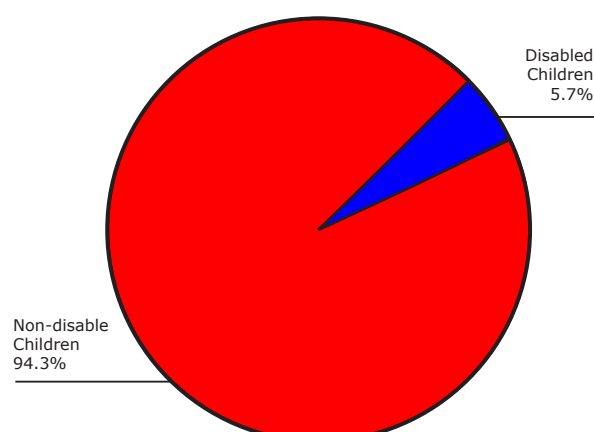
Out of the 45 children who answered a question on transportation into Thailand, 37 (82.2%) said they traveled from the border by bus. A total of 9 (21.6%) children who came by bus reported they traveled to Mochit bus terminal in Bangkok, while another 16 (35.1%) children said they took the bus to Rangsit District in Pathum Thani province (north of Bangkok). A small number of respondents said they came by train, pre-arranged car or taxi. From this information, the research team feels it is possible to draw the conclusion that many child beggars are using the public bus as the preferred means for transportation from the Cambodian-Thai border.

The researchers conducted a cross-tabulation of who accompanied the child while traveling and what mode of transport was taken from the border. The results showed there is a slightly higher chance that if the child came with a *Me Kyhol* or 'non-blood relative', the transport used from the border would be a pre-arranged car, rather than the bus. This suggests that *Me Kyhol* or 'non-blood relative' may be setting up their transportation arrangements in advance, in order to avoid public transport.

A total of 32 children stated that 'facilitation fees' had been paid to someone near the border by the accompanying adult. It may have been that this was simply the border pass fee (10 baht) or it may have been something more, such as fees paid to a *Me Kyhol* to facilitate the border crossing. Some children said that the fees/bribes were paid to border officials.

G. Children with disabilities/begging with disabled adults

Chart 7



Prior research reported that some children are purposely mutilated or drugged in order to gain more sympathy whilst begging. The assumption is that these children are more pitiful, and therefore able to garner more donations.⁵⁴ Among the 140 children in the shelters who had been begging, a total of 8 (5.7%) children were either physically or mentally disabled to some degree. Two children were found with *Encephalocele*, a rare disorder in which an infant is born with a gap in the skull and the brain protrudes through this gap. The other children were found to have had polio, or to have missing limbs or digits. None of these 8 children reported that the disability had been purposely inflicted upon them. The research team investigated and found that the physical evidence tends to support the children's contentions.

It is also worth noting that seven other children (not disabled) were found begging with adults with disabilities. A total of six of these children accompanied blind men, and one accompanied/guided an adult with Down Syndrome.

Box 5

	Children with mother or relative	Children with <i>Me Kyhol</i> or 'Non-Blood Relative'	Total
Disabled child	3	5	8
Child with disabled adult	4	3	7
Total	7	8	15

Five of the disabled children came with a *Me Kyhol* or 'non-blood relative.' Three of them came with one of their parents or another relative. Out of the children that journeyed with disabled adults, four of them were with one of their parents or a relative, and three were with a *Me Kyhol* or 'non-blood relative'. The three children with the *Me Kyhol* all stated that the disabled adult was a friend of one of their parents. In most cases, it was found that the person was a friend of the father, who the children reported was also blind. All eight children with a *Me Kyhol* said that the consent of their parent(s) had been given for them to come to Bangkok to beg.

While it is a limited pool of respondents, these findings nevertheless suggest that children are not commonly mutilated in order to beg, but that disabled children and adults are used as 'tools' to attract more sympathy and money from passers-by.

⁵⁴ See literature review, chapter 1.

V. Research Area 2: Day-to-Day Lives of Cambodian Child Beggars

Previous reports have raised many issues about the day-to-day lives of Cambodian child beggars. Among the findings of those reports were statements that child beggars are not happy begging because they are forced to do so, most beggars are not allowed to keep their earnings, beggars do not have control over their working hours, and that beggars were locked up in their accommodation when they are not working. The research presented in this section further explores these issues and sheds new light on past findings.

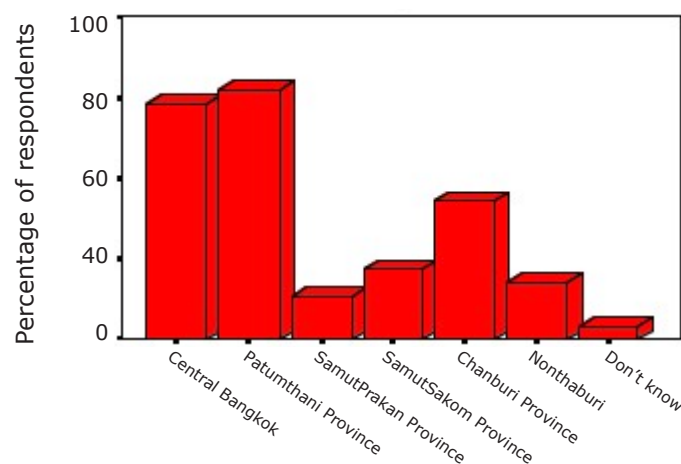
SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS

- Most beggars have control over their hours, earnings and accommodation.
- Areas frequented by foreign tourists are not necessarily the most lucrative areas for beggars.
- Begging can be perceived as more profitable than working in Cambodia or working as a legal migrant in Bangkok.
- Child beggars are generally satisfied about begging, but view it as a temporary occupation.

A. Locations where begging takes place

Chart 8

Where do you work?

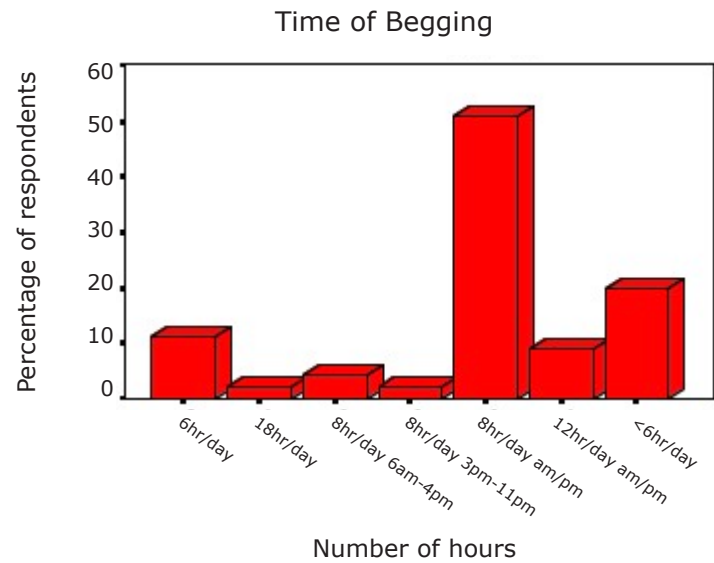


Where do you work?

A total of 58 children provided information on where they begged. The answers show that Cambodian children beg in a wide variety of locations, covering much of the Greater Bangkok area. The answers are also surprising because except for spots in Central Bangkok and Pattaya (Chonburi Province), the areas where children beg are not commonly frequented by tourists or foreigners living and working in Bangkok. This finding goes against the common assumption that beggars go to Bangkok because they are targeting tourists. None of the 58 children said they were dropped off at their begging location by any sort of boss or influential person, and left to beg in that location.

B. Times of the day during which beggars are active

Chart 9



A total of 45 children answered the question focusing on what time they begged each day. The times varied enormously, but the most common times were during the morning and evening rush hours (i.e. when people are on their way to work and leaving work). Most child beggars worked about 8 hours per day, with a few reporting 12 hour work days, and only one child working 18 hours a day.

A cross-tabulation between times of begging and who the child was with shows that there is a slightly higher chance that if the child was with a *Me Kyhol* or ‘non-blood relative’ that the child would beg from 18:00-02:00 hrs. The only child who said he had to work 18 hours a day was with his mother, and he reported a work day starting at 6:00 a.m. and continuing until midnight.

C. Earnings of beggars

Chart 10



A total of 53 children answered how much they earned on a daily basis. The graph above shows the responses, indicating that daily earnings range from a low of 100 baht to a high of 2000 baht. Interestingly, 12 (22.6%) children, a fairly significant number, said they earned between 251-300 baht per day. Another 10 (18.9%) children stated they earned between 751-1000 baht per day, and 2 (3.8%) children said they earned over 1000 baht per day. To put these wages in perspective, it is worth considering that even the lowest level earnings (100 baht per day) is considered to be a very good daily wage in Cambodia. Of course, the cost of living Thailand is higher, but it is not so high as to deter Cambodians from coming to Bangkok to beg.

Two (3.8%) children said that they were paid a monthly wage of around 1,500 baht, but the person they begged with (in both cases, a disabled adult) kept all of the earnings garnered on the street. These two children were classified in the “Other” category of the graph.

All of these children were begging with an adult. Very few of the children were actually in charge of the earnings, so it was difficult for them to know how the money was spent. Some of the mothers in the Baan Raitipung provided assistance to researchers to calculate an idea of daily spending.

Following the assumption that beggars target tourists, it could be expected that children earned the largest amounts would be in areas where there are many tourists. However, this is not necessarily the case. A child beggar reported that s/he earned 1,501 to 2,000 baht while begging in Sanam Luang. Meanwhile, other beggars earned between 751-100 per day while begging in Central Bangkok, Pathum Thani Province, and Pattaya. To summarize, the researchers found that there is no significant correlation between location and amount of earnings.

The 15 children who were either disabled children, or begging with a disabled adult, tended to be at the higher end of the earnings scale, with nine (60%) of these children earning 500 baht or more per day.

This section provides a comparison of the relative economic viability of begging vs. working in Thailand with the legal work permit at the minimum wage. The report further makes a comparison with average monthly income and expenditures of a household in Banteay Meanchey Province.

D. Incomes in Cambodia

Based on the ILO's figures, 56% of the households surveyed earned 120,000 Riel (30 USD) a month or less (US\$1 = 4,000 Riel) and 46% had a monthly expenditures of 120,000 Riel or less. This shows that the majority in the aforementioned income bracket are unable to save any money. The report further highlighted that most households (85%) reported not having enough rice for the family's consumption all year. In particular, the report showed that people from O'Chrov District, which contains Poipet

commune, where most of the beggars reported as their place of origin, reported that 83% of households in this area do not have enough rice for year-round consumption. This lack of food was the primary reason given for why someone in the family migrated for work.⁵⁵

E. Begging in Bangkok – Cost comparison with incomes in Cambodia, and working at minimum wage in Bangkok

The following case study was recorded by the research team during informal interviews with women in Baan Raitipung. The information provides an idea of the average earnings and expenditures for a Cambodian family of four. As the research team found out, it is not unusual for the mother to be begging with her children while the father engages in other work, usually illegally.

Case Study 3 -- DAILY EXPENDITURE: Woman, 35 years old, begging with two children, aged 6 and 3 years old

Her parents died when she was 10. She lived with her brother for 9 years. She has 2 children, Da, a girl of 6 years old and Roit, a boy of 3 years old.

While begging with her children, she earns 300 baht per day. Her rent is 1,200 baht per month. Electricity and water cost and extra 1,000 baht. Her new 'husband' earns 4,000 baht per month selling chickens in a market in Bangkok. They spend about 200 baht per day for 4 people on food. Every day they spend 32 baht on transport.

The first time she came to Thailand (many years ago), she worked as a domestic worker. She paid a *Me Kyhol* to get her that job (3,000 baht), and was introduced to the person by her neighbor knew the *Me Kyhol*. At that time, her children stayed in Poipet with her older sister. She was arrested and sent to the IDC for one week then sent back to Cambodia for about 6 months.

When she came back this time, she bought a day border pass for 10 baht. She then went into the forest to hide from the police for a few hours.

