



ASSESSING VULNERABILITIES AND RESPONSES TO ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES IN CAMBODIA

THE MIGRATION, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE NEXUS



PROJECT INFORMATION

Cambodia is being reshaped by increasingly complex and diverse population movements. Domestic and cross-border migration is one of the most significant transformational changes in Cambodian society and is set to continue. According to the 2008 Population Census, 26 per cent of the Cambodian population were migrants. Between 2010 and 2013, the Cambodia – Thailand corridor became the 9th most important migration stream globally (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2013). As of November 2014, it was estimated that 0.9 million Cambodian nationals were established in Thailand.

In Cambodia, local livelihood and employment conditions are considered to be the main determinants of migration. With 80% of its population living in rural areas, the country depends upon natural resources for food and income. Increasing pressure on the lives and livelihood of rural communities caused by the intensification of environmental degradation and climate-related disasters is anticipated to intensify the current trend of high rural to urban migration and international migration in the coming years. The concurrence of climate change and high rates of out-migration raises certain questions: to what extent do current and projected climate and environmental changes contribute to shaping the livelihood dynamics of Cambodia's rural population? How do rural communities react to these changes? To what extent does migration operate as a viable adaptation strategy?

Between January 2014 and April 2016, IOM Cambodia has documented knowledge on the livelihood dynamics, migration patterns and drivers observed among Cambodia's rural communities through the support of the IOM Development Fund, in cooperation with the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM) and the involvement of the Ministry of Environment (MoE), the National Committee for Subnational Democratic Development (NCDD-S), the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) and local NGOs.

Key activities included:

- ▶ Academic research and policy review
- ▶ Collection and analysis of empirical data in two selected provinces
- ▶ Capacity building to national and subnational authorities
- ▶ Awareness raising activities
- ▶ Sharing of experiences and good practices

