



IOM International Organization for Migration  
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations  
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# ***My Heart Is Here***

## **Alternative Care and Reintegration of Child Trafficking Victims and Other Vulnerable Children**



IOM would like to acknowledge the generous support from Irish Aid and Cooperazione Italiana, which was essential for this research project.

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of IOM.

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Alternative Care and Reintegration  
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Róisín Boyle

September 2009



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## **Acknowledgements**

First of all, I would like to extend my gratitude to IOM Phnom Penh for granting me the opportunity to visit and observe various shelters throughout Cambodia and to engage in constructive dialogue with both children and staff alike. It has been a truly enriching experience.

I am greatly indebted to the Chief of Mission, Ms. Iuliana Stefan and my supervisor, Dr. Bruno Maltoni for their practical advice and support throughout this project.

Sincere thanks are given to Mr Long Samnang, my assistant and translator whose patience and friendly manner helped to make the children feel at ease during the interviews.

A special thank you is due to Dr. Adam Lapicki, my husband for editing the report as well as for his insightful comments and suggestions.

I would like to thank the management of the shelters for facilitating the interviews with both the staff and the children. I appreciate the invaluable input from the staff and from all the workshop participants who shared relevant information throughout the trainings, completed surveys, and participated in focus group discussions. Their dedication is inspirational.

My deepest appreciation goes to all the children who participated in this study. They have to be commended for their readiness to talk candidly about issues that were sometimes of a personal and sensitive nature. The touching accounts of their lives have opened a window to their incredible strength under very difficult circumstances. I hope the outcome of this research will bear the fruit they deserve.

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September 2009

## **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

ARM	American Rehabilitation Missionaries
BCC	Behaviour Change Communication
BTC	Battambang Transit Centre
CCPCR	Cambodia Centre for the Protection of Children's Rights
CCT	Cambodian Children's Trust
CWCC	Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre
DoSVY	Department of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (Provincial level)
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IEC	Informational, Educational and Communication
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
KMR	Komar Rikreay
KnK	Kokkyo naki Kodomotachi
KST	Krousar Thmey
MMF	Mercy Ministries Foundation
MoLVT	Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training
MoSVY	Ministry of Social Affairs, Youth Rehabilitation
MoSALVY	Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation (Royal Government of Cambodia)
NCPD	National Committee for Population and Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIS	National Institute of Statistics
NOVCTF	The National Multi-sectoral Orphans and Vulnerable Children Task Force
OSVY	Department of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (district level)
PKO	Puthi Komar Organisation
PPS	Phare Ponleau Selpak
PTC	Poipet Transit Centre
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SKO	Sprouting Knowledge Orphans
SRO	Svay Rieng Orphanage
TPO	Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund



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## **Executive Summary**

This study aimed to assess development, social integration and post-return reintegration issues facing child victims of trafficking and those considered vulnerable for any migration-related and general exploitation or abuse issues, currently residing at shelters and orphanages that are or have received support from IOM in the past. Children's attitudes towards the quality of care provided at these residential institutions as well as the impact of shelter life on their overall well-being, preparedness for reintegration and responsible global citizenship were investigated. The perceptions of the staff regarding the same issues were also sought to validate the children's claims and to identify differences in opinion. The findings shall help the stakeholders to devise more effective and efficient strategies to close the gap between child vulnerability and child trafficking, identify elements for a successful reintegration process, and more generally enhance the quality of life for children in alternative and residential care.

A total of 133 children and 82 staff from 16 shelters and orphanages as well as a pseudo-foster programme representing alternative care providers in Banteay Meanchey, Battambang, Prey Veng and Svay Rieng were investigated by combining qualitative research techniques with quantitative methods such as semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, direct observations and surveys. The majority of the children (68%) interviewed are long-term residents who lived at a shelter for at least one year. They are from families that are dysfunctional and fragile but not necessarily destitute. The interviewees were predominantly middle children with the typology including orphans, sexually abused, street children, domestic violence victims and those who had migrant experience (about one third), but with very few disabled or from ethnic minorities. Nearly half of the children (48%) share similar experiences to those of their siblings, who have also migrated (15) and live in shelters (24).

The staff participants were engaged in 15 different roles from director to security guard, but mostly encompassed social workers, educators, and caregivers. The main responsibility for all of them was to educate children. The majority of the staff members stated directly that working with children is what they enjoy most about their work. The participants are long-term employees with only 11% having worked less than a year at their shelters. The majority were not so highly educated with only 9 people having studied at university, 10 at associate teacher training colleges, and 12 having completed Grade 12. However, most of the staff surveyed are actively pursuing opportunities to augment their capacity, believing that they have relevant training adequate for the job (55%), somewhat adequate (36%) or limited (9%).

Most of the children appeared to be well-balanced psychologically, considering their traumatic past and troubled backgrounds, displaying a healthy self-esteem, with 88% of them believing they have some talent. They are satisfied with the level of positive reinforcement paid at the shelters, mainly given as verbal admiration. They feel happiest receiving praise (19 cases), playing (13), coming to the shelter (8), during shelter activities (6), and going on outings (4). The most common causes for feeling unhappy are thinking about home (14 cases) and fighting (14). Approximately 70% of the interviewees have made more friends at the shelters. 56% of the children found it easy to speak to the staff for numerous behavioural related reasons. The shelter staff are the children's focal confidants (35%), ahead of other children (21%), teachers (10%) and parents (6%). Main concerns evolve around children's families and future. The majority (61%) were not enthusiastic or were even very unhappy (20%) about leaving the shelter. Regarding post-shelter life, 79% maintain a positive outlook based on the assumption of higher employment marketability due to education and training received.

The staff were less optimistic regarding children's abilities with only 39% ranking them on a par with community children. The majority (91%) of the staff's judgement that shelters are opening up opportunities, is similar to that endorsed by the children. The staff do not have a good understanding of what promotes children's happiness, regarding good grades at school and going out (26% each) to be the most pertinent factors. The approach of ensuring good relations with children (education - 39%, and meetings - 26%) is considered too formal. With all positive responses to the levels of communication (very good 56%, good 26% and average 17%), the staff clearly does not feel the need for improvements, and ignoring the fact that many children (44%) feel reluctant to talk to them. According to the staff, the children are prone to talk about the future rather than dwell on the past.

Although the majority of the children are satisfied with the basic services rendered, standards differ among shelters. Children rarely (43%) or never (31%) get sick with 54% claiming that they become ill less often than before joining the shelter, and only 20% more often. Almost every child agreed that shelter food is better than the food at home. 74 children (92%) expressed that they were getting more food now and subsequently, 72 of them claimed an increase in weight. In addition to having more friends, toys and sport equipment to play with, the children expressed delight at the opportunities to participate in group activities, team games and novel recreation. Nearly all of the children were united in a predilection towards living at the shelter rather than at home. When describing what was available in the shelter and not at home, possessions (75 cases) and facilities (31) took precedence over opportunities (16) and relationships (1) for many of the children. School education was the most appreciated

feature of the shelters. 37% of the interviewees did not find any fault with the shelter. Grievances about the shelters are typical complaints which can be equated with communal living.

With regard to the physical well-being of the children, the staff is less diverse and statistically more enthusiastic in their opinion citing a lower relative frequency of sickness (74%) and much better treatment (61%). The reasons cited for the shelter being better than homes included: more opportunities (70%) and better living conditions (48%). Changes that the shelter staff imagined children would like were: opportunities to receive money (13%), go on outings (8%), more vocational training (8%), and a “voice” to share ideas with staff (8%).

67% of the children admitted to missing their families. Nevertheless, the majority do not have any desire to live with their family in the immediate future (54%) and some - never (18%). Older children in the shelters can be considered responsible or altruistic towards the younger mates because 77% declared that they received support from their seniors. Many children (44%) admitted to fighting, in particular boys (27%), and similarly, bullying was not admittedly practised (62%). Feelings towards other children in the shelter were characterised as empathy or love (60%) and friendship (20%). 45% believed they are no different to community children, with 14% expressing amicable feelings. The shelter personnel were regarded as very kind (65%) or kind (9%) but topics of conversation with them seem rather impersonal.

Data obtained from the staff states that children do not talk much about their family. Good relations between younger and older children and towards newcomers are confirmed. Fighting frequency reported as observed "sometimes" by about 50% is higher than indicated by children. Bullying is either nearly non-existing or undetected, perhaps not understood. All the staff were unanimous in declaring the atmosphere between the shelter staff and children as very good. The majority of the staff (74%) acknowledged that the children spoke regularly to them but rarely shared their worries or concerns.

The majority of children like going to school (73% like it a lot, and 10% like it). Many children are in lower grades than expected for their age. Most held themselves accountable for helping with shelter housework (80%), taking care of younger children (65%), and reporting problems to staff (62%). 48 interviewees recognised importance of participating in decision making. 66% of the children acknowledged that they can provide assistance to others. The majority (62%) justified the necessity of support for their post-shelter life.

The staff felt that the children were not as enthusiastic about school as they claimed to be (61% only). It was acknowledged by approximately one third of the staff that shifts and chores determine the children's execution of housework duties. It was corroborated that children participate in the decision making process within shelters but there was a wide gap between shelters vis-à-vis the kind and extent of engagement. The staff interviewees placed little value on the children's potential to contribute to society by helping others.

55% children asserted that people in other countries experience similar problems to theirs, with 25% giving reasonable examples and 30% not fully comprehending the problems. 43% of the children did not think they are capable of doing anything important for people in other countries. Most of the children (90%) liked some foreigners. 51 children (63%) mentioned that international organisations are supporting them and Cambodia, but only 27 had some idea of the details. 47% would like additional international assistance for their shelter whereas 49% did not know whether any foreign support is required.

Over 20% of the staff admitted they do not know if there are similar problems in other countries, while 9% stated other countries had no problems. Nearly 50% of the staff was not sure if the children at the shelter could be useful or of any interest to foreigners while 13% were convinced that they could not be of any help, sometimes confusing potential capability with unwillingness. Shelter staff (65%) was usually aware of international help and could collectively identify major contributors to their organisations.

Focus group discussions generally agreed with findings from individual interviews.

**Certain areas for further research have been identified and recommendations regarding future actions and strategies can be summarized as follows:**

It is important to clarify the purpose, goals and objectives of the shelters – including the role of international aid. Goals of reintegration with the local communities, including families of children, whenever possible, should be confirmed with the funding organisations and then emphasised to the key shelter staff and the children.

In order to meet the re-integration objectives, specific programmes featuring interactions with local communities and families of the children should be implemented and monitored. In order to meet the re-integration objectives, specific programmes featuring interactions with local communities and families of the children should be implemented and monitored. Examples that could be utilised include open days (or family days) of the shelter, sport competitions, artistic performance or voluntary work of children and staff for the local

community.

Efforts should be made to support both immediate and extended families to care for their children in the home environment as the study has established that most children do not come from indigent families. More emphasis should be placed on providing services such as micro-credit lending and other income generation programmes, scholarships to support education of children, counselling, etc.

Training programmes and workshops should continue, and their effectiveness should be periodically assessed through research projects like the one reported hereby. Certain important areas need actions urgently, including: sexual education and other gender-related issues, further developing healthy self-esteem and confidence in children, the style of management skills congruent with the care provided, bullying, awareness of global or international issues, and global citizenship of Cambodians. It is important to develop a curriculum appropriate to the educational level of the shelter staff which is well below university standards.

Child specialists in certain areas such as literature, art and crafts, dance, music, sports and recreation, should be invited to the shelters to conduct occasional interactive workshops for the children. Efforts should also be made to invite new staff members and those who have yet to receive adequate pre-service and in-service training to future seminars, workshops and trainings.

Increased access and development of communication tools in a Khmer context would be instrumental in encouraging constructive dialogue between the staff and children, augmenting certain life skills activities (decision making, problem solving, creative and critical thinking), as well as helping the latter to overcome stigma.

IOM along with other development partners should shift their attention more towards shelters that are currently providing a lower quality of care i.e. Goutte D'Eau Neak Loeung, SKO, Svay Rieng Orphanage and KST, as well as reaching out to other shelters that have received insufficient support.

IOM and its partners should continue to work towards increasing awareness among both shelter staff and children hosted in shelters on the dangers of irregular migration and child

trafficking and on the higher trafficking risk faced by children in vulnerable situations.

On-site mentoring at the shelters ought to be initiated to garner the benefits for all concerned parties. Participation will enable the staff to achieve better levels of professional success, as well as enhancing collaboration, goal achievement and problem solving within the organisation.

The shelters and local organisations should be encouraged to share their experience and knowledge as it became obvious that the level of expertise among different shelters can vary dramatically even when they belong to the same organisation. Local organisations and the key personnel of the shelters should be made aware of the intermittent role of the aid organisations and the need to aim for development of self-sustainability, at least on the national scale.

Careful monitoring of shelter capacity is advisable, especially in shelters experiencing food shortages, so as not to exceed the maximum quota of residents as this will put more pressure on fragile services and resources as well as contribute to the unpleasantness of over-crowding for children.

Essentially all the shelters succeed in satisfying physical needs of the children but everything is handled in a general atmosphere of realistic minimalism and pessimism. Children have no dreams and all what they are hoping for is basic survival. Both staff and children would benefit from more spontaneity and creativity. Proper training may help in this matter but it will be essential to recruit staff with adequate abilities and motivation.

Due attention should be paid by the managerial staff of shelters during the recruitment process that candidates with a predisposed attitude of negativity and hopelessness towards children in alternative residential care are not employed no matter how qualified or experienced they appear to be otherwise.