In 2004, the RTG opened a short registration period for illegal migrants from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar. The initial period for registration to take place was for three months. The RTG re-opened the registration in March 2005 for a one month period. The first part of the registration process involves obtaining a 13 digit migrant identification card from the Ministry of Interior (MOI). This card allows the migrant to stay in Thailand for a period of one year but limits their movement to the province in which they registered. The second part of the process is obtaining a work permit, which allows the migrant to work legally with a registered employer. The employer must act as a guarantor for the migrant worker. The total cost of the work permit for one full year is 3,800 baht. This fee includes 600 baht for a health exam, 1,300 baht for health insurance, 100 baht for the application fee, and 1,800 baht for a one year work permit.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ ILO, *A cross-border labor migration survey in Banteay Meanchey Province, Cambodia*, 2005, p. 32

⁵⁶ This is assuming that no other 'fees' are paid. One migrant worker recently reported that he paid 4,500 baht for these documents. For more information, please see www.phamit.org

Box 6

Cost-Benefit Analysis of Working in Cambodia vs. Begging in Bangkok vs. Working Legally in Bangkok at Minimum Wage

Working in Cambodia	Begging in Bangkok*	Working Legally in Bangkok at Minimum Wage*
<p>Monthly Income 56% of households in Banteay Meanchey earn 120,000 Riel= USD 30 or less</p> <p>Monthly Expenditures 46% of households in Banteay Meanchey spend 120,000 Riel=USD 30</p> <p>Profit As was explained in the paragraph above, most households do not have any extra money left over at the end every month.</p>	<p>Monthly Income 300 baht per day in earnings x 30 days = 9,000 baht per month (This figure is a rough estimate based on the chart above which shows that highest number of beggars earned between 251-500 Baht per day. Furthermore, 300 Baht was the amount of daily earnings most quoted by beggars who were informally interviewed by the research team.) Husband earns 4000 baht per month working as an illegal construction worker (This figure is based on information obtained from Mr. Sompong Srakaew, Director of the Labor Rights Protection Network) Total monthly income = 13,000 baht (USD 325)</p> <p>Monthly Expenditures Border pass for 4 people (@10 baht each) = 40 baht Transport to Bangkok for 4 people (@500 baht each) = 2000 baht 1,200 rent per month. 1,000 electricity and water per month 200 baht per day on food (mother, father + 2 children) = 6000 32 Baht per day on transport = 960 (All above figures are based on estimates given by beggars when informally interviewed by the research team) Total Monthly expenditure = 11,200</p> <p>Monthly Expenditures for the Following Months 1200 rent per month 1000 electricity and water per month 200 baht per day on food (mother, father and 2 children) = 6000 32 Baht per day on transport = 960 Total Monthly expenditure = 9160</p> <p>Profit Profit after 1 month=1,800 Profit after 2 months=3,840</p>	<p>Some assumptions that have been built into this case profile include: 1) the family initially enters into Thailand illegally 2) there were no other ‘fees’ involved in the border crossing or travel to Bangkok 3) both husband and wife each need a work permit and 4) the family has no other expenses than the ones listed below</p> <p>Monthly Income 184 Baht per day (legal minimum wage in Thailand) x 24 days/month x 2 persons = 8,832baht Total monthly income = 8,832baht</p> <p>Monthly Expenditures for the First Month Work Permit (3,800 Baht) x 2 persons= 7600 Baht (Please note that this a one time expenditure) Border pass for 4 people (@10 baht each) = 40 baht Transport to Bangkok for 4 people (@500 baht each) = 2000 baht 1200 rent per month. 1000 electricity and water per month 200 baht per day on food (mother, father and 2 children) = 6000 32 Baht per day on transport = 960 Total Monthly expenditure = 18,800 Baht</p> <p>Monthly Expenditures for the Following Months 1200 rent per month 1000 electricity and water per month 200 baht per day on food (mother, father and 2 children) = 6000 32 Baht per day on transport = 960 Total Monthly expenditure = 9160</p> <p>Profit Profit after 1 month= -9,968 Baht Profit after 2 months= -328 Baht</p>

*based on case study provided above

- The cost-benefit analysis shows that begging is one of the most lucrative options and economically feasible options available to Cambodian migrants unless they are arrested or placed in government shelters. This is borne out by the comparison above which shows a significant difference between income in Banteay Meanchey and Bangkok. An estimated calculation shows that income derived from working illegally, including begging, in Bangkok is roughly 10 times higher than working in Cambodia. Begging is perceived by Cambodians as one of the most profitable options but it must be noted that this perception holds true only as long as the beggars are not arrested by Thai authorities. Being held in a shelter deprives beggars of the opportunity to earn income, potentially for as long as several months, and can result in increased debt in Cambodia if the beggar took out loans to come to Thailand and cannot repay them in a timely manner with remittances. If deported, the migrant beggar will also have to make additional financial out-lays if s/he wishes to return to Thailand.
- Begging is a viable option for unskilled mothers with young children
- The average income of 9000 baht for a woman, who begs for one month, is more than the combined monthly income of 8,832 baht for two legal migrants receiving minimum wage.
- Based on the above figures, the expenditures incurred from the work permit and travel costs would likely be prohibitively expensive for a potential migrant family unless they had a least 10,000 Baht in savings before migrating to Thailand. Furthermore, even in the following months, the monthly expenditures incurred by a family of four would still exceed their monthly income by more than 400 baht. In the best case scenario (i.e. if the mother or father was able to make some extra money), the family would perhaps be able to break even for the month.
- If the woman is arrested after one month of begging and taken with her children to Baan Raitipung where she is housed for three months (this duration was obtained from informal interviews with beggars on the streets and in Baan Raitipung, and is considered realistic), then she must live on 600 baht per month. It is also likely that she has other children or family dependants back home to whom she has sent some or all of her profits already. If she has many children back home, they will have to borrow money to pay for food until she is released and able to return to Cambodia. Thus, she ends up in an even worse situation than when she first set out to make some money.
- This cost-benefit analysis shows that in spite of the risks of being arrested and placed in a shelter for a couple of months, based on the above figures, a potential migrant could be more inclined to become an illegal beggar instead of a legal migrant worker.

The following are some of example case studies which help show the daily expenditures of beggars.

Case Study 4 -- DAILY EXPENDITURE: Woman, 29 years old, begging with 1 baby girl

I paid 800 Baht from Cambodia to get here. Renting a room costs 1,500 Baht/month but I live with someone else so we pay 750 Baht/person. I spend 80-100 Baht/day on food. I get 400 Baht/day from begging. I go to beg from 07.00 to 09.00 and 13.00 to 16.00. I got there by bus cost 7 Baht (from Samrong to Pratunam Park)

Case Study 5 -- DAILY EXPENDITURE: Woman, 25 years old, begging with 2 year old daughter

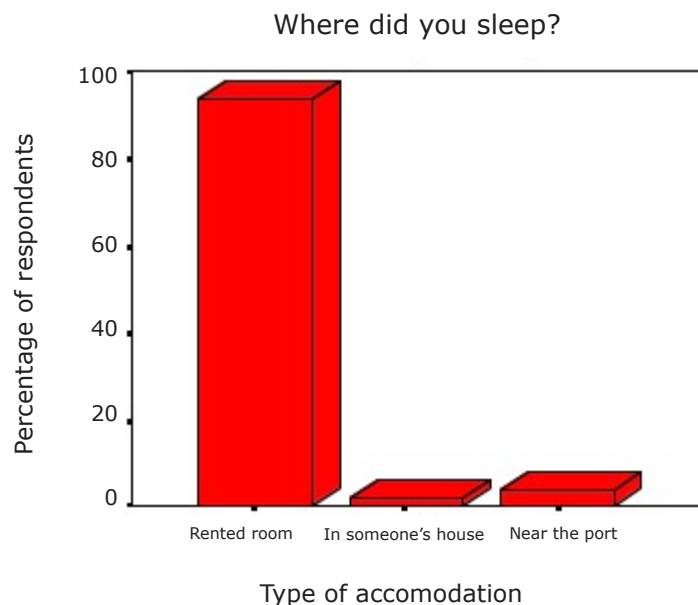
I rent a room cost 30 baht/day at Don Muang, and this cost includes electricity and water. I spend 80 baht/day for food .I get profit of about 500 baht/day, and I go to beg from 05.00 to 08.00 and 16.00 to 20.00.

Case Study 6 -- DAILY EXPENDITURE: Woman, 34 years old, begging with 3 year old daughter

I spent 500 baht to get here. My rented room costs 700 baht/ month, and includes electricity and water. Breakfast costs 80 baht (for 3 persons -- my husband, me and my child) and lunch costs 50 Baht (for 2 persons -- my daughter and me). I do not pay for dinner because I have some food already. I earn about 700 baht/day., and my husband also works around here in construction.

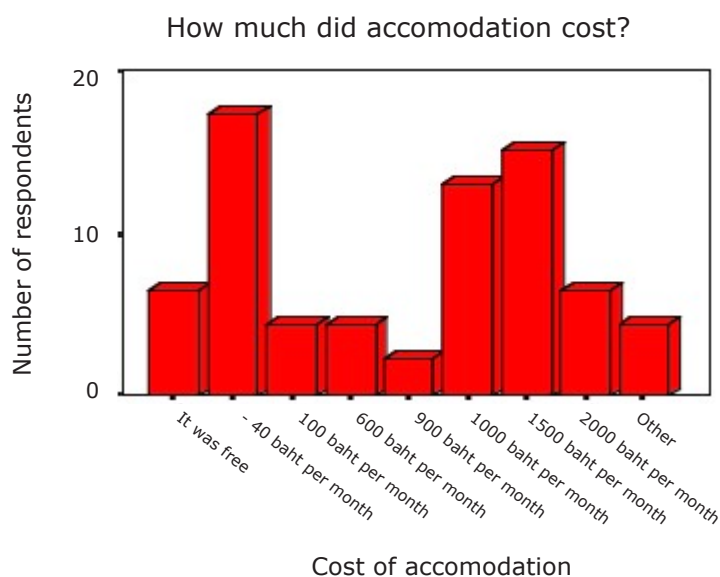
F. Accommodation and meals for beggars

A total of 52 children provided answers about where they slept. Almost all the children -- 49 (94.2%) in total -- said that they slept in a rented room. Only one child (1.9%) answered that he lived in someone's house. The researchers noted that this child is of Vietnamese origin and was working alone with a *Me Kyhol* in Pattaya. Meanwhile, two (3.9%) of the children lived in a slum area near the port in Samut Prakarn province with their mother.

Chart 11

A total of 46 children answered questions asked how much their accommodation cost. Most of the children gave the price for the 'room' in total, as a shared cost between whoever was living there. Sometimes this was just the child and mother, but sometimes more than one mother and child lived together.

Chart 12



Most of the children gave a monthly price for rent but 17 (37%) of the children gave the price as a daily figure of up to or around 40 baht. The daily figures given suggest that ‘landlords’ are aware of the transitory nature of the beggars and therefore rent out rooms on a daily basis.

When asked if meals were included, 43 (93.5%) of the children answered said that meals were not included. Two (4.3%) of the children said that meals were included and that they were of good quality. These 2 children also said that the price paid was 100 baht per day per person (with accompanying adult), which included meals and all utilities. Only one (2.2%) child who had come with a *Me Kyhol* did not pay for accommodation as it was included in the job. That child reported that the meals were included but were too small and of poor quality. The same child also reported being beaten by the *Me Kyhol*.

A total of 42 (91.1%) beggars said that they had access to a bathroom and that the house had electricity. Almost all of these children said that these utilities were not included in the rental price, notably if it was a monthly fee. Four (8.9%) of the children said there was electricity but nowhere to take a bath. These children paid extra to take a bath in the public bathrooms (2 baht per time). These findings correlate with interviews with women and children begging on the streets.⁵⁷

Case Study 7 -- Living conditions of Cambodian beggars in Bangkok

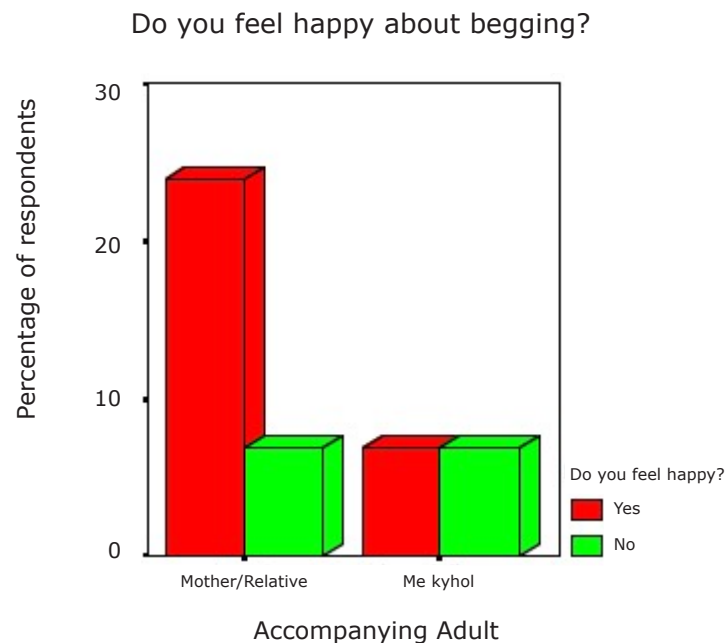
Three women beggars of 41 years, 39 years and 17 years shared a house in the Northern suburbs of Bangkok. Each was accompanied by a child (Boy 13, Girl 5 months, and Girl 5 months). One of the women was possibly a *Me Kyhol*. The accommodation was a very small, wooden, ‘slum-type’ house with one room. There was a toilet inside and somewhere to take a bath outside. There was 1 light in the middle of the room. There was an electric stove, a fan, a rice cooker and an electric kettle. The rent cost 1,500 per month. The 2 younger women pay the older woman rent. Water is included in the monthly price but electricity is extra.

⁵⁷ The researchers collecting data on the street met these beggars and visited their house on several locations. In the 3rd week of December 2005, the women and children were rescued and sent to the Nonthaburi Home for the Destitute.