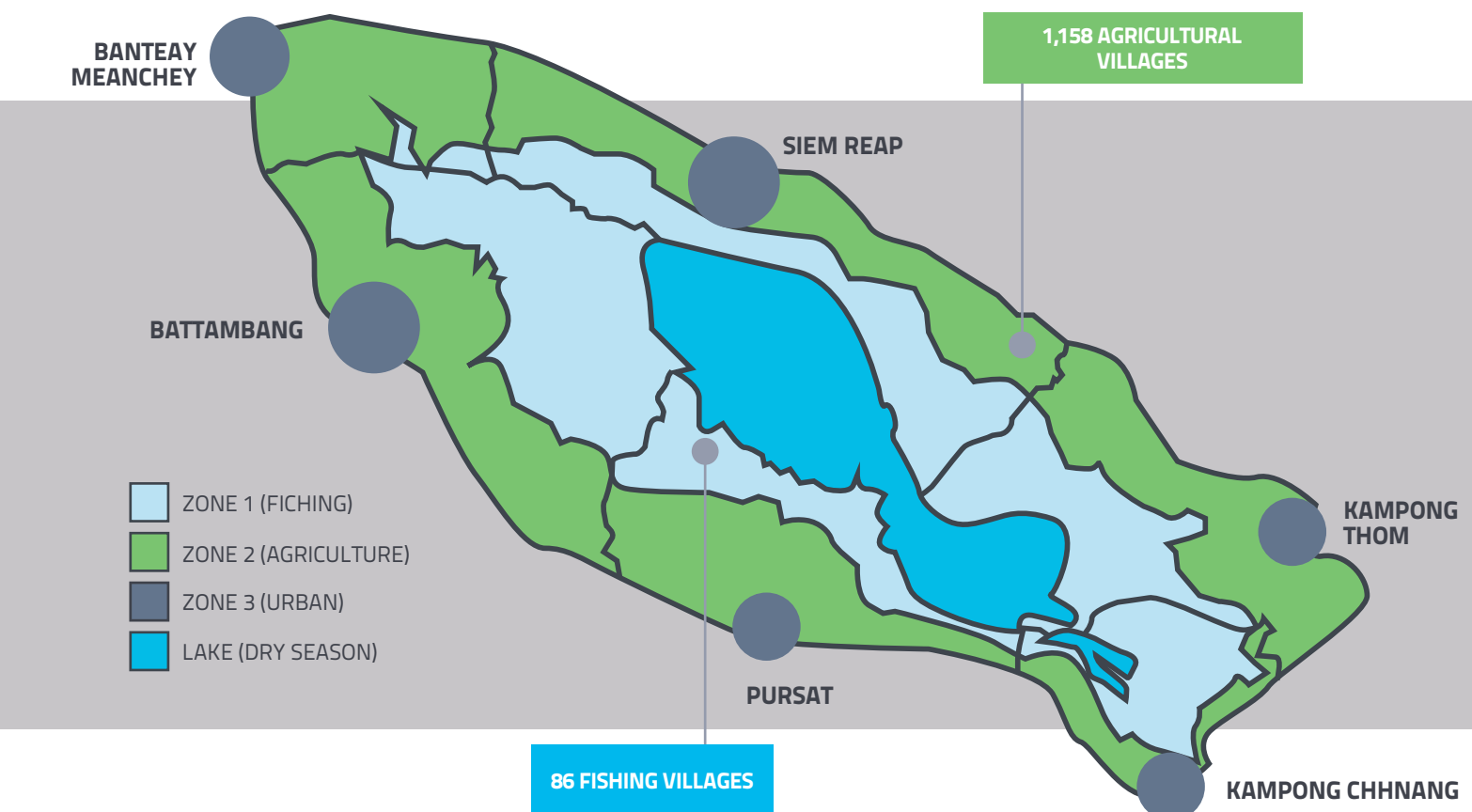


SELECTED SITES

The Cambodia's Tonle Sap Basin was chosen for the field study due to its uniqueness in the Cambodian context, with close proximity to the Mekong River, direct or indirect contribution to the livelihood needs of at least 15 per cent of Cambodia's total population, high vulnerability to climate change, and established high out-migration patterns.

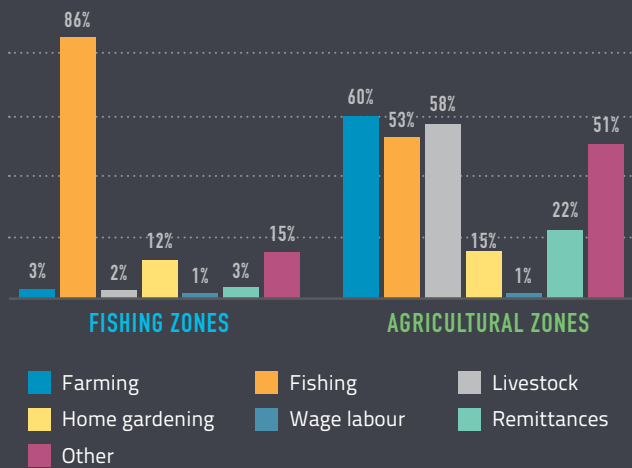
First and second hand information were collected through a broad-based consultation process, including provincial consultative workshops, participatory rural appraisals and household surveys in four selected rural communities, characterized by diverse socioeconomic profiles:

- ▶ Kampong Chamlang and Pat Sanday, two fishing villages located in the north-eastern part of Kampong Thom Province
- ▶ Bak Amrek and Andong Trach, two agricultural villages located in Battambang Province.



KEY FINDINGS

Source of income

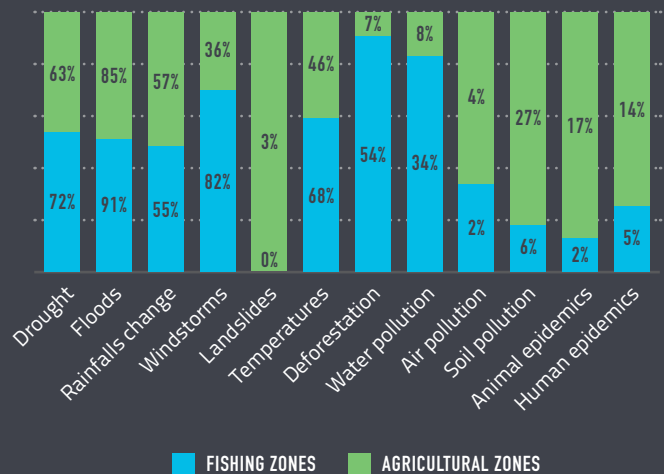


Livelihood strategies are more diversified in the agricultural zone than those in use in the fishing zone. Surveyed households in the agriculture-based communities generate earnings from farming (60%), fishing (53%), raising livestock (58%) and wage labour (51%). Significantly, over 20 per cent of the respondents in the agricultural zone cited remittances as a crucial source of income. With 86 per cent of the households relying primarily on fishing, communities in the fishing zone reported fewer diversification options and increased vulnerability to resource depletion due to a degrading environment.