Girls and boys should be equally encouraged in their development and given the same opportunities. This would make girls less vulnerable to exploitation and more employable and give boys opportunities to better understand issues of gender equality. This correlates with the aforementioned training on gender issues for caregivers, social workers, educators and children.

Peer education as a means of advancing behavioural change needs to be recognised and strengthened. The children who had been trafficked should be respectfully encouraged to share their stories during the shelter’s session on raising awareness on trafficking issues. Reflection and discussion with all the participants should follow.

As this study reveals, children have clear ideas about their circumstances and have a lot of ideas to contribute. These ideas are at times different to those of the staff. Since there is a dearth of interpersonal communication between shelter staff and children, the former have to learn to listen to the children more and incorporate their suggestions into shelter policies and plans. The children need to be given a “stronger voice” to become more involved in decision making processes at the shelters. Therefore, efforts need to be made to set the stage and make meetings a comfortable environment where children are not afraid to express their worries and concerns or to make suggestions.



**KMR Battambang**



## Chapter 1: Introduction

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) states as its mission that “*IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As the leading international organisation for migration, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to:*

- *Assist in meeting the growing operational challenges of migration management.*
- *Advance understanding of migration issues.*
- *Encourage social and economic development through migration.*
- *Uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.”<sup>1</sup>*

Children represent the predominant age group among migrants in South-East Asia where trafficking remains a big part of the child labour programme. UNICEF estimates that 1.2 million children are trafficked or affected by trafficking each year. Additionally, children are most affected by the successful or failed migration experiences of their parents. Consequently, the impact of migration on children is becoming a growing issue and an operational challenge that require a deeper understanding within the realm of human migration management. Large numbers of children involved in migration are in need of alternative support means which their parents fail to provide. Those correlations were among the key motivation factors for undertaking this research project on behalf of IOM.

The Cambodian Policy Document on Alternative Care for Children (2006) defines alternative care as “*care for orphaned and other vulnerable children, who are not under the care of their biological parents.*”<sup>2</sup> Further, there are two broad categories often distinguished: institutional or residential care, and non-institutional or non-residential care or family/community based care but the distinctions between the various models are at times obscure. In a nutshell, residential care comprises orphanages and recovery or child protection centres operated by the state or by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), whereas non-residential care relates to family and community and encompasses foster care, kinship care, adoption, pagoda and other faith-based care, children headed households and group-home based care. For those Cambodian children unable to avail themselves of the natural form of care, growing up within their families, institutional care may remain the only option as very few foster and other forms of alternative care exist. Even though long-term residential care is

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/about-iom/mission/lang/en>

<sup>2</sup>Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, “*Policy on Alternative Care for Children*,” (Phnom Penh: MoSVY, 2006), p. 9.

considered to be the least favourable type of child placement because of its negative impact on children's psychological, emotional and social development,<sup>3</sup> it cannot be ruled out. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) estimated that out of the 20,348 children living in alternative care in 2001, 11,470 were in residential care.<sup>4</sup> Although orphanages and shelters conjure up negative images in people's minds around the world, all child care forms, even families of origin, carry an element of risk for the child. "At the same time, it could be postulated that, if done well, any alternative care form works in the interest of the child."<sup>5</sup> J.K. Reimer et al. (2007) ascertain that all of the 'alternative care forms' employed in Cambodia are viable, if due consideration is paid to the situation of each child and certain basic conditions are met. Likewise, Kavoukis (2004) advocated that alternative care services can be a step toward reintegration, and help prepare children for a new life by providing support such as counselling, formal and informal education, vocational skills training and job placement.

In recent years, interest in alternative care in Cambodia has gained momentum. With a weak child welfare system, and no clear statistics on the number of residential care facilities throughout Cambodia,<sup>6</sup> concerted efforts are being made by the MoSVY, with the participation of international donors and the NGO sector to improve the quality of alternative care. Since early 1999, IOM has been working in close co-operation with MoSVY to provide safe and sustainable return and reintegration services for victims of trafficking, including children. The Poipet Transit Centre (PTC,) which has been jointly supported by IOM and UNICEF since its establishment in 2000, serves as a safe transit point for children returning from Thailand through repatriation and deportation mechanisms. One of the main functions of the PTC is shelter referral or seeking alternative care for those children whose family tracing and assessment are not supportive of reunification. As it is not always a viable option for trafficked children to return to their families<sup>7</sup>, long-term recovery services are necessary and some of them have been supported by IOM. In 2006, the MoSVY developed a regulatory framework for

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nacac.org/policy/researchchart.pdf> This document gives a brief overview of the academic findings into the effects of institutionalised care for vulnerable children.

<sup>4</sup> MoSVY, (2006), p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> This idea was specifically stated by Fr. James Noonan in reference to foster care for children affected by HIV/AIDS, in a paper "Seedlings of Hope, Responses to children in difficult circumstances". Phnom Penh. 2001 cited in J.K. Reimer et al. *The Road Home: Toward a model of Reintegration' and Considerations for Alternative Care for children trafficked for sexual exploitation in Cambodia*. (Cambodia: Hagar/World Vision (2007), p. 62.

<sup>6</sup> Holt International (2005) identified 208 facilities in the 24 provinces of Cambodia but only 117 of them were registered with MoSVY.

<sup>7</sup> In some cases there is a high risk that the child will be sold or rented back to the trafficker. In other cases, the family may have disappeared or is for various reasons unwilling to take back the child. Other children may be very young or have physical and psychological disabilities and cannot remember their families or places of origin.

alternative care for children by adopting the Policy on Alternative Care for Children, and issued the Minimum Standards on Residential Care for Children, to narrow the gap in the quality of care and to fulfil basic needs requirements. 160 out of 197 NGO run residential alternative care services have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with MoSVY.<sup>8</sup> In this context, IOM developed and published a manual, “*Home away from Home*” which complies with the minimum standards on residential care, and used it as a basis for delivery of training to build the capacity of caregivers and shelter staff to identify, rehabilitate and reintegrate trafficked and other vulnerable children. Additionally, some NGOs<sup>9</sup> have begun to move away from institutional care to other forms of alternative care prioritised by the Royal Government of Cambodia<sup>10</sup> by adopting group home-based care system<sup>11</sup>.

An improved quality of care will prepare the children residing at shelters to enter adulthood with fewer difficulties, and with more confidence and self-esteem. The major service providers are now faced with a myriad of challenges to fulfil their obligations in meeting the minimum standards. However, effective improvements in the quality of alternative care cannot be realised without giving the children a “voice” to express their realities, hopes and aspirations. The 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child had given the children the right to have their opinions considered when adults are making choices that affect them, and the Royal Government of Cambodia is a signatory to this Convention. Young people understand the obstacles they face and will have clear ideas on how to tackle them because they have first hand experience of living at shelters and have experienced or witnessed the effects of trafficking and child exploitation. Children have different perceptions to adults about shelter life and although, the final decisions will rest with the latter, children’s suggestions should influence policies.

Before embarking on solutions aimed at policies and strategies, it is important to reflect on current practices. It was the endeavour of this study to build upon IOM’s work for Cambodian children, and in particular children who have been trafficked<sup>12</sup> or are vulnerable to trafficking living in residential care centres by learning more of how these children themselves experience and understand their situation.

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<sup>8</sup> NOVCTF, *Orphans, Children Affected by HIV and Other Vulnerable Children in Cambodia: A Situation and Response Assessment, 2007* (Kingdom of Cambodia: MoSVY, 2008), p. 46.

<sup>9</sup>Of the shelters investigated in this study, ARM, CWCC, CCPCR, Homeland, KMR, and KST have recently started variations of group home base care in addition to their residential care centres.

<sup>10</sup>Family care and community care are the best options for alternative care meaning institutional care should be a last resort and a temporary solution. (MoSVY 2006), p.12.

<sup>11</sup>In group home based care a limited number of children are housed in a family environment under the supervision of small groups of caregivers unrelated to the children. A group home is integrated into a community setting, but is not run by the community. (MoSVY 2006), p.11.

<sup>12</sup> Survivors of trafficking have experienced some of the most fundamental abuses of human rights which may have damaged their self-esteem and belief about themselves.



**Having Fun**



**Dressmaking**

## **Chapter 2: Methodology**

### **2.1 Research Aims and Objectives**

This research project was undertaken to evaluate performance of selected shelters with regard to their mission of helping victims of child trafficking, orphans and other vulnerable children. Furthermore, the author's intention was to identify gap areas and find potential routes to close these gaps utilising, among others, expertise and resources of international organizations such as IOM. Since criteria for such a performance evaluation have not been imposed a priori, the aim of this work was also to examine what means may be the most proper for detailed and more quantitative monitoring, likely required in the future if any specific aid or training programmes are to be implemented. The approach undertaken for this study was to prioritize and evaluate children's perception of the support currently received, in the context of their past experiences and post-shelter perspectives, across physical, psychological, social or even global aspects of life. To ensure a more complete understanding, and in the context of the executive role of caregivers, their perception of the same issues, with background of their motivations and qualifications, was also included among the objectives of this study.

### **2.2 Sample Selection and Sample Size**

Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) currently residing at shelters in various regions of Cambodia were the main focus of this study. The term orphan includes children who have lost one or both parents whereas vulnerable children embrace children who are economically deprived, abandoned, affected by HIV/Aids, sexually, physically or emotionally abused, street children, in conflict with the law, disabled children, and drug addicts.<sup>13</sup> The criteria for selecting participants were not exclusive but rather all-encompassing to facilitate an impartial overview of the shelters and the perceptions of both children and staff alike. Subsequently, children and staff of both sexes and from all age groups, ethnicities, family backgrounds, educational background, etc. were allowed to participate. Children from the designated 16 shelters and one "pseudo-foster" care programme were randomly chosen by the interviewers, selected by the shelter staff, or volunteered. Since the UN Convention defines children as anyone under the age of 18, those participating should be formerly described as children and young adults, which was the group some shelters catered for, including students attending universities or pursuing vocational training. As residents or members of shelters, it was imperative to also incorporate and address their issues and concerns, and their experience reported often dated to their statutory childhood. Due to time and resource constraints, it was not feasible to engage in the survey children under the age of 5, living at some of the shelters in the survey. Substantial and constructive input from a younger age group would entail

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<sup>13</sup>MoSVY (2006), p.11.

employing adroit and prolonged interviewing techniques and procedures. A total of 133 children contributed to the survey, 81 were individually interviewed and 52 participated in focus group discussions (FGDs) on specific topics. 23 staff from all of the 16 shelters volunteered or were nominated by their supervisors to partake in the individual interviews at respective shelters. As the author was facilitating training for shelter staff from all of the shelters and other agencies such as PTC, and government staff (OSVY) engaged in the prevention and enhanced return and reintegration of trafficked victims, 12 staff representing some of the 16 investigated shelters were able to volunteer for FGDs during IOM workshops. Additional semi-structured surveys regarding the background and motivation of shelter staff (see Appendix 5) were completed by 53 of the workshop participants, while questionnaires on various topics were distributed and the data later quantified for research purposes. Additional information was elicited from the participants during training sessions.

**Table 1: Provinces where shelters are based**

<b>Battambang</b>	<b>Banteay Meanchey</b>	<b>Prey Veng</b>	<b>Svay Rieng</b>
ARM	CWCC	Goutte D'Eau Neak	CCPCR
CCT	Don Bosco	Loeung	CCPCR Boys
Homeland	GoutteD'Eau		Svay Rieng Orphanage
KMR	Rehabilitation		Wathnakpheap
KnK	Goutte D'Eau Poipet		
SKO	KST		
	MMF		

The 16 shelters that were the focus of this study include American Rehabilitation Missionaries (ARM), the Cambodia Centre for the Protection of Children's Rights (CCPCR), Cambodian Children's Trust (CCT), the Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre (CWCC), Don Bosco, Goutte D'Eau Residential Centre Poipet, Goutte D'Eau Rehabilitation Centre Poipet, Goutte D'Eau Neak Loeung, Meahto Phum Ko'Mah also known as Homeland, Komar Rikreay (KMR), Kokkyo naki Kodomotachi (KnK), Krousar Thmey (KST), Mercy Ministries Foundation (MMF), Sprouting Knowledge Orphans (SKO), Svay Rieng Orphanage (SRO) and Wathnakpheap. CCPCR Boys' Programme was the pseudo-foster care programme<sup>14</sup>. All are

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<sup>14</sup> This programme is run by CCPCR in Svay Rieng and funded by IOM. Vulnerable boys from local communities are sent for vocational skills training. During their course of study, they live with the trainer or employer and are paid weekly visits by a CCPCR staff member to monitor their progress and to

based in Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, Prey Veng and Svay Rieng, provinces that are close to the border regions with Thailand and Vietnam (Table 1), and as such are hosting children who may have or are likely to have a migration experience. These shelters represent a cross section of alternative care providers in Cambodia such as long term, short term, private, public, faith-based organisations, national, international, mixed, single sexed, and day care, etc. The alternative care facilities in this study can be classified into three main categories: orphanages,<sup>15</sup> child protection centres,<sup>16</sup> and foster care<sup>17</sup>. Group homes of some of the shelters were not researched.<sup>18</sup> All shelters are or were in the past recipients of IOM assistance in terms of technical and financial support, as well as capacity building of shelter staff. There is a stark contrast among some of these shelters in terms of physical infrastructure, resources and services offered, with ARM and MMF<sup>19</sup> representing the upper end of the scale and SKO and KST<sup>20</sup> the lower end, while the rest would rank somewhere in between. According to the staff who attended the IOM workshop trainings, there are also disparities in remuneration, benefits and opportunities. At public shelters and some local NGOs, the facilities are poorer, and the salary is lower. On the other hand, the staff at the public shelters, as government employees, are entitled to a pension fund, as well as having a second job. Although, the NGO salary is higher, they do not have a pension fund and are not allowed to have a second job. The staff acknowledged that salary, rather than shelter facilities and services, was the most important aspect for them. It was more difficult to determine the quality of childcare at these shelters from observation alone.