Children were also asked if they knew the house owner of the accommodation where they were staying. 28 (61%) of the children replied negatively while another 13 (28%) of the children said they did not know him but added that they understood he was kind. Only three (6.5%) children said they knew the owner and he was not kind. Two (4.3%) of these children came with their mother and one (2.2%) was working with a *Me Kyhol*.

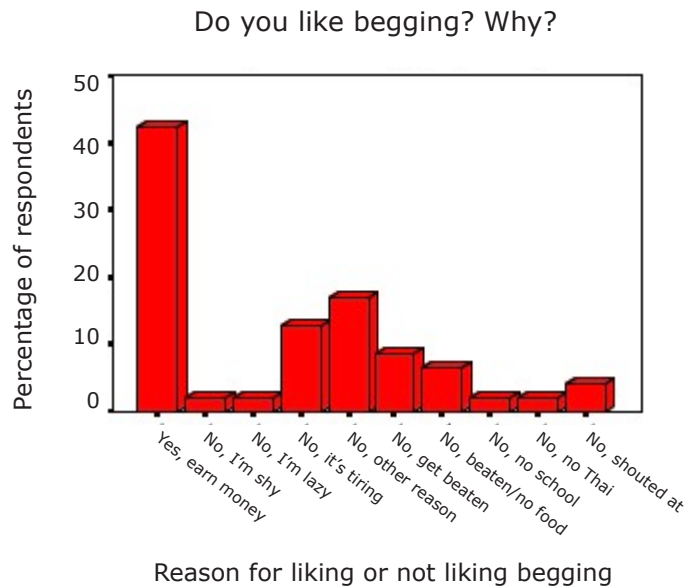
G. Emotional state and outlook of child beggars

Chart 13



A total of 45 children answered the question about whether they felt happy about begging. A majority, 31 (69%) responded affirmatively and 14 (31%) responded in the negative. Close to 24 (close to 77%) children stated that they came with their mother or another relative and said they felt happy. Meanwhile, only 50% (7) of the children who came with a *Me Kyhol* or 'non-blood relative' said they felt happy.

Chart 14



A total of 47 children answered the question of whether they liked begging. As shown in the graph, 20 (42.6%) of the children responded affirmatively. The reason given by all of them was because they could earn money.

A total of 27 (57.4%) children answered in the negative. Their reasons are wide-ranging. Among the reasons were they are too shy to beg, begging is too tiring, they get beaten, shouted at or do not get any food if they do not earn enough, it is difficult because they don't speak Thai, or the need to beg keeps them out of school. Children found it difficult to answer questions about their expectations. A few mothers, however, provided some insight:

Case Study 8 -- EXPECTATIONS ABOUT BEGGING: Woman, 46 years old, begging with 2 youngest sons, 4 and 3 years old

It is more difficult then I expected because I don't know people and it is difficult to stay. I came to beg in Thailand because I want to earn enough money to buy 2 pigs.

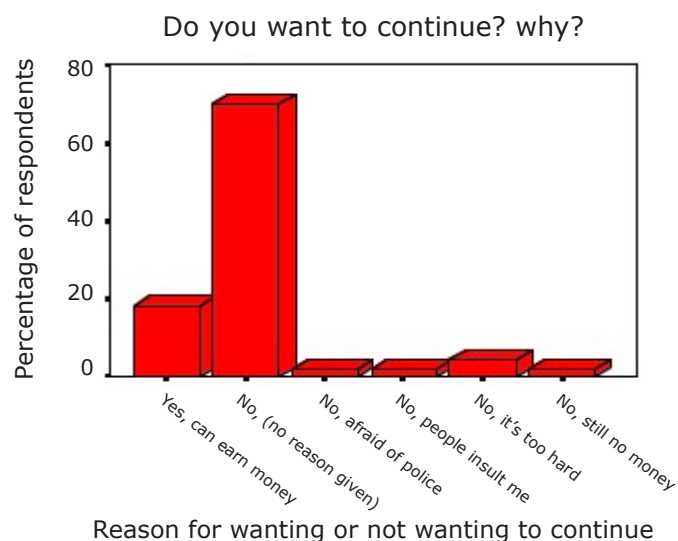
Case Study 9 -- EXPECTATIONS ABOUT BEGGING: 22 years old, begging with only son, 3 months old

It's more difficult than I expected because I'm afraid of the police.

Box 7

Do you have free time?	Frequency	Percent
Have free time, relax	26	59.1
Have free time, play with friend/relative	9	20.4
Have free time, sleep	7	15.9
Have free time, go for walk	1	2.3
No free time	1	2.3
Total	44	100.0

A total of 44 children answered the question focusing on whether they have free time or not. Fully 43 (98%) children said that they have free time and can relax, play, sleep or go for a walk. Only 1 (2%) child said he had no free time, but it is worth noting that this child also said that he worked 18 hours a day and came with his mother.

Chart 15

Despite the fact that a fairly high percentage of children reported they were happy, could deal with begging and had additional free time, it is worth noting that close to 80% said that they did not want to continue begging indefinitely. Some of the reasons given for wanting to leave the sector are concerns about the police, contentions by the children that the work is too hard, and the fact that people tend to look down on beggars. One child even stated that he did not want to continue because his family still has no money, even after all of the begging he has done. This is likely due to the fact that they were arrested before being able to earn.

Box 8

What are your dreams for the future?	Frequency	Percent
Get a good job	13	29.6
Study and get a good job	9	20.5
Be a teacher	3	6.8
Be a mechanic	3	6.8
Study	3	6.8
Work in construction	2	4.5
Be a vendor (cars, cloth, flowers)	2	4.5
Work at Salon	2	4.5
To be like other people	2	4.5
Be a policeman	1	2.3
Be a cook	1	2.3
Be a doctor	1	2.3
Be an air hostess	1	2.3
Be a motorcycle taxi driver	1	2.3
Total	44	100.0

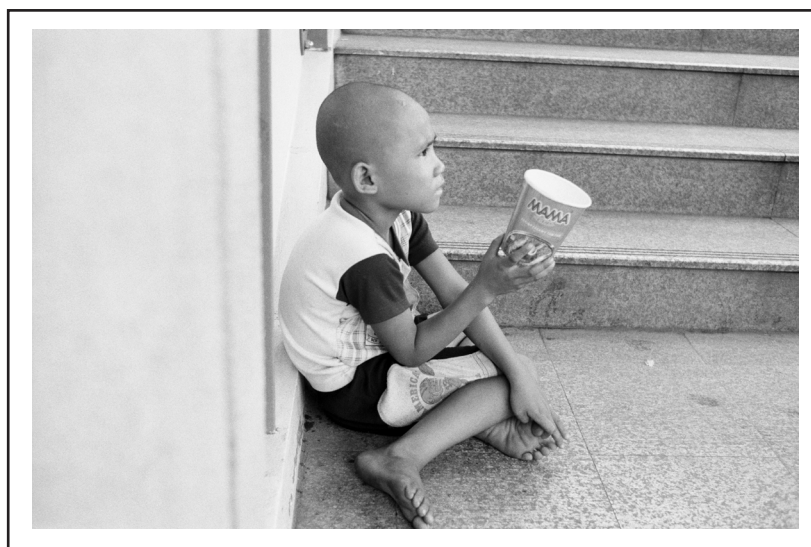


Photo © Ayako Tsuda

What is encouraging are the children's expressions of their hopes/dreams for the future. The fact that they are dreaming implies that they do not expect to be begging for the rest of their lives, and that in their view, begging is just a temporary occupation. A total of 25 (56.8%) children said they would like to study or get a good job, or a combination of both. Being mechanics or teachers were the most popular professions, with working in construction and being a vendor as the next most popular. One boy said that he wanted to be a policeman, but emphasized that this meant not a Cambodian policeman. Two children, both with disabilities, stated that they wanted to be like other children.

VI. Research Area 3: Public Attitudes and Behaviors toward Cambodian Child Beggars

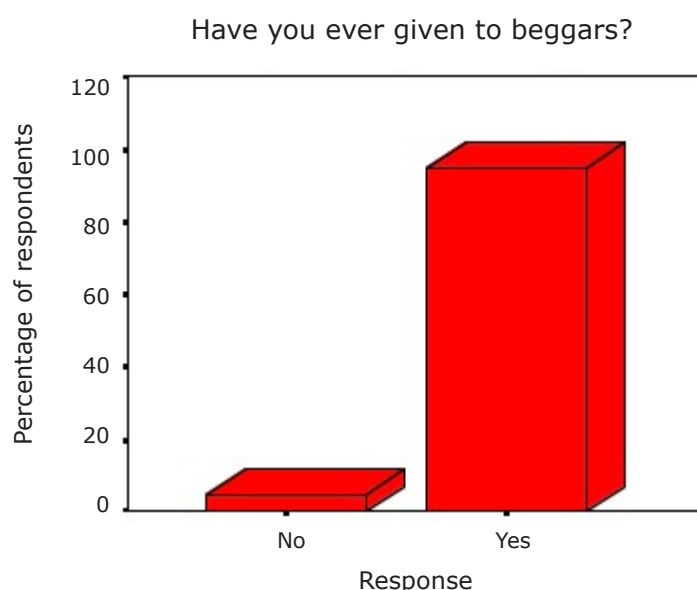
SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS

- A high percentage of Thai people give money to beggars on a regular basis
- Amounts vary but those that give on a regular basis give anywhere between 1-20 baht
- People are slightly more inclined to give to child beggars, and are even more so if the children are disabled
- Most people give through a sense of sympathy
- People still give despite being aware that some beggars are forced to beg.

A commonly held view is that beggars in Thailand make most of their money from western tourists⁵⁸. Although this may be true in some areas of Bangkok and the rest of the country, the findings of this survey suggest that Thai donors are also contributing significantly to the income of beggars.

A total of 401 Thai respondents were interviewed at 16 different locations throughout the city. (For the locations please refer to page 12) 120 (30.1%) of the respondents were seen giving money before being interviewed. 279 (69.9%) were not. The sex of the respondents was 229 (57.1%) female, 172 (42.9%) male. In terms of age, 202 (50.8%) were under the age of 25, while 193 (48.4%) were aged 25-50, and only 3 (0.8%) were aged over 50.

Chart 16



Only 19 (4.7%) respondents said that they never given money to beggars. If this is assumed to be an accurate reflection of the Bangkok populace's practices regarding beggars, this would mean that translated into the total population of Bangkok who are likely to give to beggars⁵⁹, it suggests that only 308,555 Bangkokians never give money to beggars, while the other 6,256,450 either give sometimes or often.

⁵⁸ ILO, World of Work, 1998, Page 1.

⁵⁹ Figures were calculated using Stickman's Guide to Bangkok. The total population of Thailand is 63,430,000 with 15% of these in Bangkok (9,514,500). Adults between 18-49 (i.e. the working population) represent 69% of the population (6,565,005).

A. Frequency in giving, and amounts given to beggars

Chart 17

How often do you give to beggars?

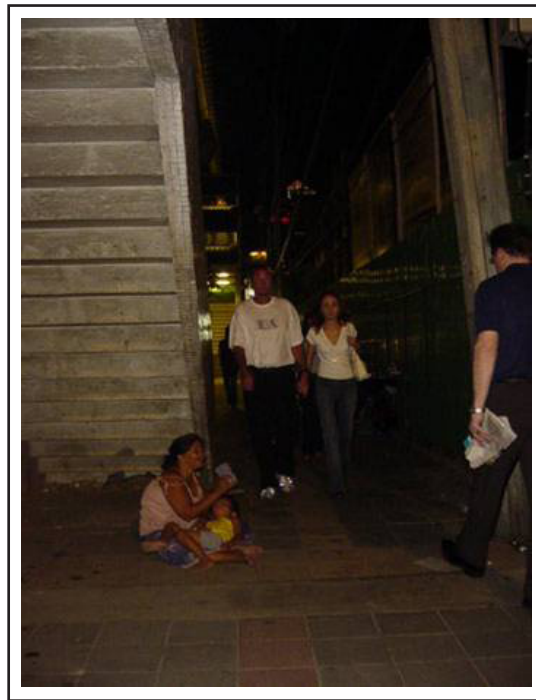
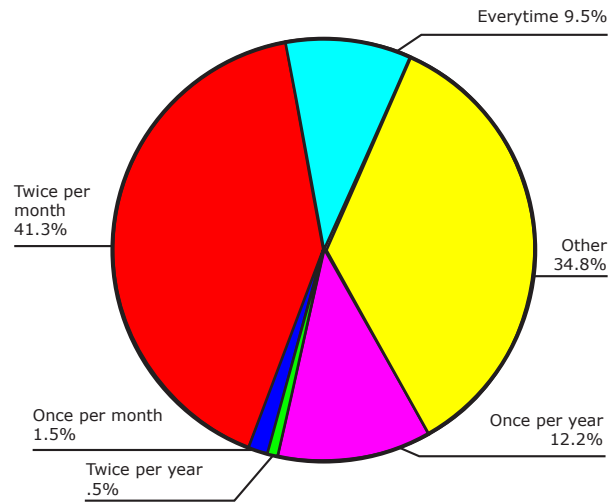
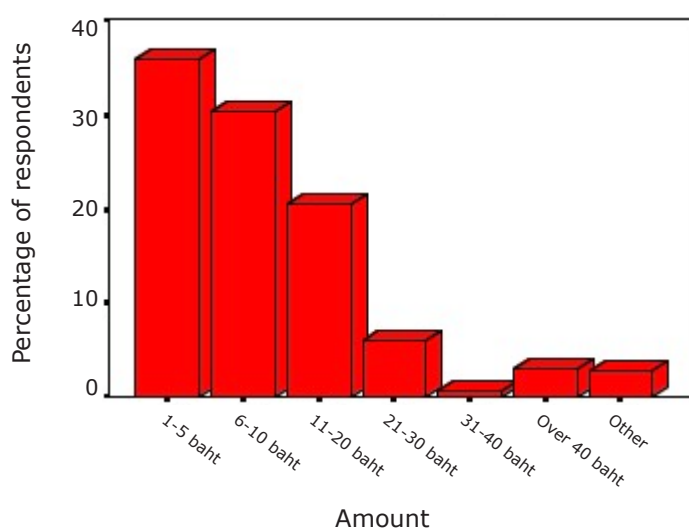


Photo © Ayako Tsuda

Among the 382 respondents who said that they give money to beggars, 37 (9.6%) respondents said they give every time they see a beggar, while 158 (41.3%) said they give at least twice per month. Another 133 (34.8%) respondents found it difficult to quantify how often they give money to beggars so their answers were classified as “Other.”