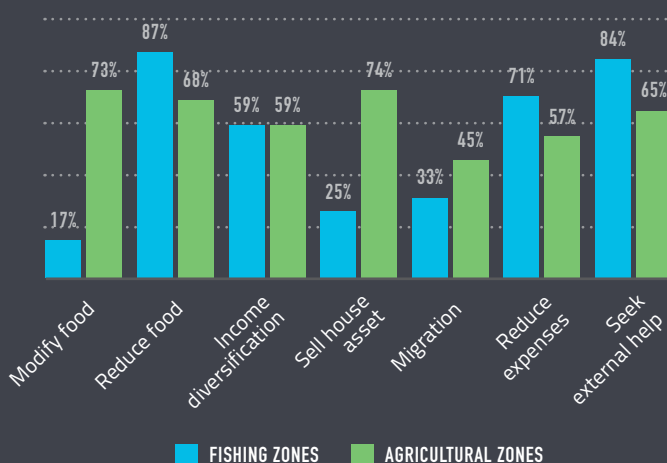
The perceived exposure to environmental stressors and the identification of environmental risks is largely a result of the livelihood strategies adopted by the surveyed communities.

While floods and droughts are largely recognized as environmental threats within the fishing and agriculture based communities, windstorms, water pollution, deforestation and temperature change carry increased risks to the livelihoods of the fishing households; soil pollution, outbreak of animal and human epidemics are more likely to be cited as environmental threats among agriculture based communities.

Exposure to environmental stressors



Livelihood responses



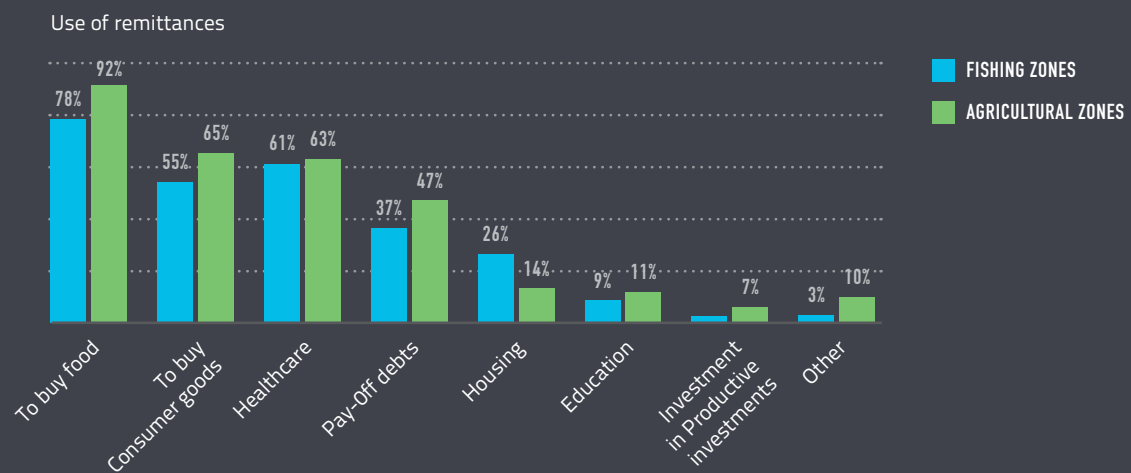
In face of economic hardship or natural disasters, autonomous responses tend to vary accordingly.

87 per cent of the respondents in the fishing villages restrict food consumption, 84 per cent rely on loans from relatives or neighbors, while a third of the respondents cited migration as a common coping strategy.

73 per cent of the respondents in the agricultural villages would primarily modify their food production rather than restrict their consumption, 74 per cent would sell household assets. Almost half of the respondents would diversify their income by sending younger household members out of the community for work.