### 2.3 Research Methodology

Structured and semi-structured interviews, FGDs and document analysis were the main data collection strategies utilised for generating qualitative data for this project. A review of the pertinent literature prior to field work helped to determine gaps in current knowledge, and to gain familiarity with alternative care systems both in Cambodia and in other countries. There is a dearth of documented research on residential and alternative care forms in Cambodia. Most

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discuss problems, etc.

<sup>15</sup>MoSVY (2006, p. 11) describes orphanages as long term residential centres for children who have lost one or both biological parents. They also provide the same basic developmental needs to a variety of children at risk.

<sup>16</sup>Child protection centres cater for children who have been affected by abuse, exploitation, drug use, street life and any other difficult circumstances. They provide basic developmental needs as well as specialised services such as counselling and vocational training. (MoSVY 2006), p.11.

<sup>17</sup>Foster care is a form of temporary placement in which a family agrees to take an unrelated child in. It is usually for a short-term duration and does not involve the permanent transfer of parental rights and responsibilities. (MoSVY 2006), p.10.

<sup>18</sup> A case study investigation on Homeland's Group Home was conducted in 2008 by Cassandra Phillips.

<sup>19</sup> ARM and MMF have international support and subsequently, can offer quality facilities and a variety of services.

<sup>20</sup> KST is an open compound with no fence or gate which makes it very difficult to monitor guests.

studies are theme based mainly focusing on specific categories of victims such as sexually abused children, orphans, street children or trafficked children. Very few studies attempt to engage children from a broad spectrum of backgrounds and circumstances, or undertake an in-depth analysis of various types of shelters such as orphanages, residential care centres as well as group home care. On the other hand, most of the shelters care for children of various backgrounds, often belonging to several categories as victims, and the approach undertaken cannot be focused on a single issue.

The wide scope of the project, limited time and resources, and most of all lack of any suitable quantitative model dictated the qualitative approach to research work of this study. Another decision in this matter was to focus on data acquired directly from children residing in the investigated shelters, including those who were not directly involved in trafficking issues as well as the victims of trafficking. This approach meant to emphasize that the children should be the eventual recipients of any aid actions in this area and their benefits should be prioritised over convenience of shelter personnel or interests of local organisations. However, the latter will always be involved in operation of these kinds of shelters, with or without international support, and independent efforts were dedicated to probe background, objectives, attitudes and opinions of some shelter staff.



**MMF Poipet**





**Homeland Battambang**



**Goutte D'Eau Rehabilitation Poipet**

Children were interviewed individually using a common set of questions prepared in advance (Appendix 1) as well as through group discussions focused on specific issues. It was anticipated that children may produce systematically different answers in these two situations, either overwhelming intimidated by the isolation against the interviewer (and the interpreter) or affected by the peer pressure of the other children in the given discussion group. Each FGD included drawing to enable the children to reflect on their responses to the given question and

to explain their picture to the group. A descriptive rather than prescriptive interpretation was inferred from the pictures.

## **2.4 Data Analysis**

Data analysis blended both qualitative and quantitative methods to strengthen the survey by representing the multiple voices and perspectives of the participants and providing clearer answers to the research questions. The coding of data from structured and semi-structured interviews, FGDs, and surveys helped identify emerging themes and their relationships with the main objectives of the study. Pertinent information was selected, categorised and recorded into worksheet computer files for statistical analysis and graphical representation. Some individual data entries were treated qualitatively in bimodal logical terms (true/false represented as 0/1 values) and statistics of their repetitions amounted to semi-quantitative representation. While the overall number of data entries might appear sufficient for more advanced analytical treatment one should take into account the overwhelming spectrum of factors dividing participants and their contributions into so many groups that typical conditions for any factorial approach could not be met. Another consequence was that many conclusions cannot be validated in terms of statistical confidence levels and should be treated as possibilities of rather unknown probability, and more intriguing ones should stimulate a focused study where requirements of quantitative analysis can be addressed.



**Focus Group Discussion**

## **2.5 Ethical Considerations**

Involving children in research necessitates paying attention to certain ethical issues such as informed consent, privacy, anonymity, confidentiality, protection from harm and participation. Permission to interview the children face-to-face was sought from shelter directors who were briefed about the main research objectives, types of questions, and the potential use of the collected data. At the beginning of each interview session, the interviewees were informed of the subject of the study, their expected involvement, as well as the future use of the data. The participants were also told that they were not required to answer any question that they felt uncomfortable discussing, and were given the opportunity to ask questions or to make comments at the end of the interview. Any information disclosing child identity was eliminated from the study. Whenever possible, interviews were conducted in places where staff and other children were not present to ensure confidentiality and to reduce the participants' risk of vulnerability.

## **2.6 Constraints and Limitations**

While the intention was to obtain a random sample of children representing every shelter, in some cases, the local personnel pre-selected children available for interviews. It is also difficult to know what instructions were given to children by their supervisors prior to the interviews. At some shelters, interviews were conducted within hearing distance of staff and other children that may have influenced the interviewees to give more socially desirable responses to certain questions, in particular regarding staff and the shelter itself.

In the context of IOM assistance, it is uncertain whether the shelter staff attempted to give answers that they considered would elicit more aid or that would show them in a more positive light. During the initial part of the interview, some participants made known their shelter's immediate needs and required support before been asked.

Taking all of the aforementioned into account it is possible that results of the surveys may be partially skewed, and if this is the case it is more likely that a truly unbiased study might reveal additional problems. However, in the given circumstances it was impossible to achieve a completely unbiased situation.

Parents were not included in the survey. The opportunity to interview some of the parents may have given a more complete picture of the children's situation and verified the accuracy or discrepancy of the information received from the children. It would be interesting to note the attitudes of parents towards the shelters and the circumstances that lead to their children being referred to the shelters. Contrary to the children interviewed their parents are scattered not only



across Cambodia but often also staying in the neighbouring countries. Inclusion of parents would thus require substantially more time and resources.

The necessity of using several Khmer translators who were generally lacking the level of experience required, and possible linguistic misinterpretations was another limitation of this work.



**Drawing**

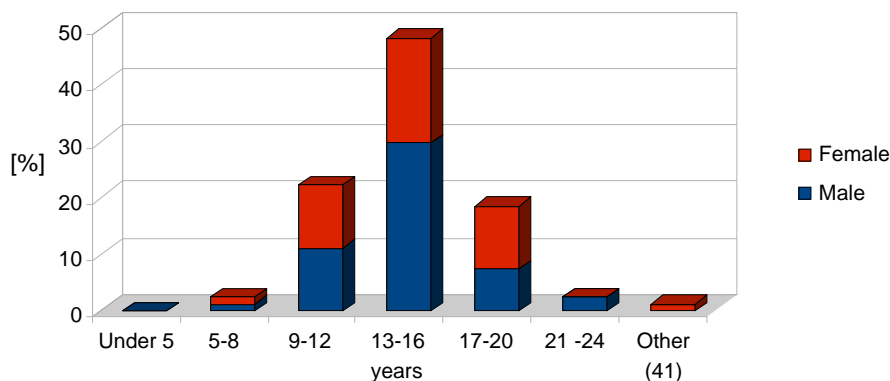
## Chapter 3: Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Socio-demographic Profile

#### 3.1.1 Children interviewed individually

Interviews were conducted individually with 81 children of which 44 were boys (55%) and 37 were girls (45%). The gender balance is slightly skewed because, as aforementioned, at many of the shelters, it was not left to the discretion of the interviewers to select the candidates and the unspecified selection criteria imply that the sample investigated was not a statistically valid representation of the whole population subjected to this study, and the issue of statistical validity extends over all results reported here. Although the ages of the children were wide-ranging, from 5 to 24, with a single person at the age of 41 years old, over 50% of the participants (41) represented the 13 to 16 age cohort. Those in the age 21-24 group were male students either studying at university or developing vocational skills (Figure 1).

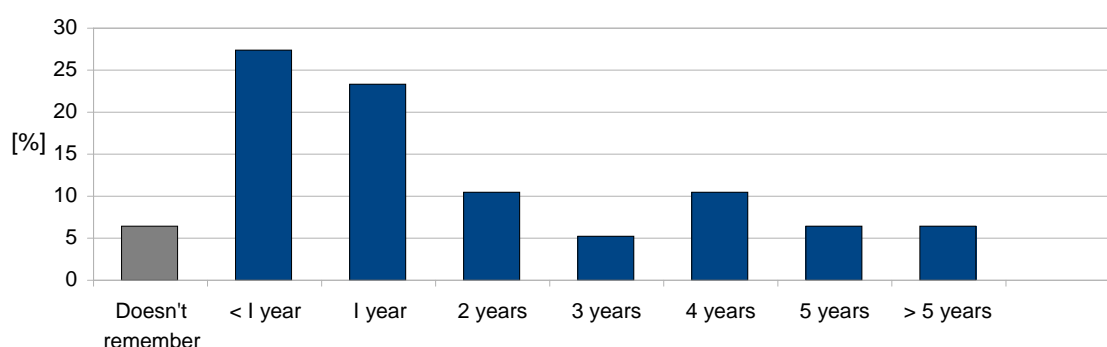
**Figure 1: Age Distribution of Children Interviewed Individually**



A notable fact of this study is that all the children claimed to be Khmer. However, it was later discovered while conversing with a shelter staff that one of the participants, a 16 year old female was in fact Vietnamese. In this case, the underlying reason for concealing ethnicity could not be probed. Therefore, it was deduced that it might stem from various factors such as the fear of others knowing that she was from a minority group, of being discriminated against, and of being called “Yuon”, the derogatory term for Vietnamese by other children. This data can also indicate that some of children may not have been entirely truthful or open about their ethnicity, or that bi-racial and minority groups are under-represented or excluded from the shelters. However, it is noted by Reimer, JK et al. (2007) that Vietnamese comprise a disproportionately large number of residents in urban shelters. A detailed study on ethnic issues within poorer communities in Cambodia seems desired and consequent actions from international aid programmes may be required.

One can consider that the interviewees are reliable sources of information as they have significant experience of shelter life. The majority of the children (58 or 68%) are long-term residents, having lived at a shelter for at least one year (Figure 2). This category includes the participants who cannot recall the length of their stay at the shelters because they have been living at the shelters for a significant number of years. They were too young to remember how old they were when they first arrived. This trend supports Holt International's findings (2005) that Cambodian children live in residential care for extended periods of time. The majority with residential status of less than a year are boys. Some children have lived in more than one shelter. Some transferred from short-term to long-term residential care shelters, such as from Goutte D'Eau Rehabilitation Centre to KnK and KMR, from Battambang Residential Centre to Don Bosco, and from KMR to KnK. One boy was moved from Goutte D'Eau Residential Care Poipet to Goutte D'Eau Neak Loeung because of his behavioural problems. One girl left CCPCR for Svay Rieng orphanage because of the problems she and her sister were creating at CCPCR. A girl at Homeland was formerly a public orphanage resident but her French foster or sponsor mother requested her to be transferred to an NGO shelter where she had another sponsored child. Many of the children at CCT lived at SKO but decided to leave along with the staff when CCT was opened.

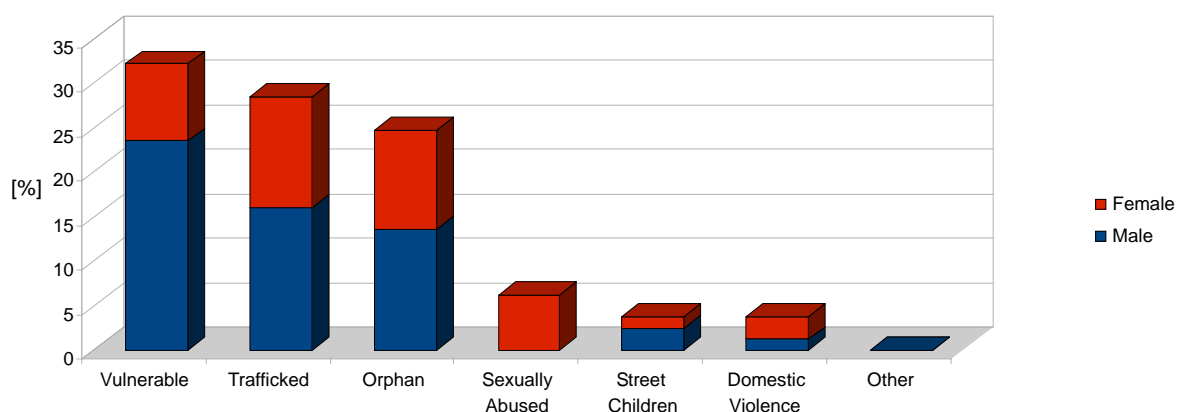
**Figure 2: Residential Period of Children Interviewed Individually**



The children hailed from various backgrounds. In cases where some children could be linked to two or more types, the most significant aspect of the child's life was considered. The categories of life history in order of ascendancy were vulnerable children (considered being at high risk of becoming victims of trafficking, sexual abuse or domestic violence due to their family situation or other circumstances) (26), trafficked children (23), orphans (20), sexually abused (5), street children (found living on the streets) (3), domestic violence victims (3) and disabled (1). The relatively high prevalence of vulnerable children interviewed corroborates

Vijghen's (2004, p.2) assertion that *some centres regard such 'at risk' children as an easy assessable source to fill up the residency if they do not have 'acquired' the planned number of clients of the intended target group.* In addition, certain trends may appear opposite to popular expectations. For instance, since girls, especially teenage girls are more likely to work in professions that make them vulnerable to sexual abuse, one would expect to find more girls than boys in the vulnerable category. On the contrary, the majority of vulnerable children were male, with almost twice as many boys belonging to this group than girls. This distribution may reflect a certain bias in interception policies, possibly related to a higher priority given to children who may create social problems over those at risk of becoming silent victims. Much deeper investigations would be necessary to verify such a highly speculative, at this moment, hypothesis. In the interviewed group, those who have been sexually abused were all female but one shelter acknowledged during a workshop discussion that they had one boy who had been sexually abused in the past. In spite of having historically one of the highest rates of people with disabilities in the world (Disability Action Council, 2003), very few of the shelters visited had disabled children. This under-representation of disabled children warrants further probing. CCPCR had recently sent one of their children, a deaf and dumb child to a shelter in Phnom Penh because no-one could use sign language. KST were also waiting to send a child who was blind, deaf, dumb and lame to a Phnom Penh shelter because the director felt he would get better care.