Chart 18

How much do you give?



In terms of amounts that people give, the bar chart above shows clearly that most people usually give whatever small change they may have in their pocket. 253 (66.3%) respondents said they give between 1-10 baht, while 79 (20.7%) respondents indicate they usually give between 11-20 baht. Using again the extrapolation of these findings to the entire Bangkok populace, it can be assumed that 3,184,533 (50.9%) Bangkokians give at least twice a month, and 2,111,345.3 (66.3%) of these donors give between 1-10 baht each time. Taking a mean value of 5 baht, it is possible to suggest that as a very rough estimate, those people that give two or more times per month contribute 21,113,453 baht (approximately \$US 500,000) to beggars on a monthly basis.

The information above is firmly in accordance with trends identified in the study done by the Thai Farmers Bank on *The Trend of the Begging Business...Growing with the Economy* and its suburbs in 1997. The study looked at begging trends from 1995 to 1997 and compared the situation for Thai and foreign beggars. The study's main findings were the number of foreign beggars was increasing, especially child beggars, and that the majority of foreign beggars were Cambodian. The study further estimated that revenues from begging were approximately 20 million baht per month, with some variation, and approximately 200 million baht per year.

The table below shows a cross tabulation between how often people give to beggars and how much they give. Through this information, it can be clearly seen that those persons who give more than 20 baht are more likely to give more than once a month, or even every time they see a beggar.

Box 9

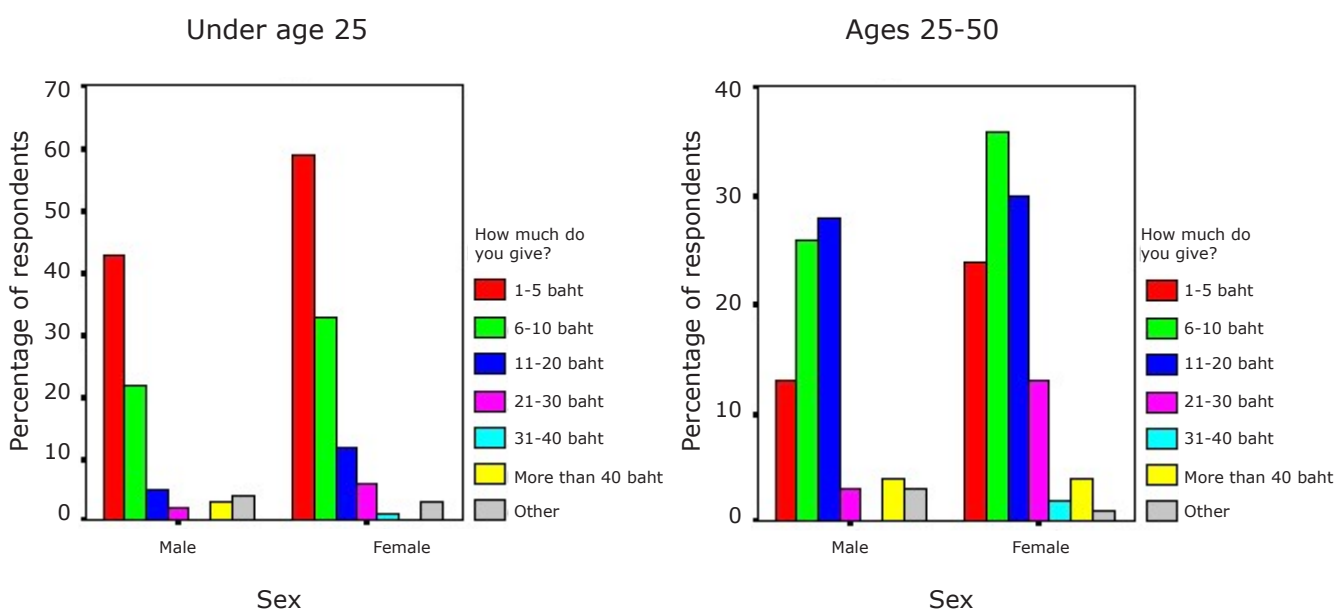
How much?	How often do you give to beggars?						
	Once a year	Twice a year	Once a month	Twice a month	Every time see beggar	Other	
1-5 Baht	29	1	2	27	16	62	137
6-10 Baht	12	1	1	54	7	40	115
11-20 Baht	5	0	0	52	6	17	80
21-30 Baht	0	0	1	17	3	3	24
31-40 Baht	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
>40 Baht	0	0	1	5	4	2	12
Other	1	0	1	1	0	8	11
Total	47	2	6	158	37	132	382

A breakdown of the answers of the persons who were ultimately placed in the “Other” category when responding includes the following responses:

Depends on my feeling when I see them	33
Often (unable to quantify)	27
Depends on their condition	21
Only if I have change in my pocket	18
Depends on the day/occasion	11
No answer (unable to quantify)	10
Not sure	6
Give more often to disabled beggars	3
Only when I see old beggars playing music	1
Only if they are a real beggar	1
On my birthday	1
Total	132

B. Ages of those giving to beggars

Charts 19 and 20

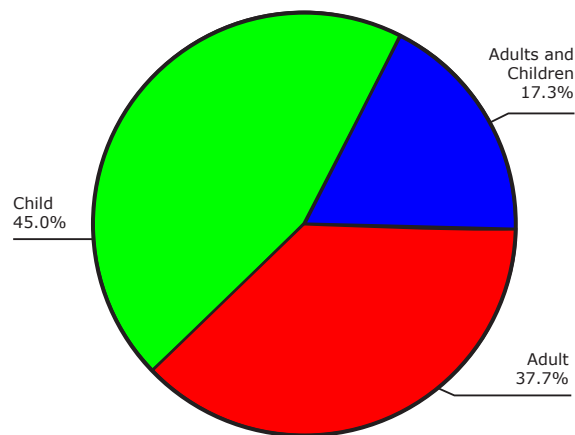


The researchers found no significant correlation between the factors of sex and amount given, but it does seem that people in the 25-50 age group tend to give more than those in the <25 age group.

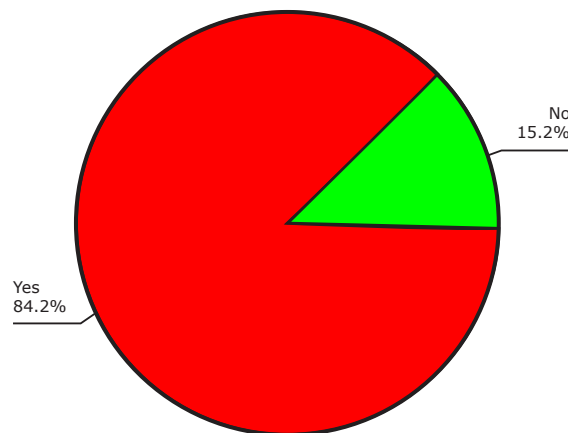
C. Reasons provided by respondents for giving to beggars

Charts 21 and 22

What kind of beggars do you give to?

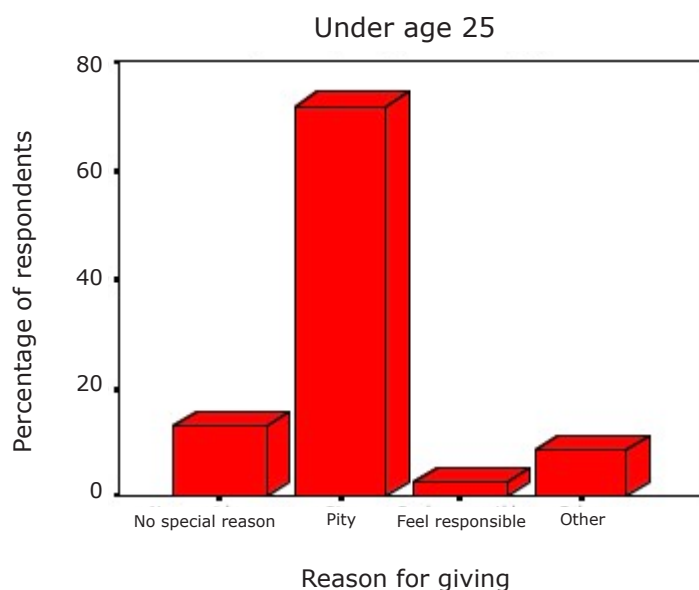


Are you more likely to give to a disabled beggar?



When asked what kind of beggar they were more likely to give to, 45% answered that they give more often to children, while 37.7% said that they were more likely to give to adults. A total of 17.3% of the respondents said they did not differentiate between the two. When respondents who gave more often to children were asked 'why?' a common response received was because the children could not help themselves. Respondents who preferred to give to adults told researchers that they assumed the adults would help the children with the money they got from begging. Although not asked in the questionnaire, some respondents made the distinction that they are more likely to give to elderly beggars. Respondents stating this told researchers that this is because they felt that elderly beggars have no other options but to beg for assistance. A total of 84.8% of the respondents said their decision to give is influenced by whether the beggar has some kind of disability. When asked why this is the case, many respondents answered that a disabled person cannot help themselves and have few job opportunities. Some respondents also specifically said they give to disabled beggars because of sympathy that the beggar has lost a limb.

Chart 23



A total of 275 (72.1%) of the respondents said that they give money to beggars because they pity them. By contrast, only 2.7% of the respondents said they feel responsible for them. Interestingly, 13.2% of the respondents said there was no special reason for why they gave. Other reasons for giving mentioned by respondents included simply wanting to help, a perception the beggars have no other opportunities, and a feeling that everyone should be charitable.

When asked if their reasons for giving or not giving were related to a sense of religious obligation, 103 (25.7%) respondents answered in the affirmative. Of these 103 affirmative respondents, 90 stated they were Buddhist, three said they were Christian and three said they were Muslim. Another seven persons did not state their religion.

From the ranks of the 382 respondents who indicated they give support to beggars, most people said that there was no particular time of the year that they were more likely to give. However, nine respondents, a small percentage (2.3%), said they were more likely to give close to holidays while another 23 (6%) persons said they were more likely to give at the end of the month, after receiving their salary.

When the 401 respondents were asked if they were aware that some beggars are forced to beg and that some children selling flowers and candies are forced to sell, an alarmingly high number said that they were aware of this situation. 325 (81%) respondents said that they know that some beggars are forced to beg, and 281 (70%) respondents said that they are aware that some sellers are forced to sell. This is surprising because one might expect this knowledge would persuade people to stop giving because they might think they are fuelling the 'begging industry.'

D. Ideas of finding solutions for begging

The 401 respondents were asked if they had any suggestions for ways to help beggars. In the category 'Other', it was found that many people said that they had no idea how to solve the issue but would like to help somehow. Two people said that it was an issue of illegal migrants. Other suggestions included: creating a begging law; discussing possible solutions with the beggars; arresting the people who force them to beg; giving more to those that cannot help themselves; helping beggars' families; and building public awareness to tell people to stop giving money to beggars.

Box 10

Suggested action	Frequency	Percent
Other	120	29.9
Create an authority to help them	79	19.7
Provide loans to start businesses	67	16.7
Find jobs	49	12.2
Build shelter	48	12
No suggestion	38	9.5
Total	401	100

When the respondents were asked who they thought should be responsible for solving the problem, a large majority said they thought it was the government's responsibility. Some also mentioned NGOs and the police. Most answers that were classified in the category 'Other' stated that everybody is responsible for solving this issue together.

Box 11

Who should be responsible for solving the problem?	Frequency	Percent
Government	276	68.8
Other	82	20.4
No response ⁶⁰	19	4.7
Government and NGOs	14	3.5
Police	5	1.2
NGO	5	1.2
Total	401	100

⁶⁰ It should be noted that these 19 respondents are *not* the same 19 respondents who stated earlier in the survey that they never give money to beggars.