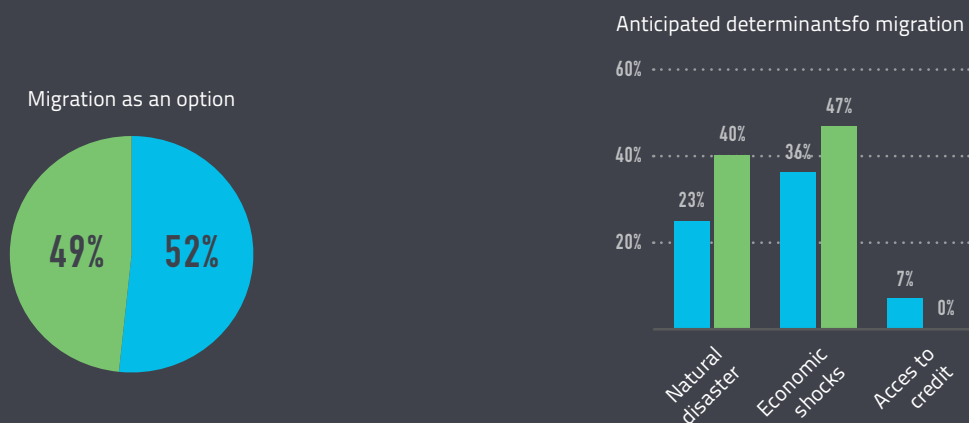
Migration patterns and outcomes are diversified and uneven

- ▶ Within the fishing communities, migration is reportedly quite a new but growing phenomenon, and movement occur primarily within the country, particularly Phnom Penh. More than half of the migrants are female, with an average age of 29.5 years old.
- ▶ In the agricultural zone, migration is a common livelihood strategy since the late 1990s. More than half of the migrants are male, aged 27 on average, with Thailand being the predominant destination. More than two-thirds of the migrant households reported migration as very important, against 40 per cent in the fishing communities.
- ▶ Economic and food security reasons drives migration in both communities (80%). 30 per cent of the surveyed households cited the direct impact of environmental factors such as prolonged drought, severe floods, strong abrupt winds, unpredictable timing of the seasons, as a key determinants of migration.



Although substantial, remittances are rarely used to support productive investment.

- ▶ In the fishing communities, two-thirds of the migrant households receive remittances and their contributions to the households' overall income appears to be substantial to one out of five households. 78 per cent of the recipients use remittances to buy food; 61 per cent to cover healthcare; 37 per cent to pay-off debts.
- ▶ In the agricultural zone, almost 100 per cent of migrant households receive remittances and contribution to the households' overall income is substantial to half of them. 92 per cent of the recipients use remittances to buy food, 63 per cent to cover healthcare goods and healthcare, 47 per cent to pay-off debts.



- ▶ When asked about their prospects, 49 and 52 per cent of the non-migrant households in the fishing and agricultural zones perceive migration as a viable option for the next future
- ▶ Anticipated triggers for migration primarily include economic shocks (36 and 47% in the fishing and agricultural zones respectively), and the occurrence of natural disasters (40 and 23% respectively).

▶ CONCLUSIONS

In the context of a fragile environment, although migration is neither the first nor the preferred adaptive strategic option, it is becoming a more common phenomenon with the frequent onset of natural disasters, and can take many forms:

- ▶ Migration has become a central element for rural households, allowing them to diversify income, secure additional resources to supplement agricultural activity when faced with soil degradation, water pollution and erratic rainfall;
- ▶ Migration can act as an adaptive strategy for dealing with seasonality and external influences such as fluctuating market pressures, or irregular flood regimes and weather patterns;
- ▶ Migration can act as a means of coping with shocks and crises associated with loss of crops, with health shocks, loss of land and indebtedness, and also contributes to disaster recovery;
- ▶ Migration can be permanent or temporary, to surrounding rural areas, to urban areas, or to another country;
- ▶ Migration tends to be selective and in most cases, a few members of a family migrate and send back remittances to support those left behind;
- ▶ It is predicted that the consequences of climate change in Cambodia will particularly affect the poorest people as they are more vulnerable and least able to adapt. As a result they will be rendered even poorer. Yet, it is not generally the poorest people who migrate, as migration demands resources. In this respect, non-migration can be associated with increased vulnerability to environmental risks. Such pressure on the most vulnerable households' livelihood can lead to the emergence of trapped population and constitute a threat to human security.