**Figure 3: Life History of Children Interviewed Individually**



The interviewees came from the following provinces, Banteay Meanchey (35 children), Svay Rieng (24 children), Battambang (13 children), Prey Veng (5), Kompong Cham (2) and Siem Reap (2). These areas reflect the geographical concentration of the shelters visited, Banteay Meanchey, Battambang, Svay Rieng, and Prey Veng. The large number of children

from Banteay Meanchey is the result of the growing number of impoverished Cambodians flocking to the border town of Poipet in search of a better life. Approximately one third of the participants were not living in their own provinces, but many of them were placed in shelters in neighbouring provinces i.e. 17 children from Banteay Meanchey are living in Battambang whereas 4 from Battambang are living in Banteay Meanchey (Table 2). However, all of the children from Svay Rieng are currently based there. Although, it is desirable to place children at shelters in proximity to their hometowns to facilitate family and home visits, it is not always possible or in the best interest of the child. Factors that may influence the selection of a shelter at the time of referral may include the following: (1) Some shelters may have reached their limit and lack the capacity to serve new clients; (2) Some clients may be in need of specific services such as counselling and vocational skill training provided by only a limited number of shelters; and (3) A place where both the safety and psychological well-being of a child can be ensured. Two of the children interviewed at Goutte D'Eau Rehabilitation centre were from Battambang and are receiving specialised treatment for drug abuse. ARM in Battambang specialises in the care and counselling for sexually abused girls and thus, receive children from other provinces. The two participants interviewed were from Banteay Meanchay. Another child from Banteay Meanchey at Goutte D'Eau Rehabilitation centre expressed a desire to be transferred to Goutte D'Eau Neak Loeung at the end of his term in order to receive vocational training in barbering.

**Table 2: Number of Children at Shelters outside their Provincial Area**

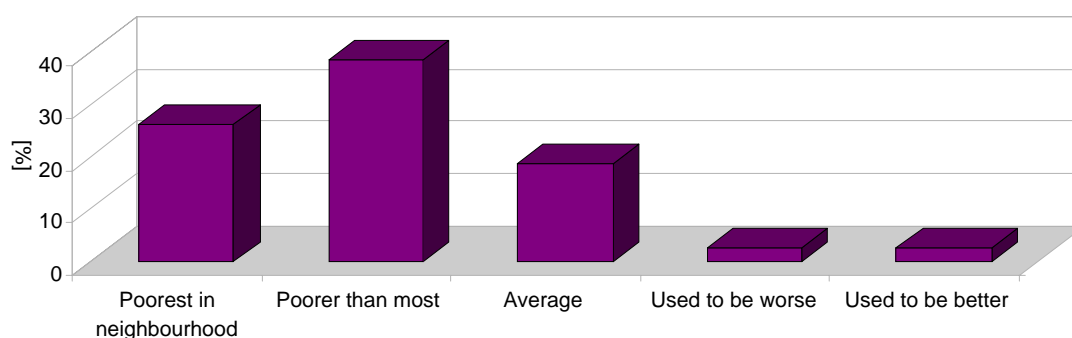
<b>Battambang Shelters</b>	<b>No. of children from Banteay Meanchey</b>	<b>Banteay Mencheay Shelters</b>	<b>No. of children from Battambang</b>
ARM	2	Goutte D'Eau Poipet	1
Homeland	2	Goutte D'Eau Rehabilitation	2
KMR	4	KST	1
KnK	6		
SKO	3		
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>

All of the children are from dysfunctional and fragile families but not all families can be considered destitute. Only 28% or 23 children have both parents while the remaining 72% include those from single-parent (24 children), step-parent (8), or divorced families (1) and orphans (22 children). Step children expressed having difficult relationships with the step parent. A few children have been completely abandoned by their parents or have a parent in Thai prisons. Usually, the guardian is left to care for a number of siblings as the average for the entire group of families is 4.2 children. The majority of the interviewees regard themselves as



coming from impoverished families, stating poorer than most (26%), the poorest of the poor (38%), and average (18%) Cambodian family (Figure 4). The roof of a house can be an indicator of household wealth and social status. However, only 5% of those who have a home claimed that they had a plastic sheet for a roof (the flimsiest form of covering), whereas 35% cited straw (minimal protection from the elements) and 42% stated tin (more solid covering). Three respondents had tiles, the most sophisticated type of roof. Furthermore, 65% or 53 children declared that their family owned land. This is a significant proportion for people who consider themselves to be poor. In addition, 21 families own TVs, 10 have stereos (any audio entertainment devices), 9 possess mobile phones and 4 have motorbikes. No family owns a car. The economic condition cannot be so austere for those families with land and basic luxury goods, thus dispelling the assumption that only the very poor are trafficked and vulnerable to exploitation.

**Figure 4: Family Situation of Children Interviewed Individually**



The interviewees were predominantly middle children or in other words, those who do not rank as either oldest or youngest siblings. Over half of the participants with migrant experience are mainly middle children (23) compared to 14 oldest child (34%) and 4 youngest child (10%). This trend suggests that parents differentiate between their children, permitting the middle children or less important and less special children to engage in employment or income generating activities in places other than their home towns. It may be deemed too troublesome to send younger children or toddlers because they may be only useful as beggars and require other family members to take care of them. Less than half of the children (48%) share similar experiences as their siblings, 15 children have siblings who have also migrated, while 24 have siblings whose dwelling places are also shelters. According to Holt International (2005) the fact that the children have siblings has significant implications for permanency planning of the children because siblings should be kept together.

### 3.1.2 Child Participants of Focus Group Discussions

27 boys and 25 girls participated in the FGDs from the following four shelters, Homeland, ARM, Goutte D'Eau Residential Centre Poipet and Goutte D'Eau Neak Loeung (Appendix 2). It was infeasible to conduct FGDs at all the shelters. The selection of shelters was based on organisational issues, time constraints, availability of venues and supporting staff. These four shelters can be considered a representative sample of all 15 shelters that participated in the survey. Gender proportions are similar to the group of children interviewed individually. Ages ranged from 9 to 20 years old which is different from the interviewed that included younger children from 5 to 8 years old (Figure 5). Over 60% of the children represented the age group 13 to 16 year olds, similarly as for those individually interviewed.

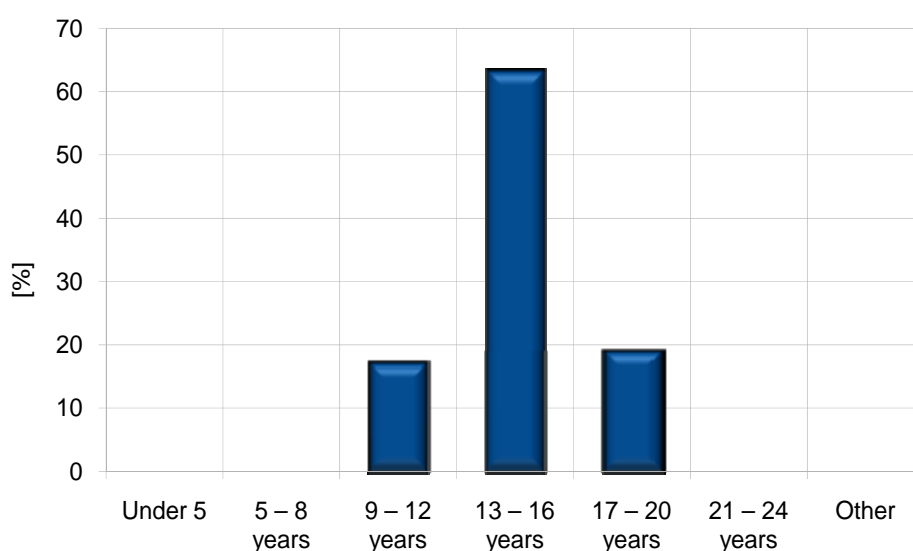


**Posing for the Camera**

There are only marginal differences between the life histories of the two groups of children. All categories are featured, trafficked, vulnerable, domestic violence, sexually abused, orphans, street children and others. The most significant variation was that the percentage of vulnerable children was lower in the FGDs, 15% versus 30%. *“I was addicted to glue before being rehabilitated at Goutte D'Eau Poipet. I came to the centre for help because I wanted to quit glue-sniffing and improve myself. I was sent to this shelter when I completed the nine month rehabilitation period,”* admitted a 15 year old boy. The distribution of residential period for both groups of children was essentially the same. The histograms of family status for the two groups are similar, with single parent families more dominant among the FGD children. The

perceived standard of living of their families varied between the two groups. The percentage of those who viewed themselves as poorest in the neighbourhood was significantly higher in the FGDs, 60% as opposed to 26%. This was compensated by a higher percentage of individual interviewed children regarding their families as poorer than most, 38% versus 15%. The roofs of family homes were reported to fall into similar categories as previously explained. However, a review of the survey results regarding other family properties showed that a significantly smaller percentage of FGD children were associated with land ownership, 28% versus 65%. It seemed that other properties (motorbikes, TVs, mobile phones and stereos) were also less common in this group of children. The results suggest that this group of children was statistically coming from poorer families than those individually interviewed. The average number of children in families for both groups was between 3 to 4 children, and both groups often (50%) declared that siblings had similar experience. Similarly, both groups stated that some of their siblings lived in shelters (30%) and had migrant experience, 17% to 19%. *“All my siblings live here at the shelter. We live in separate houses but we talk to each other every day. I am happy to have them here,”* remarked a 15 year old girl. *“I went to Thailand with my parents and siblings. I didn't work there because I was too young. However, the mobile team found me and sent me here. My siblings are still with my parents”* stated a 17 year old girl.

**Figure 5: Age Distribution of FGD Child Participants**

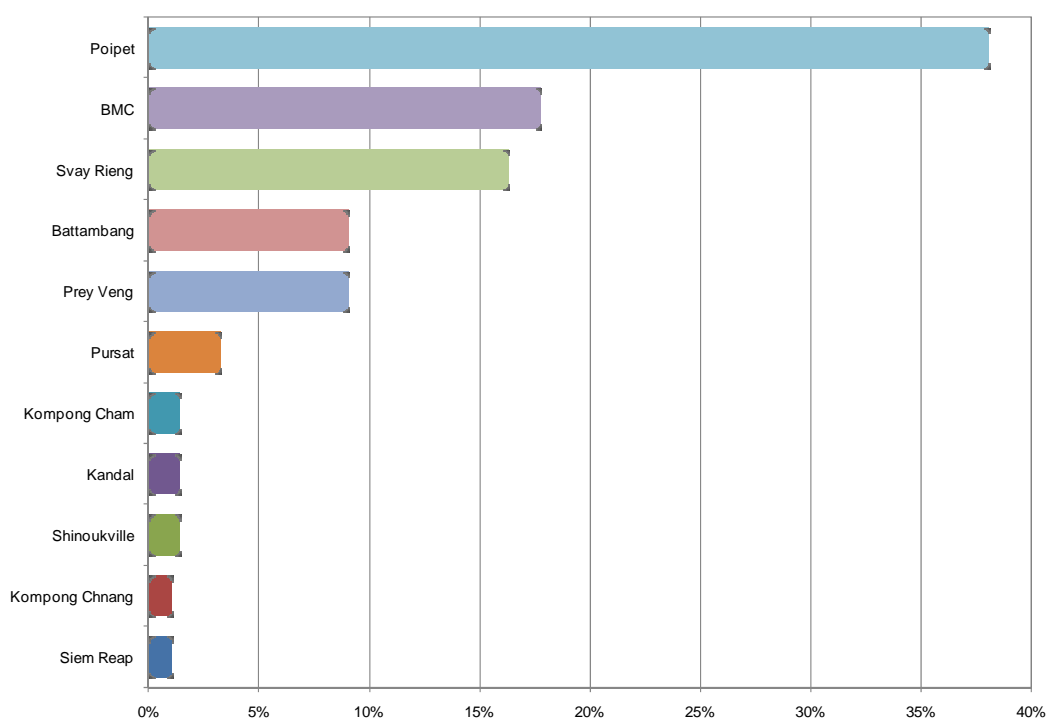


### 3.1.3 Staff interviewed individually

Interviews with staff members were also used to review background information on all children (Appendix 3) because, as expected, the staff had a generally more accurate understanding of the socio-demographic profile of those residing in the given shelters. Over half of children (56%) are from Banteay Meanchey, then from Svay Rieng (16%), Battambang

(9%), Prey Veng (9%) and the remaining 10% from other provinces (Figure 6). These statistics reflect quite accurately the hometowns of the representative of children interviewed. There are very few ethnic minorities residing at the shelters, hence the lack of multi-ethnic participants in the children’s survey. According to the employees interviewed, the children at their shelters are mostly Khmer (98.7%), and have very few Vietnamese (0.3%), Khmer/Vietnamese (0.4%) or Khmer/Chinese (0.6%) residents. In general, sentiments towards these ethnic minorities were not so positive *“In the past, we had a few Vietnamese children. It was difficult to prepare food for them and they had a hard time. The other children used to tease them all the time”* (Homeland, shelter staff). *“The Khmer/Vietnamese and Khmer/Chinese children have problems mixing with the rest of the children because of their disobedient and obstinate behaviour. They can’t speak Khmer clearly either”* (ARM, shelter staff). *“CCPCR used to have 7 Vietnamese girls who were former karaoke girls. They behaved differently to the Khmer girls and were very difficult to control. We had to ask another NGO to take them”* (CCPCR staff). These statements illustrate that some staff are racially prejudiced.