VII. Additional observations – Cambodian/Vietnamese children beggars

As has been highlighted in the previous sections of the findings, most of the Cambodian beggars beg voluntarily, are capable of traveling to Bangkok on their own, and have control over their lives in Bangkok. Migrating on their own could also mean they are using loose, informal networks to facilitate their journey.

Through the research, the research team also identified another group of children – Cambodian/Vietnamese children who sell flowers and other small items. Since they were not the target group for this study, the researchers were unable to devote much time or effort to find out more about this group. However, the limited information that the research team did gather raised concerns about the vulnerability of these children and is a situation that requires further exploration. (Please see section C. Children selling flowers or small items on the street on page 59 for more details.)

VIII. Analysis of networks and *Me Kyhol*

SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS

- No real ‘gangs’ per se controlling Cambodian ‘networks’
- Informal networks of *Me Kyhol* facilitating their journeys
- Beggars form group/alliances with other beggars or migrants which serve as protection networks

From the research team’s observations on the streets and in the MSDHS centers, it is possible to divide children begging or selling small items on the streets into three main ‘groups’:

- Children that come with *Me Kyhol* or with a family member through informal networks -- As far as this project’s research shows this is by far the biggest group of Cambodian children in Thailand.
- There are very few children who come to beg alone. However, those children who do come to beg alone appear to be familiar with or even part of the informal networks and probably came with a relative/agent many years ago. They probably also have links with legal/illegal family/friend migrants who are well established in Bangkok and speak fluent Thai.
- Children coming to Thailand with someone in order to sell flowers or small items – for example, the children selling roses in tourist areas/bars/restaurants who appear to speak fluent Thai and a little Khmer. However, by appearance, these children appear to be ethnically Vietnamese, although their nationality is unclear. A few of them may originate from Cambodia but now live with legal/illegal family/friend migrants who are well established in Bangkok. There are also other nationalities including Burmese, Bangladeshi or Pakistani who are contributing children to Bangkok’s beggar industry. The research team could not establish whether children in this group are associated with begging gangs.

A. Children and women that come with *Me Kyhol* or informal networks

Cambodian perceptions of the *Me Kyhol* are much more diverse than the usual translation of *Me Kyhol* translates as “human trafficker.” This theory is supported by information collected from adults accompanying children in the shelters, from children in the shelters themselves, and from children interviewed in the Mith Samlanh Training Centre and on the streets of Phnom Penh. The information from people who actually use the services of the *Me Kyhol* demonstrates the *Me Kyhol* has many different roles and s/he is already known to the person paying for the service. It also demonstrates that the only difference between the *Me Kyhol* that performs these services and a ‘trafficker’ is that the ‘trafficker’ is a *Me Kyhol* who tricks or forces someone into a situation to which they did not agree.

1. The *Me Kyhol* as a travel agent

Many of the women in the shelters and on the streets said they came to Thailand alone. Some stated they had heard from friends or relatives how to get to Bangkok. Still others said they had been to Bangkok more than once, and added that on the first occasion they paid a *Me Kyhol* to facilitate their trip. Anecdotal information from beggars and key informants indicates the standard cost for the *Me Kyhol* to facilitate your trip to Bangkok is approximately 3,000 baht⁶¹, though with variations the cost can go up as high as 5000 baht. This price includes facilitation of the purchase of a day pass at the border, transport on the Thai side of the border, facilitation to either avoid RTP checks once past Poipet or for

⁶¹ This figure is derived from informal interviews with the mothers in Baan Raitipung, with children in MSDHS shelters, and with other children included in the snapshot survey in Phnom Penh.

paying RTP officials at these checkpoints, and linking up with accommodation in Bangkok. This figure is supported in the ILO/IPEC report which stated that those seeking work in Thailand pay from 2,500 to 3,000 Thai baht per job in Bangkok.

Case Study 10 -- Woman in Baan Raitipung (also known by street team before arrest)

Chhay paid a *Me Kyhol* a total of 5,000 baht to bring her and her 3-month old baby to Thailand. The *Me Kyhol* facilitated the border crossing and her journey to Bangkok. Chhay moved into a house with the *Me Kyhol*. There was one other woman and her young baby living there too.

Both of the girls living with the *Me Kyhol* paid 700 baht in rent per month to the *Me Kyhol*. This covered most of the rent which was 1,500 baht for the whole house. It was a very small wooden 'slum' type house with one room. There was a toilet inside and somewhere to take a bath outside. There was one electric light in the middle of the room. There was an electric stove, a fan, a rice cooker and an electric kettle. Chhay and the other women say that electricity is an extra cost they must bear.

Case Study 11 -- Woman in Baan Raitipung

The first time I came to Thailand, I paid a *Me Kyhol* 3000 baht to bring me. My neighbor knew the *Me Kyhol*. I left my children in Poipet with my older sister. The *Me Kyhol* bought me a day pass (I think it cost 10 baht) and led me through the forest to avoid the police check point after Aranyaprathet. The *Me Kyhol* brought me to Bangkok and helped me find a place to live.

Case Study 12 -- Phnom Penh, Mith Samlanh Training Center

I went to Thailand with *Me Kyhol* named Darith. I went to Thailand to beg and steal money. The *Me Kyhol* facilitated with police at the border. I lived with the *Me Kyhol*. If I got 1,000 baht, he would take 400 baht. I would buy ya-ba (methamphetamines) with 100 baht and keep the rest.

2. The *Me Kyhol* as a housing agent

Some of the better known *Me Kyhol* rent houses in different locations in Bangkok which they, in turn, rent out to other beggars. Based on interviews with beggars in Baan Raitipung, the rent and utility prices charged by a *Me Kyhol* appeared to be fair and generally in accordance with market rates. Furthermore, information from the previous section indicates that a majority of beggars who answered questions about their accommodation reported that they had access to basic facilities such as a bathroom and electricity in their rented accommodations.

3. The *Me Kyhol* as an informal bank/remittance sender

The *Me Kyhol* also acts as an informal bank for migrant workers. The research team was told by many of the women that they send money back to their family in Cambodia via the *Me Kyhol*. To send money home, the beggars contact a *Me Kyhol* that they may introduce to their friends or family. Typically, the beggar hands the money over to the *Me Kyhol* who charges a fee for the service. The fee amount varies and can either be a percentage of the money being transferred or a flat amount. The *Me Kyhol* then contacts his/her agent in Poipet and the agent gives the money to the designated recipient. While the process might vary slightly from person to person, it usually occurs in the aforementioned manner and is quite reliable.

Case Study 13 -- Woman in Baan Raitipung

I send money to Cambodia with a person who is a beggar like me. I know him from my neighbor who rented a room near me, and asked him to make introductions. The *Me Kyhol* came to my room and took the money to be transferred from me. And then I called to my mother tell that I am sending money to her. That person tells me to receive money behind Palalai Pagoda. He is disabled, and only has one arm. He takes a profit of 80 Baht for every 1,000 baht I send through his network. I also often take money to home by myself.

Case Study 14 -- Baan Phumvet, Boy, 12 years old

My father sends money back to Cambodia with the *Me Kyhol* called Mr. Puen. If we want to send money, we just call Mr. Puen and he comes to meet us. He takes 3% of whatever we want to send.

4. The *Me Kyhol* as a job agent and employer

Some beggars, particularly disabled ones, may act as *Me Kyhol* by approaching a family and offering them the opportunity to earn money by sending their child to beg with the *Me Kyhol*. Typically, the *Me Kyhol* will keep all of the money made from begging and pay the child or parents a “monthly salary.”

Case Study 15 -- Boy, 12-13 years old, Baan Phumvet

Sothly came from Battambang with Mr. Pat. Mr. Pat is blind. He is a friend of Sothly's mother (his father is dead). Sothly's father was also blind. Sothly took Mr. Pat to beg at Klang Thom everyday from 8pm to midnight. Everyday, they earned around 2000-2500 baht. Mr. Pat kept all the money but paid Sothly 2,400 baht per month. They sent the money back to Cambodia via a *Me Kyhol*. Mr. Pat has been to Thailand many times and he pays many children to bring him to beg.

Case Study 16 -- Boy, 5 years old, Baan Phumvet

Sophal comes from Banteay Meanchey. He has been to Thailand two times. The first time he came with Mrs. Ron (who is a *Me Kyhol*). Mrs. Ron paid his parents 1,500 baht. The second time he came with Mrs. Mao Sok, 55 years old. Before, Mrs. Mao worked in a restaurant in Pakkred. This time, she took Sophal to beg from 9am-12am and 2pm-5pm. They only begged for two days before being arrested.

5. The *Me Kyhol* as a trafficker/agent of unsafe migration

The research team found no cases of children that were tricked into begging. However, one young woman the research team met in Baan Kredtrakarn Protection and Occupational Development Centre was tricked by a *Me Kyhol* into the sex trade after believing that she was going to get a good job in Thailand. Although the evidence is scanty, there is nothing to suggest that this *Me Kyhol* was any different from the *Me Kyhol* who facilitates the journeys of women and children to Thailand to beg.⁶²

⁶² In 2005, Mith Samlanh assisted the IOM/MOSAVY project in the repatriation of 6 male youth from Phnom Penh who had paid a *Me Kyhol* to take them to Thailand to work in the construction industry. When they arrived, they had actually been sold to the employer, a clear case of trafficking.

Case Study 17 -- TRICKED INTO PROSTITUTION: Female, 27 years old, with three children

Before Vanna came to Thailand she was earning a living in Cambodia by selling fish paste by bicycle going from village to village. One day, a Khmer lady came to her village. She spoke Thai very well and showed off her gold and her obvious wealth in the village. This lady knew somebody in the village and stayed in her house. She said that jobs in Bangkok were easy to find and that it was easy to become rich like her. Vanna went back to her family and told them she wanted to go to Thailand. Her parents didn't agree as they thought the lady was lying. A week later, Vanna decided that she was going to go anyway. So she sold a pig and got \$47.50 (190,000 riel) for it. She also had about \$50 (200,000 riel) that she had saved from selling fish paste. She went to see the lady and told her she wanted to go to Bangkok. She gave her all the money (3900 baht) and was promised a job in Bangkok selling clothes.

When they eventually arrived at their destination, Vanna saw a karaoke shop (there were many karaoke shops in this area). She was surprised and worried and asked the lady why she was here and not in Bangkok selling clothes. The lady replied, "You see, there are many girls younger than you, they can do this work and they send back lots of money." Vanna started to cry and asked how she could get home. The lady said she could not send her back – this is the job that she had been given.

Vanna had been tricked, and sent to Hat Yai town in southern Thailand. There were 8 other Khmer girls working in the karaoke shop. The lady who tricked her was between 30 and 32 years old.

Case Study 18 -- Woman, 24 years old, Baan Kredtrakarn

I came to work in Thailand. I would like to say it is really wrong but my family is so poor. There are jobs in Cambodia but the salaries are so low. I heard I can earn a lot of salary in Thailand so I decided to come and work in a restaurant selling food, and I would get a salary of 3000 baht per month. After 2 months, I could not attend work anymore because I miss home so much. Then I asked my boss if I could go home. He said if I went home, he would not pay my salary and I would have to find money by myself. I cannot speak Thai and I met another Khmer girl who sold sex for money. She persuaded me to work with her and I decided to do it because I wanted to make money to go home.

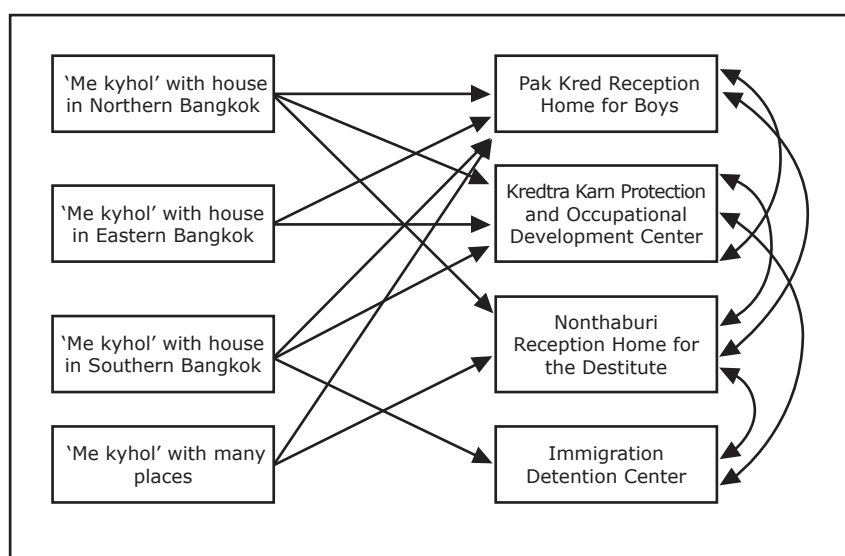
Evidence from this report as well as many previous reports underscores the fact that children or adults who migrate without knowledge of the situation in the destination country and lacking knowledge of the local language will leave themselves vulnerable to dangers to which they might not normally be exposed.