POLICY ANALYSIS

POLICIES	THE MIGRATION, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE NEXUS
Rectangular Strategy III, National Strategic Development Plan (2016-2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ National macro-level development policies address migration, environmental degradation and climate change as distinct development challenges and make no explicit references to their linkages.
National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Social protection schemes should meet the needs of those vulnerable from natural disasters ➤ Social protection schemes should provide assistance to those left behind in migrant sending communities ➤ The strategy emphasizes that low capacity of the domestic labour market to absorb growing flows of new jobseekers leads to migration
National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA- 2006), Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan (CCCSP) 2014-2023; Sectoral Climate Change Strategic Plans (CCSP) and Climate Change Action Plans (CCAP) of 9 line ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The NAPA, CCCSP, sectoral CCSP and CCSP prioritize community resilience through enhanced food security, access to water and sanitation infrastructures and sources of energy, local economic development and improved social protection mechanisms ➤ The policies look at migration as a failure to adapt ➤ The policies recognize that some adaptation strategies might reduce migration (rural development), but some might further facilitate it (transportation infrastructure development) ➤ Little attention is put on the potential of inwards remittance to foster local economic development and community resilience
The National Employment Policy (NEP) 2015 - 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The NEP aims at developing the domestic labour market as an alternative to migration and steady urbanization
The Labour Migration Policy (LMP) 2014 - 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The LMP recognizes climate change as a cause of low agricultural productivity , contributing to a shift of the labour force from the agricultural sector to other sectors of activity ➤ It recognizes the potential benefits of migration, including cross-border migration, for the socioeconomic development of the communities of origin ➤ The policy includes provisions on the development of financial services to ease remittances transfer and support productive investments in the communities of origin
Decentralization policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Decentralization policies call for the mainstreaming of climate change into sub-national planning process ➤ Implicitly, they do not see migration as an adaptation strategy but as a failure to adapt
Draft National Urban development Strategy (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The policy explicitly recognizes the need for improved climate resilience in developing urban settings ➤ The policy anticipates an increase in migration, putting more pressure on urban infrastructures

▶ RECOMMENDATIONS

NATIONAL LEVEL

- ▶ Support knowledge development through improved data collection processes to inform national and subnational policies and practices to address the challenges facing mobile populations, including those resulting from extreme environmental events or gradual environmental degradation.
- ▶ Integrate migration into the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) by reducing pressure of migration, averting displacement and considering the option of planned relocation where necessary, and by turning migration into an adaptation strategy.
- ▶ Support the development of policy coherence at a national level, including systematic mainstreaming of migration across all relevant sectors.
- ▶ Streamline migration indicators into future Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change adaptation programmes and monitoring and evaluation frameworks.
- ▶ Include climatic and environmental variables into national population census.
- ▶ Facilitate temporary and circular migration schemes through protective, accessible and affordable legal migration channels, strengthened policy, institutional, administrative and legal frameworks and reinforced operational and technical capacities to maximize the potential benefits of labour migration in socioeconomic terms.

AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

- ▶ Raise policy and public awareness on the complex linkages between migration, the environment and climate change among decentralized authorities.
- ▶ Ensure that the local authorities incorporate climate adaptation strategies in their medium-term development plan.
- ▶ Identify appropriate subnational institution or body to monitor and record environmentally-induced migration.
- ▶ Minimize the occurrence of distress migration through livelihood diversification schemes for local communities, support to local employment opportunities and local labour market oriented skills development programmes.
- ▶ Mainstream programme targeting returned migrants (productive investment, entrepreneurship, business development) and provide alternative to indebtedness.
- ▶ Investigate approaches for disseminating information about migration and adjust target population access strategy to equally engage men and women.
- ▶ Invest in irrigated agriculture, extension of climate resilient crop varieties, such as early maturing, drought and flood resilient crops.
- ▶ Improve animal husbandry, by for example creating shelter vaccination campaigns.
- ▶ Promote financial inclusion through provision of micro-credit services to farmers to better access farm inputs, develop programmes on remittances management and productive investment.



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