**Figure 6: Hometown Area of Children at the Investigated Shelters**



The majority of staff (70%) believe that very few children have siblings residing at either their facility or at a different one which somewhat correlates with the children’s statements. Over half of the shelter personnel (56%) indicated that their residents share similar experiences as their siblings whereas a little less than half of the children interviewed believed that to be the

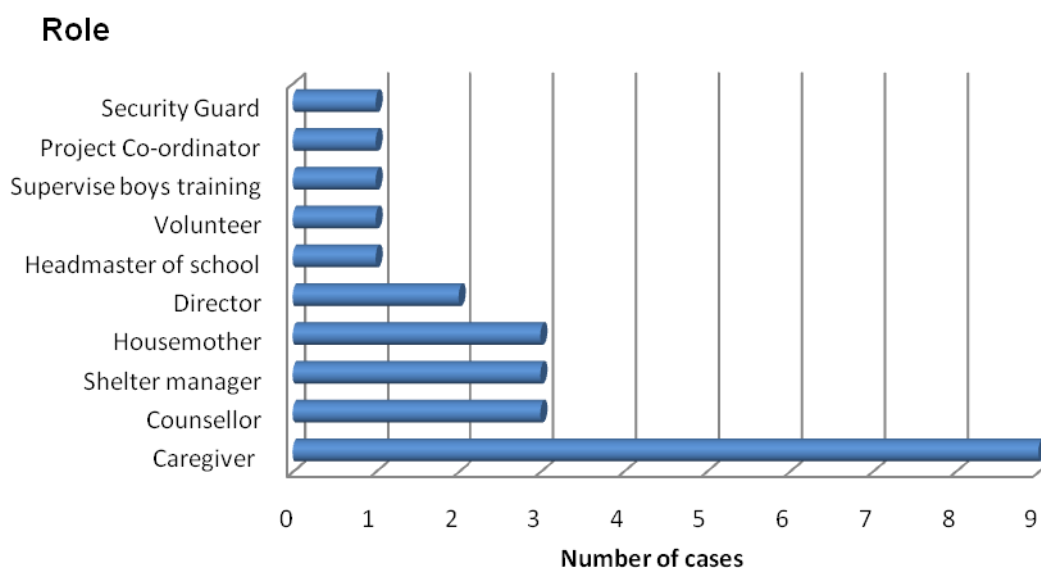
case. *“Some of the children have similar experiences. We have four siblings here at our shelter. They are all former beggars. There is one brother still living at home and he is also a beggar,”* (Svay Rieng Orphanage employee). A caregiver at Don Bosco stated that *“the children here were more vulnerable than their siblings because they are the eldest in the family and are asked to help support their families.”* A similar opinion was expressed by an employee at Wathnakpheap. However, the majority of the children who participated in the study were middle children. A house mother at Svay Rieng Orphanage believes that the siblings of shelter residents are in a worse situation because they have less food to eat at home and are probably neglected or abused by their parents.

### 3.2 Professional Background of Shelter Staff

#### 3.2.1 Staff interviewed individually

6 males and 17 females who are employed at the investigated shelters were interviewed individually. It is not surprising that the majority were women as childcare is traditionally regarded as women’s work. The participants comprised of a variety of shelter workers from director to security guard. However, the main roles included 9 cases of caregivers (day-time employees assisting children in various aspects of life and education), counsellors (3 cases), shelter managers (3 cases) and 3 cases of housemothers (women living in shelters and sharing the same housing facilities with children) (Figure 7).

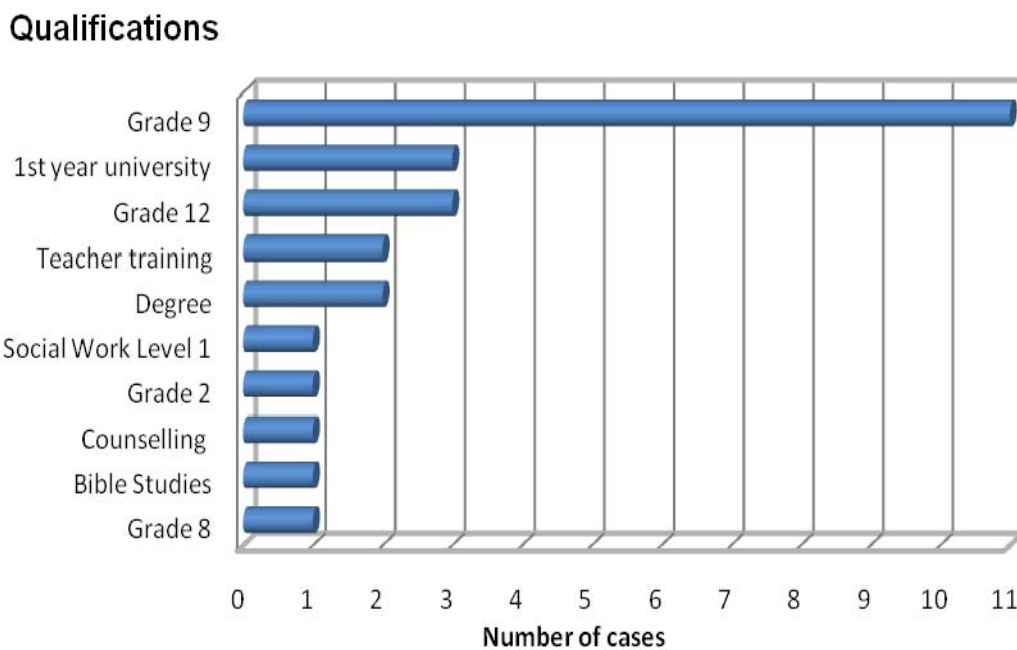
**Figure 7: Job Title of Shelter Staff**



The majority were not highly educated with only 2 staff holding a bachelor degree, 2 with

teacher training qualifications, 3 currently attending university, 3 having finished grade 12, and 11 grade 9. The lowest educated, having only completed Grade 2 of primary school was a house mother. The staff members are experienced childcare educated with only 2 staff holding a bachelor degree, 2 with teacher training qualifications, 3 currently attending university, 3 having finished grade 12, and 11 grade 9. The lowest educated, having only completed Grade 2 of primary school was a house mother (Figure 8. The staff members are experienced childcare workers with 20 having at least over 3 years of experience working with children, while 13 have been employed at their current shelters for over 3 years.

**Figure 8: Staff Qualifications**

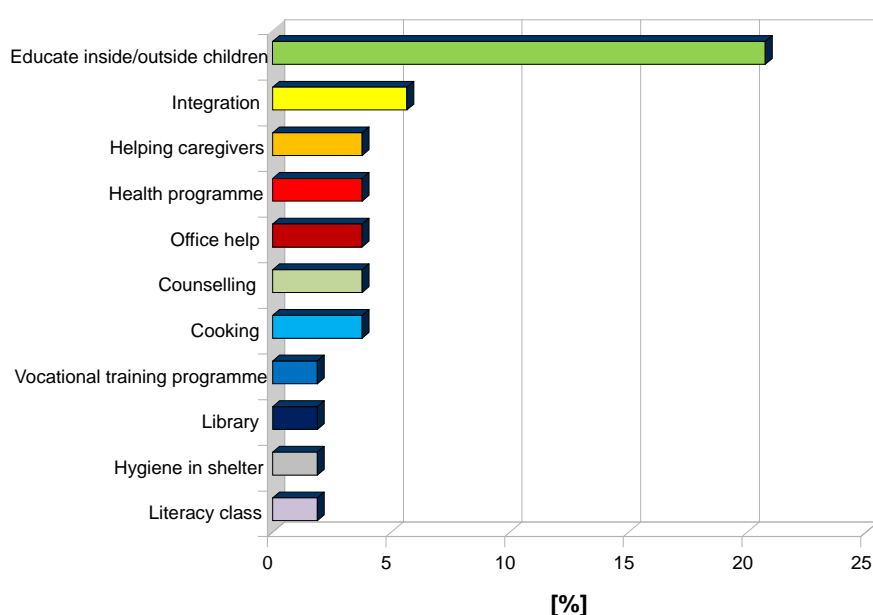


### 3.2.2 Staff Participants of Survey

A questionnaire comprising of a total of 20 open and closed questions was formulated (see Appendix 5) and distributed to 75 workshop participants. 53 of the participants representing 20 organisations completed the survey. In addition to the 15 shelters (CCT was not represented) where individual interviews were conducted, five other organisations contributed, including PKO, PPS, PTC, World Vision, and DoSVY. Although the participants were engaged in 15 different roles, the main tasks encompassed social workers (30%), educators (23%), and caregivers (17%). Despite the assortment of job titles, the main responsibility for all of them was to educate children (Figure 9). There appears to be a vast disparity among the shelters regarding the ratio between children and caregivers, with some shelters citing 81:1, 25:1 and 7:

1. The participants are long-term employees of the shelters with only 11% having worked less than a year at their shelters. 12 of the staff admitted to having a second job (8 are teachers, 2 are tailors, 1 is a health care worker, while another is a caregiver), work which is similar to their shelter duties. 52 of the staff formerly held other posts where 69% gained practical experience for their current job. The educational attainment of the staff was not so remarkable with only 9 people having studied at university, 10 at associate teacher training colleges, and 12 completing Grade 12. However, most of the staff surveyed (48) are actively pursuing opportunities to augment their capacity such as IOM training, counselling, child protection, reproductive health and basic social work. Thus, all believe that they have relevant training for the job as statistics show adequately for the job (55%), somewhat adequate (36%) and a little (9%).

**Figure 9: Responsibilities of Shelter Staff**



### 3.2.3 Staff Focus Group Discussion

3 men and 3 women from 6 different shelters (ARM, Homeland, KMR, KnK, PPS, and PKO) participated in a FDG regarding staff motivation (Appendix 4). They represented a diverse group comprising of a health care worker, educator, caregiver, social worker, director and a counsellor. Only two of the participants have been working at their respective shelters for less than a year but similar to all the group members, their former work experience was in comparable fields. Two of the members have been awarded bachelor degrees while the rest had completed high school. However, they all have attended many in-service training courses such



counselling, reproductive health, nutrition, first aid, and case management, but all felt that the training was only “a little adequate” for their jobs.



**IOM Workshop Training for Shelter Staff**

### **3.3 Staff Motivation**

70% of the staff interviewed individually stated directly that working with children is what they enjoy most about their work, while another 4 interviewees (15%) valued what they described as “living with the children,” and an additional group of 4 emphasised teaching children, which clearly means working with children as well. *“Since I began working at CWCC, I have received a lot of training. I feel proud living with the children, especially, when they call me mum”* (CWCC staff). Equally, data from the completed questionnaires signified that working with children was the main attraction of the job for the majority of the contributors. Furthermore, everyone responded positively to the question whether they liked children (very much (43%), quite a lot (49%) and somewhat (8%). 34% failed to indicate why they liked working with children while the rest gave such answers as wanting to improve the quality of life for Khmer children (21%), personal satisfaction (11%), believing it to be an important job (9%) and feeling sorry for the children (9%). The participants of the FGD were united in their desire to help vulnerable children through education and problem solving.

The main job related complaints for those interviewed individually focused on inadequate



capacity of the staff to deal with certain issues such as managing children (65%)<sup>21</sup>, preventing conflicts (17%), solving conflicts (13%) whereas personal monetary gain was only considered important to 9%. *“The most difficult part of my job is to counsel children. I know the children have problems but I don’t know how to help them. I don’t have enough experience with children. I really need more childcare training,”* declared a member of staff at CCT. *“I find it difficult to get the families to understand the risks of trafficking,”* stated a Don Bosco employee. The participants of the survey had a wider range of complaints than the staff interviewed individually. Perhaps, they had more time to think about the answer or could answer more freely since they were outside the shelter. Disobedient children (15%) - in other words - managing children, too much work (13%), conflict solving (9%), and poor staff management (7%) were the major grievances pertaining to these participants. Low remuneration was mentioned only by 2 people. For the FGD participants, the irksome part of their work included heavy work load, managing children, dealing with parents, poor staff management, bullying from colleagues, staff bullying children, and inefficient time to spend with children.