6. The *Me Kyhol* as part of informal networks

The level of organization and structure of the business of a *Me Kyhol* may vary greatly, but these research findings suggest that they are part of very informal networks of friends or relatives in both countries and that each *Me Kyhol* often has more than one role.⁶³ The diagram below was compiled after the researchers on the streets and researchers in the shelters discovered links between different people interviewed. The arrows represent different relationships that existed between *Me Kyhol* and some of the beggars, and also among the beggars themselves.

63 Derks, Henke and Vanna quote Marshall (2001) as saying that "in the Mekong region, trafficking resembles more a cottage industry rather than organized crime" (Page 17) and later state that "social networks play an important role in recruitment practices of migration movements in general and trafficking in particular" (Page 43).

Chart 24

Me Kyhol networks

Some examples of these relationships are:

- The *Me Kyhol* who has a house in Northern Bangkok facilitated the journey of a young woman and baby but had also brought her two sons to beg with her and the daughter of an acquaintance. This young woman had paid a service fee of 5000 baht to the *Me Kyhol* with whom she also lived. Both the *Me Kyhol* and young woman were ‘rescued’ and taken to the Baan Raitipung. Her two sons were rescued and detained in Baan Phumvet, and the young girl whom she had brought to beg was taken to Baan Kredtrakarn.
- The *Me Kyhol* with many telephones was supposedly married to a woman in the Nonthaburi Home for the Destitute, who in turn was supposedly the ‘elder sister’ of a boy in the Pak Kred Reception Home for boys.
- The *Me Kyhol* with a house in Southern Bangkok provided lodging to three blind men who were arrested and taken to the IDC. Each of the men had come with a child who said they knew each other from home.
- Children in the Pak Kred Reception Home for Boys, stated that they knew one of the women in the Baan Raitipung and that this woman was known to be a *Me Kyhol*.

B. Children that beg alone

Through efforts of researchers on the street, a few cases of Cambodian children who beg alone were identified. The numbers of these cases were so few (only four were encountered) it is difficult to determine the incidence, circumstances, or trends regarding this group of children. No children in the shelters were found to have come to Thailand alone.

Case Study 19 -- OBSERVATIONS FROM THE TEAM ON THE STREETS OF BANGKOK

The street team met 4 boys under the age of 18 who were 'alone.' Three of them were 'hanging out' together in central Bangkok. The youngest was 14 years old and he was begging. The next boy was 17 years old and he told researchers that he "did nothing." The third boy was 18 years old and said he sometimes worked for a Cambodian man who sold flowers (in a street stall). The team met the fourth boy at different locations (all still in central Bangkok) but said they 4th boy said knew the others. He said he was 13.

Interestingly, since the first meeting, the team has met the 17 year old who said he was doing nothing on several occasions. He is friendly and most of the time seems willing to chat with researchers. Recently, he has been seen with 2 'younger brothers' of about 8 and 12. The youngest one sells roses and the older one either sells roses or begs. The 17 year old seems to be acting as their boss. He buys the flowers at Pak Klong Market, and then he sits close by and observes the younger boys when they are begging or selling flowers.

The team observed that these boys have contacts with other Cambodians living and working in Bangkok. On one occasion, they were sitting with a young woman (early twenties) whose husband was dragging himself along the floor and begging (he had one leg missing). The 13-year old boy for example was with 3 men (all were amputees who said they came from Pursat). They all said that they lived together in a room in Pathum Thani Province.

The 14 year old boy said that he had been arrested before and taken to the IDC but he was released because he spoke such good Thai, the authorities thought he was Thai. The 18 year old boy said he did not speak Thai and had just come to Thailand to 'have a look'. The 17 year old says that he comes and goes between Thailand and Cambodia quite often and that his 'younger brothers' study in Cambodia.

C. Children selling flowers or small items

Many children can be found at traffic lights selling garlands, or offering other services such as windshield washing, selling trinkets, etc. Key informant interviews with people on the streets and with women selling garlands on the streets, together with interviews with 13 children selling at the traffic lights, suggest that the majority of these children are Thai and work for themselves or their parents.

Observations and interviews on the streets, combined with data collected in the shelters do however suggest that there may be links with some children and more formal or organized networks or gangs. In most cases it appears that these gangs serve more as protection networks rather than 'trafficking rings' but in a few, there does appear to be links with more aggressive forms of forced labor.

The research team found that children selling flowers or other small items such as candies or tissues are concentrated around the Sukhumvit area in Bangkok. Because most foreign children on the streets are afraid of being apprehended, it was extremely difficult to talk to them. Combined with the fact that many of these children speak fluent Thai, and they will not admit to understanding or being Cambodian because they fear arrest. The research team met the following children:

- Girl, 10 years old and girl, 9 years old selling roses around Sukhumvit area. The girls said they were sisters and that they lived with their mother who works close to Samrong (Pathum Thani Province). They have been here for almost 3 years, and they attend Thai school everyday from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. They work selling roses every evening from 7 p.m. to midnight. Although they both spoke Khmer, it was unclear whether they were Cambodian or Vietnamese.
- Girl, 10 years old, who appeared to be ethnically Vietnamese, selling roses on Sukhumvit Soi 4. When asked where she came from in Cambodia she answered in Khmer. Her 'boss,' a girl of around 15 or 16, then nudged her in the back and she said that she only knew a few words of Khmer. The girl was well-dressed and had a mobile phone. Her 'boss' had two mobile phones.
- Boy, approximately 8 years old, selling roses on Sukhumvit Soi 11. He understood Khmer but he would not speak it.

- 3 teenage girls (13-19 years old) selling roses and sunglasses on Sukhumvit Soi 4 said they have lived with their parents in Thailand for more than 10 years.
- A boy of around 15 with his younger sister, 8, was shining shoes and she was selling roses. They said they lived with their parents in Samrong and added they had lived here for a long time. The boy had a mobile phone.
- Boy (approximately 12 years old), selling roses on Sukhumvit Soi 4. This boy said he was from Pakistan. He did not speak any Khmer.
- Girl (approximately 8 years old), selling roses on Sukhumvit Soi 7. She said she was from Bangladesh.

All of the children spoke or understood Khmer and looked ethnically Vietnamese except for the children who said that they were from Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The research team conducted more than 30 key informant interviews on and around Sukhumvit. These informants stated that they think the children selling flowers are working for gangs. One informant said that he has seen someone drop the children off around 8 p.m. or 9 p.m. Another told us that the children work until the bars close (1 a.m. -- 2 a.m.) because this is a good time to sell roses to foreigners when they are coming out of bars. In contrast, the children selling small items in this area told the street team that they were working either for themselves or for their families.

16 out of the 30 informants stated that they think that the children are not Thai. Only 4 of the 16 mentioned that they thought that some of the children are Thai and some are foreign. Nationalities mentioned included Vietnamese, Cambodians and Burmese and Russians (the last only for sex work). The reasons given for why they think they are not Thai included:

- They do not speak Thai well.
- When the policemen come, they run away (this assumption is based on the idea that Thai children are not afraid of the police)

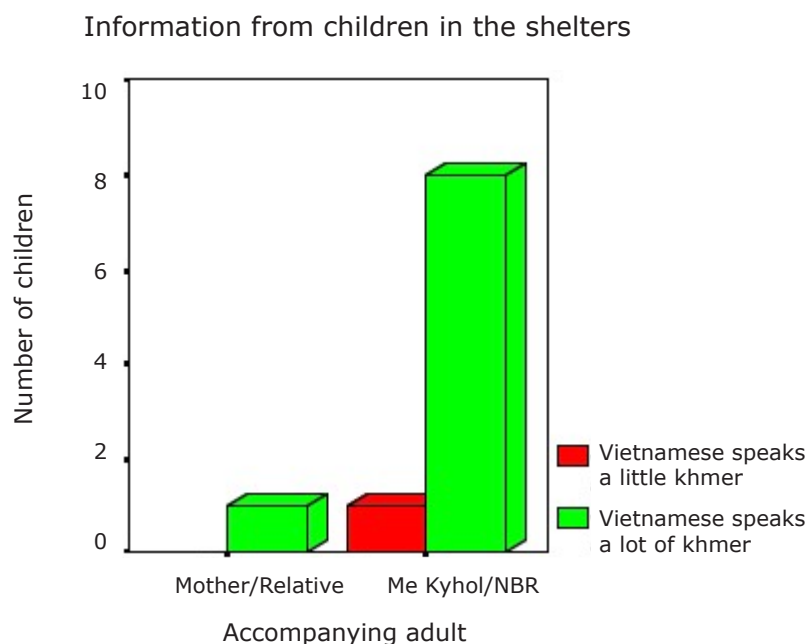
A Cambodian woman begging on Sukhumvit with her children told the team that the children selling roses are Vietnamese but speak Khmer as they have lived in Cambodia for a while.

The street team also met one woman who had escaped from the Baan Raitipung and returned to her place of work in Pattaya. She is disabled (one leg missing below her knee) and is of Vietnamese/Khmer origin. She takes Polaroid photos of foreigners to sell to them. She informed the team that the adults and children selling flowers in Pattaya, who could be either Cambodian or Vietnamese/Cambodian origin, work for Vietnamese gangs but that they do this on a voluntary basis as the gangs protect them from potential dangers such as the police.

Some of the children met by the research team had telephones but as witnessed by the team one evening, the phones seem to be used more as an early warning system to alert other beggars/sellers of threats.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ In this instance, it was the research team that was seen as a threat. The boy cleaning shoes on Sukhumvit Soi 4 called other beggars/sellers further down Sukhumvit to alert them that research team was around and asking questions.

Chart 25



Of the 10 children of Vietnamese/Khmer origin in the shelters, only one of them was working with a relative.⁶⁵ All of them had been selling roses or candies in Pattaya. Most of these children are about the age of 10.

Box 12

Children selling items on the street

	Centre	Age	Location work	Type of work	Come from
1	Kredtrakarn	9	Pattaya	Selling roses/candies	Poipet
2	Kredtrakarn	10	Pattaya	Selling roses/candies	Poipet
3	Kredtrakarn	10	Pattaya	Selling photos/flowers	Poipet
4	Pak Kred	11	Pattaya	Selling roses/candies	Trad/Koh Kong
5	Pak Kred	5	Pattaya	Selling roses/candies	Phnom Penh
6	Pak Kred	6	Pattaya	Selling roses/candies	Poipet
7	Pak Kred	10	Pattaya	Selling roses/candies	Poipet
8	Pak Kred	10	Pattaya	Selling roses/candies	Poipet
9	Pak Kred	14	Pattaya	Selling roses/candies	Phnom Penh
10	Pak Kred	10	Pattaya	Selling roses/candies	Poipet

A majority of the children who reported being beaten were Vietnamese/Khmer origin. In total, eight children reported being beaten. Of these, five were part of the 10 children of Vietnamese/Khmer origin in the shelter and came with a *Me Kyhol*. One of these boys arrived at the shelter with what looked like a cigarette burn on his neck. Among the other three, none of whom were Vietnamese/Khmer origin, two were with a *Me Kyhol* and one was with his mother.

⁶⁵ And even then, it may even be that this is a 'non-blood relative'.

In addition to selling flowers, a 14 year old boy who was one of the ten boys of Vietnamese/Khmer origin in the shelters was also suspected by the research team to have been selling sex.⁶⁶ Another girl of Cambodian/Vietnamese origin on Sukhumvit told the team that “if you go with foreigners, they will pay 10,000 baht (approx. USD 250) for a massage.”⁶⁷

Out of the 140 child beggars in the three shelters, 10 were of Khmer/Vietnamese origin. To the street team’s knowledge, they were all arrested without an adult, although the adult may have been taken to the IDC. One of the 10 told the research team that he had been with his mother while selling roses in Pattaya. The other 9 children claimed that their parents were dead. From their interactions with these 10 children, the team in the shelter noted that the circumstances of all of these children were much more unclear than those of their Cambodian counterparts.

All Cambodian children begging or selling were the target of research but it appeared to the team that these children were working in areas more likely to be protected by gangs, and the team felt it was much more difficult to gain access to them. As these children were not the target group of the research, the research team was unable to devote more time to learning about this group. However the researcher team observed some common traits among the children of Vietnamese/Khmer origin encountered both in the shelters and on the streets:

- 1) Lower incidence of arrest
- 2) High percentage of these children are beaten
- 3) They work in sex industry/red-light areas known to be protected by the police, such as in Pattaya, Nana (Sukhumvit Soi 4)
- 4) All are selling items instead of begging

Below are case studies collected from Vietnamese/Khmer children in the shelters:

Case Study 20 -- Vietnamese/Khmer Girl, 10 years old

This is my first time to Thailand. I came with an old Vietnamese woman called Ork. She gave my mother 8000 baht and took me to sell flowers at Pattaya. I sold flowers in bars and restaurants from midnight to 6 a.m. in the morning. Yey Ork was waiting for me to get the money I earned. She also taught me how to steal and pick the pockets of foreign tourists. She was happy when I got more money from selling flowers. If I did not earn much she would beat me.

Case Study 21 -- Vietnamese/Khmer Girl, 9 years old

I was born in Vietnam but moved to Phnom Penh. For the past 2-3 years, I have lived in Poipet. I came to Thailand with Mrs. Da. She is not my relative. Mrs. Da has a passport but bought a day pass for me. We rented a room for 1000 baht/month. I begged in Pattaya and have all the money to Mrs. Da. Mrs. Da sends 3,000 baht via a *Me Kychol* to my mother each month.

Although the evidence is weak, these findings suggest that there needs to be more research on possible links between children selling flowers or candies in some areas of Bangkok, children selling flowers or candies in Pattaya, the sex industry, and ‘gangs’ or networks (with potential links to Vietnam). This theory is supported by Dr. Kritiya Archavanitkul who also states that “interestingly, the network which recruited Khmer children was a different group from the one which recruits Vietnamese children.”⁶⁸

⁶⁶ This was not confirmed by the boy himself but his behavior and interactions with the team, and conversations with staff in the shelter suggested that he had sexual contact with a number of adults, including foreigners.

⁶⁷ She was approximately 10 years old. When the team asked if she had to remove her clothes she said that she did not which implies that sexual intercourse was not involved.

⁶⁸ Archavanitkul, 1998, section 5.3.1.

From conversations with key informants⁶⁹, these networks are more representative of networks throughout Thailand which transport children down to large tourist destinations such as Pattaya, Koh Chang, Koh Samui and Phuket. This is backed up by evidence from the ILO: “Cambodian children are trafficked primarily to neighboring Thailand mainly for begging, soliciting, street hawking or flower selling on the streets of Bangkok. Cambodian children are also seen in the relatively affluent tourist resorts such as Pattaya, Phuket and Hua Hin. As young as four, these children often belong to organized trafficking networks and begging syndicates.”⁷⁰ Although there is no evidentiary link that has been proved between Vietnamese ‘networks’ and these children, one interesting avenue for possible future research arises from the access that these children have to red-light areas where more “organized criminal networks” operate. Is there a link between these children, and these criminal networks? Are these flower selling activities protected from police harassment? The children themselves are quite vulnerable, because Vietnamese children who have either lived in Cambodia for many years as illegal/legal migrants often lack legal status in Cambodia.

69 Notably Maryknoll staff based in the Immigration Detention Centre and the IOM Translator/Interpreter.

70 ILO, 2006.

IX. Conclusion

While outwardly simple and obvious at first glance, the situation of Cambodian beggars is much more complex than it appears, and the depths of complexity only become apparent when one delves deeper into the issue. It quickly becomes clear that ‘rescuing’ beggars as a primary intervention is not sufficient, since the beggars quickly return after deportation to the Thai-Cambodian border. The researchers learned that beggars are quite capable of moving from the border to Bangkok by themselves, on public transportation, indicating that deportation is simply a hindrance to beggars, not a solution in and of itself. Asking the public not to give money beggars is not sufficient either, as it can have dangerous consequences for all beggars, especially those who are actual trafficked victims and are presumably being coerced to produce earnings – although it should be noted that the researchers state they found few beggars who were actually trafficked victims. This must be weighed against the fact that it is the relatively lucrative (from the point of view of the beggars) outcomes of begging that continue to entice migrants from Cambodia to beg, meaning that a sustainable solution will require a diminution of giving to beggars.

The list of involved stakeholders has grown exponentially as various forms of expertise and authority have been deemed necessary (primarily by the RTG and by national and international advocates) to tackle the problem – and now the police, immigration, social workers, interpreters, attorneys, NGOs, labor experts, marketing experts, international agencies are all involved. At the end of the day, the level of complexity of this problem requires a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder approach, which is both effective and sufficiently broad in scope. Fortunately, there is capacity in both Thailand and Cambodia to address this issue. There are political commitments contained in bilateral and multilateral agreements signed by both Governments, and stakeholders on both sides of the border have clearly demonstrated their willingness to collaborate in search of sustainable solutions.

Any sustainable solution to the problem of Cambodian adults and children begging in Thailand will need to incorporate a wide range of activities and partners. A truly comprehensive approach, covering issues that cross borders and targets, is critical. As noted above, serious progress on the legal aspects has already been made: the governments of Thailand and Cambodia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on *Bilateral Cooperation for Eliminating Trafficking in Children and Women* on May 31, 2003. This MOU lays the groundwork for collaborative approaches in combating human trafficking. Implementation and operation of the MOU is still in progress, and most observers recognize that this MOU provides the backbone for wider efforts but that is not a substitute for actual work on the ground. Nevertheless, the MOU demonstrates the clear political commitment of both governments. Furthermore, the governments have also signed the MOU on Cooperation in The Employment of Workers, which aims to provide channels for legal employment as well as necessary protection of workers’ rights. More recently both governments took part in a regional collaboration, which resulted in signing of the COMMIT MOU in October 2004. Among other things, this MOU charged the two governments with an obligation to ensure cross-border cooperation in the safe return of trafficked persons, including the provision of support to ensure their well being; to work together to facilitate the successful recovery and reintegration of trafficked persons. These collaborative approaches provide the most realistic avenue for solutions to the issue of Cambodian beggars in Thailand.

The proposed strategy requires long-term commitment, both political and financial, from partners across the board: governments, NGOs, international agencies, and the general public. Through disciplined, coordinated action on several fronts, tangible and solid results can be achieved. Critically, the governments of Thailand and Cambodia must act in harmony, recognizing their unique roles and responsibilities. Without economic development in Cambodia as a whole, and specifically if there is no follow-up in Cambodia on projects to provide medium to long-term economic livelihoods for rural Cambodians, then improved service delivery and identification of victims and vulnerable migrants in Thailand will not have long-term effects on recidivism rates. If victims and vulnerable migrants are taken off the street without

appropriate assistance, any public information campaign to stop giving cash handouts to beggars could rebound against the beggars if they are controlled by external gangs or networks demanding money for services or protection. All collaborations which are developed must include important stakeholders with experience working directly with the target population, especially community groups and NGOs.

Clearly, there is more work that needs to be done to address this sensitive issue, both in Thailand and in Cambodia, and the solutions which are developed must be sustainable. The current cycle of apprehension, screening, return to Cambodia, and then re-migration back into Thailand is replete with well-intended short-term responses, but none of these have yet been able to change the overall dynamic of the cycle. The research team sincerely hopes that some of the following recommendations may lead to policy responses that can alter the current cycle in a way that addresses the problems, and helps assure the migrant beggars of a better life.

X. Recommendations

Based on its research, observations and analysis, the research team has developed a series of recommendations, which are divided into five thematic areas.

A. Pre-departure/Prevention of unsafe migration

Information

- Establishment of one-stop safe migration centers and outreach teams in key high risk areas of Cambodia to provide information on legal avenues of migration, vocational and life skills training opportunities, and local employment/income alternatives/options
- Close coordination in Cambodia among the safe migration centers, the local inter-ministerial institutions, international organizations, rural development NGOs, livelihood NGOs, local businesses, national development programs for effective implementation of the above
- Public information campaign in all provinces of Cambodia on safe migration
- Public awareness campaign in Thailand on the vulnerability of foreign migrant workers

Training

- Provide life-skills training to prospective migrants in Cambodia for legal employment in Cambodia and/or other countries, especially Thailand
- Provide training for community based stakeholders in Cambodia on the legal avenues of migration, vocational and life skills training opportunities, and local employment/income alternatives/options

Cooperation

- Promotion of safe migration through utilizing all existing mechanisms including the Thai-Cambodian Employment MOU and the Thai-Cambodian Trafficking MOU **(CB)**²
- Close cooperation between RTG and RCG for ongoing clarification of the legal process for foreign migrant workers, especially in Thailand **(CB)**

Research/Data Collection

- Ongoing data collection and needs assessment to identify specific target areas for safe migration and economic livelihood activities

B. Work on the Streets

Rescue and screening

- Work from the initial assumption that all beggars are victims of trafficking and transport them to a shelter where screening can take place to determine who are victims of trafficking. Child-friendly interview techniques to be provided to all responsible actors.
- All stages of the process should include persons who are fluent in languages of the migrants that can be part of the shelter social work team to provide interpretation and basic social work services.

- Round ups/rescues should continue to be led by a multi-agency task force of RTG officials, police and social workers. They also should be further strengthened to ensure well-planned coordination.
- Ensure clear understanding about the RTG's screening policies among those involved
- Strengthen coordination and information-sharing among all actors involved in any aspect of the above process.

Support for non trafficked beggars

- Determine/refine appropriate services and processes for beggars who are not victims of trafficking

Research/Data Collection

- Look into possible links between children, especially Khmer/Vietnamese children, selling small items or begging and gangs controlling the sex industry

C. Services in shelters in Thailand

Services in shelters

- Undertake a consultative process to refine and agree guidelines on the treatment and types of services for vulnerable migrants in government shelters, to be shared with NGO and CSO shelters. Decisions should align with the best interest of children and those under care.
- Review current services for “vulnerable migrants” against the above guidelines. Those placed in the shelters should participate in the review of services.
- All stages of the process should include persons who are fluent in languages of the migrants that can be part of the shelter social work team to provide interpretation, basic social work and child-friendly services, with the support of partners from countries of origin of the migrants. This includes services to prepare children / adults for return
- Information on standards of care to be available for all, including those in the shelters

Capacity building

- Continue capacity-building of shelter staff on issues of migration, human trafficking, and cross-cultural understanding

D. Repatriation and return

Services to and treatment of victims

- The quality and efficiency of intake interviews, family tracing, family assessment and family support processes should be improved to expedite return/repatriation to Cambodia of unaccompanied children and trafficked victims, and vulnerable migrants, and to reduce time spent in shelters in Cambodia and ensure sustainable reintegration.
- Review procedures and undertake a consultative process to agree guidelines for treatment and types of services for vulnerable migrants relating to repatriation and return

Reception centres

- Reception centres, like the Poipet Transit Centre, should also be located in areas such as Koh Kong and should expand to accommodate repatriated vulnerable migrants as well as trafficking victims.
- Target vocational training skills provided in shelters in Thailand to meet with current needs of the Cambodian labour market.
- Improve network of services available to returnees in Cambodia so that they build upon and reinforce skills acquired in shelters in Thailand.

E. Promoting sustainable reintegration*Systems and processes*

- Review approaches and systems for reintegration of vulnerable migrants in order to speed up family reintegration.
- Based on the findings of the review, the RCG and partners should strengthen and improve the quality and efficiency of reintegration and follow-up services for both victims of trafficking and vulnerable migrants to ensure successful reintegration.

Coordination

- DSAVY, OSAVY, commune and village authority staff be involved in reintegration and follow up should receive more support and training on relevant processes and procedures.
- Review and reinforce the collaboration among MOSAVY, DSAVY, OSAVY, MoWA, MoLVT, private sector and NGOs through existing networks/structures (such as CPN, MDT, MoSAVY Process).

Support to families

- RCG and partners should reinforce holistic family support upon return (including education, training, legal registration, psycho social support, income generation activities, healthcare) to avoid remigration/ re-trafficking.
- Promote family reintegration upon return when possible and encourage community/family based alternative care by both Government and NGOs.

Training and livelihoods

- RCG should encourage development of private business and investment to create employment opportunities in source provinces at the local level, not just in Poipet (transit town) or Phnom Penh
- Training on the legal avenues of migration, vocational and life skills training opportunities, and local employment/income alternatives/options should be provided to returnees.
- Close coordination in Cambodia among the resource centers, the local DSAVY, rural development NGOs, livelihood NGOs, local businesses, national development programs, etc is essential to implementing the above recommendations.

Research/Data Collection

- Ongoing market research and review of existing data on employment opportunities to improve vocational training and job placement services in both Thailand and Cambodia.
- Maintain and update a resource directory of services available to returnees.
- Conduct a parallel survey in Cambodia on Cambodian Child Beggars returned from Thailand.

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XII. Appendices

A. Appendix 1—Questionnaire used with child beggars

Date

Name of Interviewer

You are being asked to answer some questions for a study. We want to get a better idea of the lives of Cambodian children who come to Bangkok. We are trying to find ways to help children like you in the future and your answers could help us do that. We will give you a copy of this paper if you want.

If you agree to be in the research, you will be asked some questions about your background and your experiences in Thailand. Some of the questions might make you feel ill at ease. You can refuse to answer any questions. You can stop the interview at any time. A child advocate will be in the room during the questions. His/Her job is to make sure that you are comfortable. He/She may tell me to stop asking questions if you look tired or ill at ease. We will protect information about you the best that we can. We will not write your name anywhere. Your interview will be on a tape but does not have your name. A child advocate will be in the room to help you.

You may leave the interview anytime. You can refuse to answer any questions.

Background

1. Sex Male Female

2. How old are you?

3. Who are you here with?

Mother	Aunt	Grandmother	Older sister	Other
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If the interviewer has knowledge that this is not true, please indicate what the relationship is

BACKGROUND/FAMILY

4. Do you have other family members? If so, who and where are they now?

5. Did you live with them before you came here? If so, where?

If the child provides more detailed information (including village name, commune and district), please note:

6. How long did you live there?

7. Is that your hometown?

Yes

No

8. If not, where is your home town?

9. Who did you live with before coming to Thailand?

Both parents	Mother	Father	Mother & Stepfather	Father & Stepmother
Aunt	Neighbour	Brothers and sisters	On the streets	Other

If the child provides more information on family situation, please note:

10. How many brothers and sisters do you have?

Older brothers	Older sisters	Younger brothers	Younger sisters
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COMING TO THAILAND**11. Did you come to Thailand with (see answer to question 3) or did you come with someone else?**

12. If they came with someone else, ask where that person is now?

13. Did you want to come to Thailand?**14. Did you or your (answer to question 3), pay anyone any money to come here?****15. Where did you cross the border between Cambodia and Thailand?**

Poipet/ Aranyaprathet	Koh Kong	Surin	Forest	Other

16. If they say forest, ask where it was (in which province?), how long did it take, was it dangerous, who accompanied them?