Only 16% of those who completed the survey declared that they would like to change their work for a job with similar benefits and 21% ‘maybe’ would consider such options whereas 55% would definitely not and 2% would rather not change because they would be receiving similar experience and benefits. However, only 30% of the surveyed group would not be enticed to change jobs with better benefits with 38% citing ‘maybe’ and 32% ‘definitely yes’. The main reasons reported for changing the workplace included wanting to improve professionally (40%) and a chance to earn more money (25%). Regarding changing employment with similar benefits, 3 participants would prefer to remain in their current jobs, 2 might consider changing while one would definitely change in order to acquire new experiences for self development. On the other hand, everyone in this group would change jobs if they were to receive additional benefits. They stated that *“working for money is important.”*

A quarter of the survey participants as well as FGD participants maintained that working with children from various backgrounds was the greatest challenge facing social workers and caregivers in Cambodia. Additional factors posing challenges for the FGD members included co-operating with local authorities (i.e. the police), lack of security while performing family tracing and assessment for reintegration, inadequate salary and bullying from colleagues. The

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<sup>21</sup> It was acknowledged during the workshop trainings, that children who have been trafficked are the most difficult to manage because they tend to be quick tempered, obstinate, indulge in anti-social behaviour, prefer to be alone, pick fights with others, refuse to do daily chores, and do not like to participate in shelter activities.

biggest changes that have taken place in the various institutions of the surveyed group are: organisational structure (17%), policy (9%), and a strategy for policies and expenditure (8%). 42% of the participants failed to answer this question. For the participants of the FGD similar changes have occurred as well as adherence to governmental policies and co-operation with relevant ministries, child participation in decision-making of internal rules.

The main assistance requested by the personnel interviewed individually were capacity building (39%), additional shelter facilities (35%), school uniforms and materials (22%), and non-specific funding (13%). Again, very few mentioned salary increase (4%), pension fund (4%), and staff insurance (4%). The survey participants stipulated for more non-specific funding (13%), capacity building (11%), life skills training for children (9%), sports equipment (8%) and a better compound (6%). Only 6% specified salary. However, half of the FGD members would like to see their salary increase while the rest wanted more vocational skills training, specific funding for car repair and leisure for children, programmes for children not attending school or vocational training, and an income generating project for poor families. Staff capacity building was not addressed.

It can be concluded that the majority of the staff are altruistic or at least want to be seen this way. Their main concern is to improve the welfare of the children by enhancing the shelters and their capacity to undertake their professional roles. There are some contradictions when addressing issues of financial compensation, possibly many participants were uncomfortable to openly admit its motivational significance.

### **3.4 Migrant Experience**

#### **3.4.1 Concepts and Definitions**

IOM defines migration as “*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.*”<sup>22</sup> The internal migrant population in Cambodia is high representing 35% of the total population.<sup>23</sup> Thailand and Vietnam are the two important destinations for Cambodian cross-border migrants. The National Committee for Population and Development (NCPD) (2008) states that the majority of migrants to the aforementioned countries are irregular migrants<sup>24</sup> and that virtually all will have required some

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.ir.metu.edu.tr/iom/pdf/iom2.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> NIS (2003), "Statistical Yearbook", National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

<sup>24</sup> IOM refers to an irregular migrant as someone who, owing to illegal entry or the expiry of his or her visa, lacks legal status in a transit or host country. The term applies to migrants who infringe a country's

form of assistance to gain entry to the other country and, having entered, to gain access to the labour force. Others may have been forced or wilfully deceived into the migration. Thus, trafficking in persons remains a grave concern in the country and the region as Cambodia acts as a receiving, sending and transit point for victims of trafficking destined for other places. The Palermo Protocol developed by the UN (2000) puts forth the generally accepted definition of human trafficking including by the Royal Government of Cambodia and IOM. Trafficking is

*“...the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.”*

Although, this definition implies a passive role of victims or deception, this study shows that the children were aware of their situation and actively co-operating. However, the UN trafficking Protocol stipulates that unlike adults, any recruitment or movement of a child into exploitation is considered trafficking, thus expanding the stereotypical concept of trafficking.

According to IOM Cambodia, the number of irregular migrants apprehended in neighbouring countries is increasing.<sup>25</sup> Among them are the rural poor seeking better opportunities and additional sources of income as well as their children who are an integral part of family income generation. Migration also has a detrimental impact on the children “left behind” in the village. Most shelters cater for the rehabilitation of children who have migrant experience or have been trafficked before reintegrating them with their families. While the first is the fact the latter may be debatable as a goal that may or may not be shared by all stakeholders, which is to be verified throughout this study.

### **3.4.2 Children interviewed individually**

Migration, played a pivotal role in over half (52%) of the interviewees lives. Some children had crossed an international border once, others multiple times, whereas crossing the border on a daily basis was the norm for several others (5 children, 4 boys and 1 girl) to work in either Thailand or Vietnam. Some of the reasons given for daily travel were that they had no place to

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admission rules and any other person not authorized to remain in the host country (also called clandestine/ illegal/undocumented migrant or migrant in an irregular situation).

<sup>25</sup> The World Bank estimates that undocumented Cambodian workers represent over 2.5% of the total population.

stay and they had no relatives there. The main reasons for migrating included poverty, family debt, deception, lack of job opportunity, positive reports and observation of returnees, opportunity to escape parent and step-parent, and pride. As described by a 19 year old girl who had spent time working in Thailand: *"I went to Thailand without telling my parents. I felt unhappy at home because my step-mother did not like me. I wanted to be free of her, but also wanted to earn some money for the family. I didn't want the neighbours to look down on us because we are poor."* Another child, an 18 year old boy stated that *"I wanted to go to Thailand to make a lot of money because my neighbour was earning a good income there."*



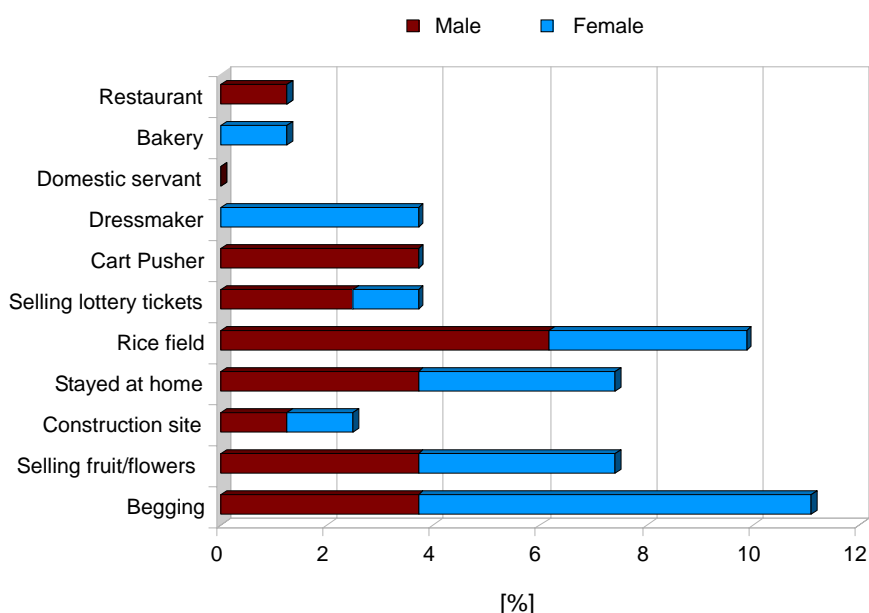
**Selling Flowers**

Although some children willingly migrated, not all went of their own accord. Some were forced to go by their parents and guardians, or sent along with parents, siblings and relatives. A 16 year old boy reported the following: *"My father had been living in Thailand for 8 years when he sent a trafficker to my home town to take me there. My uncle made me go with the trafficker. I had to guard the house and take care of my younger brother while the rest of my family went to work. I wanted to return to Cambodia."* A nineteen year old disabled girl spent 5 years in Thailand begging for the trafficker because her mother sold her to him. She was able to escape when she was arrested by the Thai police and consequently, repatriated and referred to a long-term shelter.

Child migration was not an individual act but more of a family or community affair. Most

of the interviewees travelled with parents (17 cases), siblings (12 cases), and relatives (9 cases), a few with neighbours (3 neighbours), while over a quarter were aware that were migrating with a trafficker. As one 19 year old girl aptly concludes, *“We went with my auntie and a lot of other people. I earned between 2,500-5,000 riels a day and my auntie kept the money to give to my mother in Cambodia. I think my auntie was the trafficker.”* Not all traffickers abused the children. Half of the children had a good relationship with their trafficker declaring that the trafficker treated them kindly, giving them enough to eat and time to sleep, and making regular payments to their parents. A 17 year old girl related, *“Living with the trafficker was better than living at home. The trafficker was very kind to me whereas at home I have bad relations with my family.”* However, the rest of the children suffered physical and psychological abuse from various actors such as the trafficker, supervisor, relative and the police. Acts of cruelty took the form of beatings, scolding, bullying, food and sleep deprivation, and non-payment of earnings. A 16 year old boy talked about his experience in a Thai prison before been repatriated: *“When I was in prison, the police beat me with a stick because when they called my name I was slow to respond. I felt so homesick and frightened.”* Three girls referred briefly to having been sexually abused. One girl alleged that she was raped in Vietnam by her relative, another by her neighbour who she was staying with while the third girl alluded to the violent behaviour from the trafficker and his friend.

**Figure 10: Work of Migrant Children**





### Collecting Recyclable Materials

The activities undertaken by the migrant children were diverse but the most common constituted begging, working in rice fields, selling fruit, flowers and lottery tickets (Figure 10). Some children were made to stay at home to care for younger siblings and to cook for their family. The majority of beggars were forced to do this activity and did not enjoy it. *“I didn’t like begging because some people were very mean to us, and we were often chased by the police. I was always on edge worrying about the police and my siblings. I really pitied them. We had a horrible life,”* were the words of a 17 year old girl. The children had to work hard but received very little money in exchange. There appears to be a wide range of income, from US\$0.50 per day to US\$86 per month. It was difficult to estimate the average daily allowance because some children reported daily, weekly, monthly payments or the sum of the total amount they had received. Moreover, figures were given in different currencies, Cambodian riel, Vietnamese dong and Thai baht. The majority of the children gave their entire earnings to either relatives or the trafficker. A few children reported that they were cheated out of money by their employers and the trafficker, or had their money stolen while they slept. A 13 year old disabled boy who had spent a year in Thailand begging explains how he utilised his earnings, *“After paying the trafficker, I could save more than 10,000 baht. I paid off the family debt and bought my family a TV. They were very happy with me.”* Yet, no one from his family has come to visit him at the shelter since he arrived six months ago after his arrest and repatriation. A 16 year old boy admitted, *“I left Thailand because my boss scolded me a lot. I couldn’t stand working for him anymore. I had 1000 baht and I spent all the money myself to buy food, to gamble, and to sniff glue.”* One of the children, a 16 year old male who refused to accompany his mother to

Thailand had the following to say: *“My mother had to use a lot of the money she earned to bribe the police every time she was arrested.”*

The majority of the children (30 or 73%) were disappointed with their migratory experience describing their experience as worse than expected. They believed that migration would improve the quality of life and not add to their misery and pain. Further hardship is comprehensible considering that only 10 of the migrant children lived with their families, while the rest lived either with other Khmer people, relatives, trafficker, or employers. Eight of the children lived on the street. As a 15 year old boy claimed, *“My life in Thailand was difficult because I had to make money for other people.”* An 18 year old female conveyed her bad experience: *“I have been travelling back and forth to work in Vietnam since I was 6 years old. I would go for a period of 10 to 20 days. I usually went with the trafficker who was my neighbour and a lot of other children. I wanted to go to help my family because they are very poor. Our situation has become worse since my father died two years ago. My parents and siblings also went to Vietnam very often. I usually begged or sold lottery tickets and earned around 5000 riels a day. The trafficker took all my money but paid my parents 115,000 riels, 1 kilogram of pork and 1 kilogram of monosodium glutamate (MSG). My parents had negotiated the payment with the trafficker beforehand. The trafficker wanted me to earn 20,000 riels a day and when I could not get that amount, he wouldn't let me eat or sleep and often beat me. I had to beg for food at the restaurants but this food was terrible, full of flies and germs. My life then was not good.”*

One out of the 9 satisfied children (22%), a 20 year old male gave this positive account of his migrant experience: *“My parents sent me to Vietnam in 2005 for one year because they wanted me to make extra money for them. I went with my neighbour who was the trafficker and a lot of other villagers. I got a job in a restaurant cleaning animal organs. I liked this job because I could earn 200,000 riels per month. I gave the trafficker 50,000 riels every month and sent the rest to my family. We lived along the street and ate at the restaurant. The trafficker and the restaurant owner were kind to me. I was happy then, and my life was better than I had expected. We left Vietnam when the restaurant closed.”* A 14 year old boy had this to say, *“I had a better life in Thailand than here in Cambodia. In Thailand there were a lot of people, a lot of markets and a lot of tourists. I could earn money easily.”*