17. Did you (or your _____) buy a day pass? Yes No

18. If not, did you pay anyone else at the border?**19. What transport/route did you take from the border?**

Bus	Public Taxi	Pre-arranged car	Train	Other
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20. If possible, provide details of the route, then ask, where did you arrive in Bangkok?

Hua Lamphon	Thonburi Railway station	Northern Bus Terminal	Southern Bus Terminal	Makesan
Other				

21. Once you had arrived, where did you go next and how did you get there?

22. Did someone else help you get there? If so who? Yes No

ACCOMMODATION

23. Where did you sleep?

On the streets	Under a bridge	Rented room	In someone's house	Other
Get precise details of where this is:				

24. Did you pay for this room? Yes No

25. How much did you pay?

26. Did this include meals? If so, how many?

27. Was the food good?

28. Was it enough food?

29. Was there somewhere to take a bath?

30. Was there electricity?

31. Did you have to pay extra for it?

32. Were there any extra costs?

33. What was the name of the guesthouse/owner?

34. Was he/she kind to you?

WHAT KIND OF WORK

35. What kind of work did you do?

Begging	Selling flowers, etc	Scavenging	No work (vagrant)	
Begging and selling flowers, etc				

36. Did you have a boss? Yes No

37. Did you or your family know your boss before coming here? Yes No

38. How much did you earn everyday?

39. How much did you keep?

None	All	Half	Other	
------	-----	------	-------	--

40. Who did you give it to?

Boss	Gang who controls the area	Send home	Other	
------	----------------------------	-----------	-------	--

41. Does anything happen to you if you don't hand the money over?

No	Get shouted at	Get beaten	Get no meal	Other
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42. How did you send it home?

Agency	Gang who controls the area	Send home	Other	
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LOCATION OF BEGGING

43. Where did you work/beg?

44. How did you know that this was a good place to work/beg?

45. Who decides/tells you that you should move to another place?

Boss	Gangs	Get moved on by police	We decide	

46. How do you move between places?

On foot	By bus	By mototaxi	By tuk tuk	Boss takes us (How?)
Other				

47. What times did you beg? (give locations for times and ask why at these times?)

48. How many different places did you go to in 1 day?

49. Is it dangerous where you work?

50. If so, how is it dangerous?

51. What problems have you had in Thailand?

HEALTH

52. Do you have any health problems?

53. Do you feel happy?

54. Have you ever been sick whilst you were begging?

55. If so, how did you get better?

Visit a doctor	Traditional Medicine	Medicine bought from the pharmacy		
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56. Did you do this by yourself or did someone help you?

Mother/relative	Boss	Other children	NGO/Organization	Other
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LEISURE

57. Did you like begging? Yes No

58. What did you like about it? What did you not like about it?

59. Would you like to continue begging? Yes No

60. If so why? If no, why?

61. Do you have any freetime/playtime?

62. What do you do in your freetime/playtime?

DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE

63. Would you like to go back to Cambodia?

64. What are your dreams for the future?

B. Appendix 2—Questionnaire used with Thai public giving to beggars

Questionnaire no _____

Date _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Name of interviewer _____

Good morning/Good afternoon. My name is _____ and I work for Friends International, an organization based in Cambodia who works with street children. We are currently doing some research in Bangkok in collaboration with the UN on the issue of beggars. Would you mind answering a few questions? It should not take longer than about 5 minutes.

1. Sex

Male _____ Code 1

Female _____ Code 2

2. Age (guess their age)

Under 25 _____ Code 1

25-50 _____ Code 2

Over 50 _____ Code 3

3. Nationality

British _____ Code 2

French _____ Code 4

American _____ Code 3

German _____ Code 5

Other _____ (can be coded later or just use 6)

4. Are you a tourist or expatriate? (AT END OF CASE ROW)

Tourist _____ Code 1

Expat _____ Code 2

5. Job

Public sector _____ Code 1

Private sector _____ Code 2

Student _____ Code 3

Self employed _____ Code 4

Unemployed _____ Code 5

Other _____ Code 6

6. Marital status

Married _____ Code 1

Number of children _____

Single _____ Code 2

Separated/Divorced _____ Code 3

7. Do you think that beggars and sellers are the same?

Yes _____ Code 1

How _____

No _____ Code 2

How _____

8. Do you ever give money to beggars?

Never (go to 10) _____ Code 1

Sometimes (go to 11) _____ Code 2

Often (go to 11) _____ Code 3

9. What are your reasons for not giving?_____
_____**10. How often do you give?**

Once per year _____ Code 1

Twice per year _____ Code 2

Once per month _____ Code 3

Twice per month _____ Code 4

Every time I see a beggar _____ Code 5

Other _____ Code 6

11. Is there a certain time of year you are more likely to give?

No _____ Code 1

Yes close to holidays _____ Code 2

Yes after I get my salary _____ Code 3

Other _____ Code 4

12. What kind of beggar are you more likely to give to?

Adult _____ Code 1

Child _____ Code 2

Both _____ Code 3

13. Why are you more likely to give to this kind of beggar?

14. Does it influence your decisions if the beggar is a disabled person?

Yes _____ Code 1 Why? _____

No _____ Code 2 Why _____

15. On average how much do you give each time to a beggar?

1-5 baht _____ Code 1

5-10 baht _____ Code 2

10-20 baht _____ Code 3

20-30 baht _____ Code 4

30-40 baht _____ Code 5

>40 baht _____ Code 6

Specify / other _____ Code 7

16. What are your main reasons for giving to beggars?

No special reason _____ Code 1

Pity _____ Code 2

I feel responsible _____ Code 3

Other _____ Code 4

17. Are these reasons related to a sense of religious or spiritual obligation?

Yes _____ Code 1 What religion are you? _____

No _____ Code 2

Christian – Code 1

Buddhist – Code 2

Muslim – Code 3

Not religious – Code 4

18. Do you give money to beggars in your home country?

Yes _____ Code 1

No _____ Code 2

19. If so, are the amounts or reasons for giving different or the same?

Same amount same reasons _____ Code 1

Same amount different reasons _____ Code 2

Different amount same reasons _____ Code 3

Different amount different reasons _____ Code 4

20. How do you think it helps?

Meets immediate needs _____ Code 1

Meets long-term needs _____ Code 2

Other _____ Code 3

21. What do you think would happen to the beggars if everybody stopped giving?

They would die _____ Code 1

They would turn to crime _____ Code 2

They would find another job _____ Code 3

They would still beg but would find a different method _____ Code 4

Other _____ Code 5

They would become even poorer _____ Code 6

22. Are you aware that some beggars are forced to beg?

Yes _____ Code 1

No _____ Code 2

Yes I've heard it but I'm not sure its true _____ Code 3

23. Are you aware that some sellers are forced to sell?

Yes _____ Code 1

No _____ Code 2

Yes because the children say so _____ Code 3

24. Why do you think people become beggars in the first place?

Abandoned _____ Code 1

Runaway from home _____ Code 2

Because of drugs _____ Code 3

No-one to take care of them (if old or young) _____ Code 4

Poverty _____ Code 5

Other _____ Code 6

Don't know _____ Code 7

Because they are trafficked _____ Code 8

25. Does it bother you to see them (i.e. do you feel bad or uneasy)?

Yes _____ Code 1

No _____ Code 2

Sometimes _____ Code 3

26. If yes, why do you feel bad?

Because it is a social problem _____ Code 1

Because I pity them _____ Code 2

Because it is an economic problem _____ Code 3

Other _____ Code 4

27. Can you suggest any solutions to the issue of beggars?

Build a shelter _____ Code 1

Help them find jobs _____ Code 2

Create an authority to help them _____ Code 3

Provide loans so they can start a business _____ Code 4

Other _____ Code 5

28. Who do you think should help beggars?

Government _____ Code 1

Police _____ Code 2

NGO _____ Code 3

Other _____ Code 4

Government and NGOs _____ Code 5

29. Did the interviewer see the interviewee giving money to a beggar?

Yes _____ Code 1

No _____ Code 2

Would you be interested in receiving the results of this survey and/or information on programmes which help beggars in Bangkok and the region?

If yes, would you mind leaving us your email address? **(Privacy Statement: We will not use your email address for any other purpose other than the above stated purpose)**

Email: _____

Thank you very much for your time. Have a nice day.

C. Appendix 3—Control of Begging Act, 1937 (unofficial English translation)**Control of Begging Act, B.E. 2484 (1937)**

In the name of His Majesty King Ananda Mahidhol

The Council of Regency

(by notification of the President of the Assembly of the People's Representatives dated the 4th August
B.E. 2480 (1933)

Aditya Dibabha

General Pitchayen Yothin

Enacted on the 4th day of October B.E. 2484 (1937)

Being the 8th year of the Present Reign

Whereas the Assembly of the People's Representatives has passed a resolution that it is expedient to control begging,

Be it therefore enacted by the King, by and with the advice and consent of the Assembly of the People's Representatives, as follows:

Section 1: This Act shall be called the "Control of Begging Act, B.E. 2484".

Section 2: This Act shall come into force on and from the day of its publication in the Government Gazette, but its application to a particular district shall be done through the Royal Decree.

Section 3: Upon coming into force of this Act, all other laws, rules and regulations, the provisions of which are contained herein or inconsistent herewith, shall be repealed.

Section 4: Routine practice in accordance with a religion or faith does not come under this Act.

Section 5: In this act:

"Minister" means the minister in charge and control of this act.

"Director-General" means the Director-General of the Department designated by the Minister for the execution of this Act.

"Competent Authority" means an administrative official or a member of the police force and senior administrative official or senior police officer as defined in the provisions in the Criminal procedure Code, including a person appointed by the Minister to carry out a task under this Act.

"Welfare Institute " means a place designated by the Minister and created to implement control under this Act.

Section 6: No person is allowed to be a beggar.

The following act is considered begging: soliciting property that belongs to others without the person soliciting doing any work for it or giving back property of some kind in return, with such act not being that which takes place between relatives.

An act of asking, without any prior direct or implicit agreement, for a voluntary property from the audience by a person who sings, plays a wind, string or percussion instrument, performs or does any other act in a like manner shall not be accepted as an excuse that no begging has taken place under the provisions of this Section.

Section 7: When it is evident from the investigation that a person who is found begging is elderly, of unsound mind, disabled or afflicted with a disease, unable to earn any livelihood, having no other means for self-support, and having no friends or relations to look after, the competent authority shall arrange for the person to be sent to the welfare institute.

Section 8: When it is evident from the investigation that the begging person does not come under the categories prescribed in Section 7, the competent authority shall instruct the person concerned to go to a government' employment office for further assistance.

If within 30 days starting from the day on which an instruction under the preceding paragraph is given, the instructed person failed to go to the employment agency concerned, or went to the employment agency but returned with an excuse for refusing to receive assistance without a reasonable cause, or received assistance but later abandoned it, or used some kind deceit to avoid being employed or receiving assistance from the said Institute, and despite the Institute's attempt to find employment and accommodation has gone back to begging, the competent authority shall send the person to a source where work is available under the Employment Act for the unemployed.

Section 9: Those who are sent to the welfare institute are under the supervision of the Director-General. The Director-General may authorize a provincial governor or mayor to take charge.

If those who are sent to the welfare institute have adequate accommodation and an adequate mode of living, the Director-General or the authorized person shall release them. If such individuals are known to have leprosy, tuberculosis or a dangerous communicable disease, they must show satisfactory evidence that the condition is no longer communicable or contagious, or, once released, they will stay in a place where the communicable condition is confined.

Section 10: The Director-General or the authorized person will instruct those put in the Welfare Institute to work as deemed appropriate or have them sent to work any other place.

Section 11: If those who are sent to the Welfare Institute or any other place have leprosy, tuberculosis or dangerous contagious disease, they shall be put under separate care to prevent possible spreading or contagion.

Section 12: The Director-General shall set regulations to control behavior. Disciplinary measures for an infraction may go beyond normal regulations as follows:

- (a) physical confinement or confinement in a dark room
- (b) taking away or reduction of privileges created for the purpose of behavior control.

Section 13: Those who are sent to the Welfare Institute or any other place but refuse to go or escape from the welfare institute concerned shall be punished with a fine not exceeding 100 baht or with imprisonment not exceeding one month, or both.

Section 14: The Minister of Interior shall have the care and charge of this Act and shall have the power to designate a Department in the Ministry of Interior to supervise and control the discharge of responsibility as well as having the power to issue ministerial regulations for the implementation of this Act.

Such ministerial regulations shall come into force upon their publications in the Government Gazette.

Countersigned by:

Field Marshall P. Pibulsongkram

Prime Minister



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