Only two children, brothers from the same shelter who worked as cart pushers in the market on the Thai border and travelled daily from Poipet felt neutral about their migrant

experience as it had made very little impression or impact on them. As the 13 year old brother explained, *“My uncle took me across the border every day to help him push his cart in the market. I received 50 baht a day and I gave it all to my mother. I never really thought about whether I liked it or not, or whether it was easy or difficult. I just did it.”*

Regardless of their experience, all children indicated that they had no desire to return to their previous migrant life. This stance may also be the result of the education and information received regarding trafficking awareness at the shelters. One child, a 16 year old boy expressed regret and sorrow: *“When I think about my life in Thailand, I feel very sad and regret some of the things I did there.”* A 12 year old girl compared her present life at the shelter to her former life as a migrant: *“Living here is better. I am happier now. I was often hungry in Thailand but there was nothing to eat. I had to sleep on the ground but here, there is always food to eat and a good place to sleep.”* A 16 year old girl concluded that: *“I faced many hard situations during my stay in Thailand.”*

### **3.4.3 Child Participants of Focus Group Discussions**

Contrary to individually interviewed children only about 30% of FGD children had migrant experience. 25% of this group claimed that they wanted to migrate which is less than the previous group, 44% were sent with parents which is more than the previous, and only one with siblings. These trends may correlate with the fact that children participating in FGDs were by average older. Only 8% of the children had experience of direct interaction with traffickers and 85% were migrating with families (siblings, parents and relatives). Nevertheless, some of these relatives or those described as neighbours could also be traffickers. 35% were living with family and 9% with other relatives which in both cases are more than the former group. Only one child resided with the trafficker, nobody with their employers and again one child on the street, which in all cases was less than for the previous group. Begging was also the main activity of the FGD children but with only one working in the rice field compared to nearly 20% of the individually interviewed children. The other activities (selling fruit, flowers, or lottery tickets, staying at home, pushing carts, working in factories) fit into the same profile as the former group. The money earned varied between US\$1 to US\$3 a day. There were no cases reporting income below US\$1 a day which is different from the group individually interviewed. This may correlate with the fact that FGD sample had no children below the age of 9 who were more likely to be paid less. Relations between expectations and reality of migrant life was similar as in the other group, 75% found reality worse than expected. *“Life in Thailand was worse than I expected. The trafficker was kind to us in Cambodia but in Thailand he often beat me when I couldn't make enough money,”* reported an 11 year old boy. Another 11 year old boy



describes his migrant experience, *“I went to Thailand with my mother and a trafficker but when we arrived in Thailand I was separated from my mother, and we didn't meet after that. I tried to escape many times to try and see her. I was made to beg but I had to give all the money to the trafficker. Sometimes I could earn 200 bahts per day and the trafficker would give me money to buy food. If I had no money I couldn't eat. I had to live with the trafficker. He often beat me when he wasn't happy with the amount of money I collected. The trafficker was too strict but I was able to escape from him eventually. My six years in Thailand was not so good. My life would have been better if it weren't for the trafficker. However, I am very satisfied with my life here at the shelter. I get enough food to eat and I can go to school. I will never go back to Thailand again.”*

### **3. 5 Psychological Balance**

#### **3.5.1 Children interviewed individually**

The general observation of all the children interviewed, is that most of them appeared to be relatively well-balanced psychologically considering their traumatic past and troubled background. They were articulate in answering the questions, made good eye contact, and were friendly and cheerful. However, a number of children (22 from 11 different shelters) seemed depressed, behaved peculiarly, or had difficulties in communicating with the research team illustrating that some children are more deeply affected. The data revealed a pattern congruent with those observations. As expected, the interviewees who were physically or sexually abused were more prone to emotional instability and idiosyncrasies. A counsellor at ARM confirmed that *“based on personal observations, different categories of children have different behaviour. Children who have been sexually abused have low self-esteem. They shun group activities and are usually quiet, lonely and isolated”*. The most severe case encountered was a 12 year old girl with a very disturbed background. Her parents divorced, her father remarried, she spent many months in Thailand begging, her mother is in a Thai prison for drug smuggling, she was raped and left with a neighbour who threatened and beat her. Her behaviour and some of her responses during the interview reflect that she is clearly in need of professional counselling.

The majority of the children displayed a healthy self-esteem, with 88% of them believing they have some talent (some had difficulties to understand this term) or are good at something. No trend can be detected from those who responded negatively as the respondents come from different shelters, diverse categories, represent both male and female of various ages, and are both long-term and short-term residents. The perceived strengths covered a myriad of conventional activities, the most popular being Khmer literacy, drawing, mathematics, study and sewing, in such order. The children interviewed were more inclined to project confidence in claiming that their ability was better (33 children) or similar to other children (37) rather than

feeling inferior (17) or didn't know how they fared (4). A 13 year old boy proudly announced: *"I am much better than the children in my class because I usually get first or second place in Khmer literacy tests."* A 16 year purported that *"I know from my monthly school report book that my grades and ability are similar to the other children in my class"*. A 19 year old boy stated: *"I used to be good at carpentry but since my accident, I am not as good as I was before. The others are much better than me"*. However, there is a correlation between shelters and how the children rated themselves in comparison to other children. Those with a sense of inferiority complex are mainly from the following four shelters, Goutte D'Eau Neak Loeung (5 out of 6 children), Svay Rieng Orphanage (5 out of 13 children), KST (3 out of 5 children) and Don Bosco (2 out of 5 children).

In respect to activities created at the shelters to help children discover what they are good at doing, 10 children felt they were not getting opportunities to explore new things. As a 12 year old boy expressed, *"I don't get any opportunities to do new things here. I had more things to do at home. I attended public school in the morning, private school in the afternoon, and helped my family with the cooking."* However, a total of 88% claimed getting some form of opportunity, with 17 children stating a little, 1 - some, and 53 - a lot. The opportunities cited can be classified into four main categories, educational, chores, vocational and skills training, and entertainment (Table 3).

**Table 3: Children's Perceptions of Shelter Opportunities**

<b>Educational</b>		<b>Vocational &amp; Skill Training</b>		<b>Entertainment</b>		<b>Chores</b>	
study	19	sewing	9	performances	4	housework	18
English	9	knitting	4	games	3	cooking	6
computer	8	electronics	2	dance	1	gardening	11
French	7	weaving	3	music	1	collecting rubbish	5
tutoring	1	beauty therapy	2	circus activities	3		
art/craft	11	furniture making	2	exercises	1		
morality	2	fish farming	1				
		hairdressing	1				
		jewellery	1				
		earn money	2				
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>		<b>27</b>		<b>13</b>		<b>40</b>



### Knitting

The opportunities were very much gender oriented. Mainly girls gave examples of traditionally female activities such as sewing, knitting, weaving, jewellery making, and traditional dancing whereas boys' examples incorporated the following typically male activities, traditional Khmer music, electronics, fish farming, furniture making, circus performance, gardening, games, and collecting rubbish. One of the two children who availed of the opportunity to earn money by working at the shelter's restaurant, a 17 year old girl described how sensibly she uses her salary, *"My salary depends on the monthly profit of the restaurant. The maximum I have received is 10,000 riels per month. I am saving it to buy a plot of land so I will have somewhere to live when I leave the shelter."* Another girl (18 year old) who earns 30,000 riels per month from the sale of her kormas woven during vocational skills training sends the money to her mother.

It is surprising that so many children classified housework, mundane tasks that normally children despise, as new opportunities for them. The following two assumptions can be made concerning this trend, (1) that the children were deprived of basic life-skill training and normal lifestyle before coming to the shelter, and (2) that the alternative opportunities provided by the shelter are even less appealing than housework. Once again, there is a pattern between shelter and chances to engage in activities. The majority of children who felt opportunities were limited or non-existent came from Goutte D'Eau Neak Loeung (6 children), CCPCR Boys' Programme (3 children), SKO (3 children), KnK (3 children), KMR (2 children), Homeland (2 children), KST (2 children) and Wathnakpheap (1 child). One 14 year old boy, a former resident of BRC and now living at Don Bosco maintained, *"I like Don Bosco better than BTC because here we get more opportunities to do things. I really enjoy planting and growing vegetables."* It

remains to be seen what impact these opportunities will have on the children's future lives. Chenda (2006, p. 18) argues the need for life plans and proper case management pertaining to formal education, long-term vocational training, short, informal and in-house training for each individual child because his study on reintegrated children found that *“such trainings did not seem to contribute anything to their current lives and livelihood strategies.”*



### **Gardening**

Praise and encouragement are also essential in nurturing confidence and self-esteem. Everyone loves to receive praise but children even more so than adults, as they constantly search for approval and acceptance. Overall, the children are satisfied with the level of positive reinforcement they are being paid at the shelters, which is mainly given in the form of verbal admiration. A 17 year old girl remarked that *“The trainer of my beauty therapy course always praises and encourages me. When I feel down, she says, “Don't be discouraged. I will always be here for you, and even in the future if you have no place to live you can come and live with my family”. She is so kind to me.”* Only 27 of the children have received awards in the form of gifts and tokens for their achievements, but mainly for educational attainment. A 14 year old boy proudly proclaimed, *“I have received prizes from the shelter director twice for getting good grades on my monthly school report. So far, I have being given soap, a scarf and school materials.”* Similarly, a 19 year old female related that *“When I do a good job at school, the director praises me and gives me money.”* Nevertheless, two children from the same shelter, a boy and a girl reported receiving prizes for non- educational accomplishments, such as for



dancing and keeping the house clean. More shelters should follow this example for the following reasons: (1) not all children can excel academically, so the same children will always be rewarded; (2) all children are unique and have their own ability, hence each talent should be equally recognised and celebrated to make all children feel good about themselves. The shelters where rewards have yet to be distributed to the interviewees include ARM, Goutte D'Eau Residential Centre Poipet, Goutte D' Eau Rehabilitation Centre, and Goutte D'Eau Neak Loeung. Likewise, the data illustrates that CWCC, Don Bosco, KST and Goutte D'Eau Neak Loeung are shelters where motivational strategies in the form of compliments and words of encouragement could be improved upon.



### **Relaxing**

Judging from the multifarious responses to the question regarding when they felt happiest, the children interviewed are easily pleased and do not have high expectations. The most cited occasion (19 times) was in the receipt of praise which highlights the significance of praising children. This was followed by playing (13 times), coming to live in the shelter (8 times), during shelter activities and events (6 times), and going on outings (4 times). However, very few children (3) mentioned that family visits or when visiting home (2 children) made them feel happiest. Nonetheless, the most common situations for children to feel unhappy is when they think about home (14 cases) and when fighting occurs between children (14 cases) at the shelter. There was a tendency for children to become melancholic and some even teary-eyed when talking about their families during interviews. A 16 year old girl mentioned, *"I feel sad when I miss home and when I see the younger children playing here at the shelter. They remind*

*me of my nephew and niece at home.” Regarding aggression between the children at the shelters, a 13 year old boy explained, “I feel sad when the other children here fight with me and don't let me play with them or join their activities.”*

Other instances that provoked sadness were when the children performed poorly or were unable to do things well (9 cases), and worrying about their family situation (6 cases). One boy, 16 year old boy became extremely upset when discussing the futility of his family's situation and appealed for assistance. He said, *“When I return to the shelter after my visit home, I feel really sad because I worry a lot about my family's financial situation and living conditions. They are very poor because they are in debt. My father works as a day labourer and my mother harvests rice for other people. Will you please meet my family and help them? They need money and rice. There is nobody to help them.”* A 17 year old female described her torment, *“I feel unhappy every time my mother or grandmother comes to visit me. They ask me for money, and try to persuade me to come home so that I can return to Vietnam to work.”* Seven boys and girls, of a mixture of ages, background and shelters responded that they have never felt unhappy since coming to live or study at the shelter. However, while a 14 year old boy was making such a statement, he became very nervous and tears started welling up in his eyes. Distribution of all the patterns related to sadness appears natural in the given environment and efforts should be focused on improving the circumstances rather than psychological intervention.

Approximately 69% of the interviewees have made more friends since coming to live at the shelters. The explanations given for this phenomenon were that they were living with many other children at the shelter, they had more time and opportunities to interact and play with other children, and the attendance at public school enabled them to befriend children from the community. A 16 year old boy compared former “friends” to his new mates, *“My friends here at the shelter are different to the friends I used to have. I like my friends here better because my old friends liked to steal.”* A 12 year old girl commented that *“It is easy to make friends here because the children are good. They share everything they have with me.”* In addition to enhancing social skills, spending time with friends is preferable to feeling lonely and having too much time alone to dwell on the past, and worry about current and future problems.

The demeanour of the staff principally affects their channel of communication with the children. 56% of the children found it very easy to speak to the staff for numerous behavioural related reasons as well as others, which included: they are approachable, live together with

them, encourage them to talk, have good relations, give good advice, treat them equally and like their own, ask many questions, have house leaders, have meeting once a week, can meet them any time, give good advice, and are kind. A 14 year old girl explained, *“Before I felt embarrassed to talk to staff because of my rude words and behaviour. However, the shelter staff tried to correct me and taught me how to use appropriate words and be polite. Now, I find it very easy to communicate with them.”* The obstacles hindering communication with staff for the remaining children (44%) emanated from staff being too busy, fear of approaching them, not knowing what to say, scolding them a lot, no permission to talk to staff (this case may indicate a serious attitude issue of the staff), and not responding to their requests. Compared to children at the shelter (33%), teachers (14%), parents (4%) and relatives (4%), the shelter staff are the most popular companions for half of the children interviewed to discuss a wide range of topics that include both the pertinent and the trivial. None of the shelters showed any distinctive bias towards particularly good or particularly bad performance in communication with children, but all have room for improvements in this matter as the percentage of the interviewees declaring difficulties was certainly too high.

The shelter staff also remain the children's focal confidants (35%), as opposed to children at the shelter (21%), teachers (10%) and parents (6%). A large number of children (31%) do not confide in anyone. A 14 year old boy had this to say, *“I can't talk to anyone about my problem or my past because I don't want them to spread rumours about me”*. Another child's (12 year old boy) comment was *“I'm afraid I won't be able to find a job after I leave the shelter because I can't read and write. I don't want to tell anyone because they might look down on me.”* A 12 year old girl had this to say, *“I worry about my father who is mentally ill because my mother doesn't take care of him. I don't talk to anyone about it because I'm afraid no-one will listen to my concerns while I am living here for free.”* The data shows a marked improvement on the findings of Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation (TPO) Report (2006, p.29) that *“children do not have good social support systems in the centres. The majority of the children interviewed did not know whom to talk to if they had a problem.”* However, further strengthening of social support systems is required, with an emphasis on children's confidence in availability and effectiveness of those provisions.

The main concerns and worries of the children evolve around their families and future, most of which are legitimate rather than fantasised. A 12 year old girl's concern was, *“I mostly worry about my mother because my older brother beats her. He's a glue-sniffer and always asks my mother for money. When she doesn't have any, he beats her up.”* An 11 year old girl is scared that her family will have to leave their home in Poipet because the man who sexually

abused her may try to make trouble for her family. A 16 year old boy explained, *“I am worried about being expelled from the shelter. I was nearly expelled once because my friend and I stole money from the shelter staff. I have been given one more chance and I am afraid of making another mistake here.”* Little is done to allay the concerns of the children. Much of the advice is generic primarily emphasising the need to study hard, and not to worry. This suggests that staff members are often unable to provide constructive help. Further training in counselling skills and improving awareness of available resources would be highly beneficial. Children should be given life-skills of communication, negotiating skills, conflict solving, and skills of analysis, etc. International organisations may be particularly capable to provide help in such matters.



### **Feeling at Home**

It appears that the majority of children (61%) were not so enthusiastic about leaving the shelter with 20% stating that they will be very unhappy to leave. The most prevalent justifications were missing friends (15 children), no chance to study (14 children), not wanting to leave (7 children), no home to go to (6), potential inability to support family (3), and no opportunity to receive further support (3). A 12 year old boy described his reluctance to leave his shelter, *“I want to stay here forever because I feel happy here.”* A 16 year old boy stated *“I will be unhappy leaving the shelter because I don't know where to go. I used to have a lot of friends at home but not anymore.”* Reuniting with family (11 children) and employment (7 children) opportunities were the underlying issues for those children looking forward to



reintegration. As a 14 year old girl at explained, *“I will be very happy to leave here because by that time I will have a job.”*

Regarding post-shelter life, 79% of the children interviewed maintain at least somewhat positive outlook based on the assumption that they will be more marketable for employment as a result of the education and vocational training received at the shelters. 29 children were clearly positive, among them a 19 year old girl believes, *“My life will be better than the life I had before coming to this shelter. By the time I leave, I will have gained enough knowledge to be able to find a good job. I have heard the director say that I can stay here until I finish university. I want to become a teacher because I want to help children.”* A 16 year old boy reiterated similar conviction *“My life will be better because I will be well educated and will be able to make money easily.”* A 14 year old girl suggested that her shelter should be open forever to receive all victims of trafficking and vulnerable children because they can receive the right foundation for a better life. One of the less confident candidates, a 19 year old girl admitted that *“I’m not sure if my life will be better or not. I’m worried that I won’t have enough food to eat.”* Another girl (16 year old) claimed *“Maybe my life will not change. My grandmother wants me to come home but I’m afraid she’s going to send me back to Thailand. She is building a new house now and needs money.”* However, even the most positive scenarios did not reach beyond possibilities of becoming average citizens who are able to satisfy basic needs of their families. Realism seems not to leave any room for dreams and perhaps some efforts should be directed to changing this situation, showing children some maybe difficult and risky, but feasible routes to succeed on a national or even global scale.

### **3.5.2 Child Participants of Focus Group Discussions**

The two focus group discussions gauging psychological balance of the participants conducted at Goutte D'Eau Residential Centre Poipet and Goutte D'Eau Neak Loeung revealed similar trends in all categories as the individual interviews with the children. The additional facts acquired from the discussions specified that the children prefer to be with others than alone, but are not so partial to meeting new people due to the fear of being exploited or tricked. This lack of trust towards strangers, no doubt, originates from frequent bad treatment, consequential hurt and unfulfilled promises of the past. Staff-child relationships can be the foundation on which to cultivate renewed confidence and trust in people. Shelter staff should be informed and trained on how to develop the behavioural traits, attitudes and beliefs necessary for building trust in children.

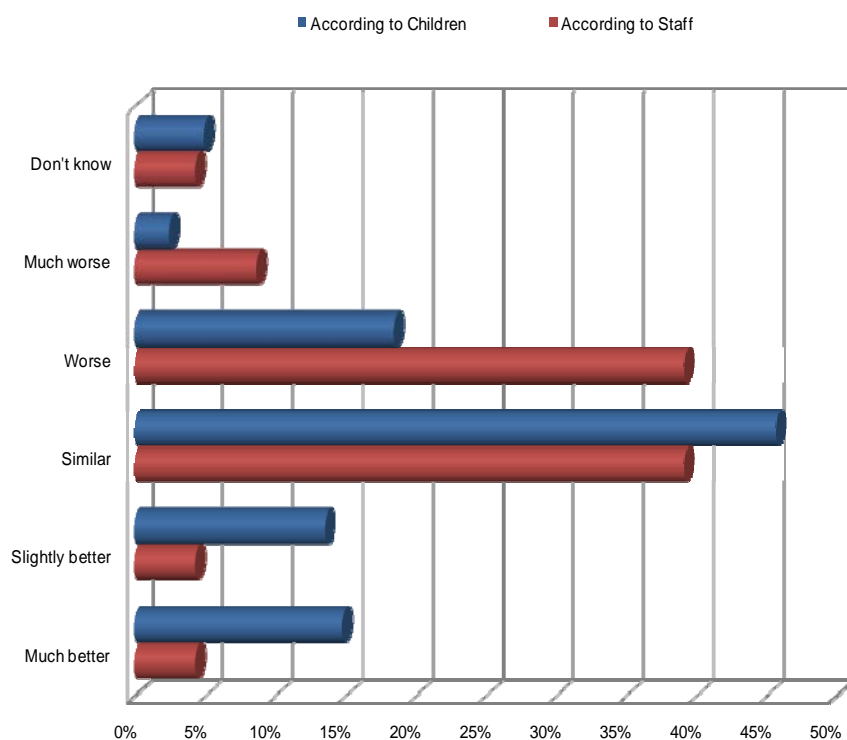
As part of the research activities for FGDs, children were asked to draw pictures of days when they felt happy and days when they felt sad, and to explain their drawings. There was a remarkable consistency amongst the children in what makes them happy. Special occasions or events were not depicted but daily life at home. Many pictures illustrate all the family sitting at the table enjoying a meal together. Others show the home and the physical surrounding, with some family members playing, preparing to go to school, feeding the chickens, watering the plants or preparing food to bring to the Pagoda. The house is also where the children can feel safe from external dangers. The children's descriptions of happiness emphasise the importance of living together as a family, having good relations and getting the opportunity to go to school. Pictures of sadness mainly illustrated scenes derived from the children's past experience of violence in the family, such as the father beating the mother while the children watched and cried, or a drunken father beating the children. Others showed family members in prison, being alone, or parrots flying away which according to the "artist" symbolises the loss of former happiness and fear of what will happen next. The child explained that the birds were building a nest in a tree where he was sitting under and thinking about his aunt in prison and that it was not fair that the birds could live together but he was separated from his family.

### **3.5.3 Staff interviewed individually**

There was a tendency among the staff to give more general descriptions of what they perceived the children to be good at compared to the specific examples of the children. The main talents cited were studying (30%), drawing (30%), singing (17%), handicrafts (13%) and dancing (13%). *"The children are good at drawing. They don't have an art teacher but they seem to prefer drawing to learning,"* explained a CCT employee. However, the staff were less optimistic than the children regarding their abilities vis-à-vis community children with 39% of the staff ranking them on par with community children. Only 8% felt they were better while 48% thought they were worse. A KMR staff member who gave a high appraisal of shelter children stated that *"the children here are much better because they have a chance to read books. The shelter staff monitor their progress and encourage them to improve whereas the community children have to spend time helping their family to make money. In addition, there is no proper management or supervision of children."* On the other hand, *"They are slower than the children from the community. Most are quick tempered and need more care and comfort,"* were the words of a CWCC caregiver. The headmaster at Don Bosco clarified that *"over 50% of residential children usually fail school tests. Some of them are just slow while others may be stressed due to family problems."* Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) which many of the children suffer from, and which inhibits their ability to concentrate on studies was the common opinion among staff. The difference between perceptions of staff and children regarding ability

are interesting but cannot be conclusive. It might be a positive effect of the shelter staff's efforts to build up children's confidence (even if it is reaching overconfidence, shelter residents may have limited knowledge of abilities of other children, and being more exposed to community members of marginally low abilities) or a presumption on the staff's side that children in the shelter are not as able as those outside. A more realistic comparison is unavailable. Gaps in the abilities of the children were reported to be due to natural ability and intellect, level of education, and age.

**Figure 11: Comparison between Staff and Children regarding Abilities**



The majority (91%) of the staff's judgement that the shelters are opening up avenues of opportunity for children, is a similar outlook endorsed by the children. However, the children's interpretations of these opportunities were broader as the staff's examples centred mainly on education and vocational skills training. A member of staff at CCPCR stated that 70% of the girls at their shelter go to work in garment factories because they needed to earn money quickly to support their families and are not interested in studying. An ARM staff member had the opposite to say, "*many of the girls here, even the youngest one talk about the future and how they want to stay at the shelter for as long as possible. They want to improve their English*

*language ability and become translators in the future. They are not so interested in studying vocational skills.*” Another staff member at Goutte D’Eau Neak Loeung remarked that although the children were getting more opportunities at the shelter, they were not making proper use of them because they refused to heed the advice of the caregivers. The staff (48%) believed that rewards as a form of motivation and encouragement are more prevalent than what the children stated (33%). Some staff acknowledged that they used their own money to give or to buy gifts for the children (Svay Rieng Orphanage). *“At school, the children can receive prizes for best scores but our children never get rewards. They are former street children and very few do well at school”* (KST director).

The staff do not have a good understanding of what promotes children’s happiness with 26% each regarding receiving good grades at school and going out for leisure to be the most pertinent factors, whereas being praised (25%) and playing (15%) were the happiest occasions cited by the children. Nevertheless, a caregiver at Goutte D’Eau Residential Centre Poipet gave an apposite response, *“the children feel happiest when we praise them and hug them.”* There is a possibility that the staff neglect to praise children. Additionally, going out for leisure may be more interesting and entertaining for the staff than for the children, perhaps due to some specific arrangements. Many of the interviewees appealed for additional funding to have outings for the children at least twice a year. Likewise, half of the staff presupposed the stereotypical attitude that children felt unhappy because they missed their family, an issue that does not reflect the performance of the shelter. Furthermore, the staff who completed the questionnaire stated that missing family and the lack of freedom as the two main causes for unhappiness at the shelter. On the contrary, only 25% of the children gave family reasons for feeling melancholy (such as thinking about home, being alone or being separated from family). Fighting in the shelter was ranked by 17% of the children as their source of sorrow whereas only one staff mentioned fighting, an issue originating within the shelter.

The staff’s approach of ensuring good relations with children (educate them 39%, and meetings 26%) can be considered too formal and too much about authority. Military style drills are genuinely considered by some shelter managers to be very appropriate. Shelter employees need to be encouraged to adopt more informal and more child-centred means for enhancing their relationship with the children. The interviewees were also under the illusion that children have made more friends since coming to live at the shelter (91% of the staff as opposed to 69% of the children), perhaps implying that children should have friends only in the shelter. Regardless of such a possibility, the more alarming may be that little is done to prepare children for life outside the shelter where friendship with those who did not have to use the alternative

care system can be vital. A similar concern was voiced by a caregiver at CCPCR who acknowledged that *“the children from the community have more advantages than our children because they can learn from one another (within a large group). The children here are sheltered as they only have to deal with each other. It is easy for them to get along because they are encouraged to maintain good relations, use polite words and co-operate. I’m afraid the reality they are going to face outside when they reintegrate is quite different.”*

Although, it is important that children are polite and respectful towards adults, there is certain evidence that shelter personnel may be taking this to extremes, and operating under the premise that children should be seen and not heard. With all positive responses to the levels of communication (very good 56%, good 26% and average 17%), the staff clearly does not feel the need for improvements, and remain oblivious to the fact that so many children (44%) felt reluctant to talk to them. A staff member at MMF described why communication between the staff and children was effective for them, *“there is good communication between the staff and children because we treat each other like family, and love one another. I act like their mother and I have dedicated my life to them.”* Maternal instinct is cited by another house mother at Goutte D’Eau Neak Loeung for enhancing communication, *“I feel as if they are my own children. I worry about them constantly, and pay more attention to them than to my own grandchildren. They really are to be pitied.”* Another employee from CWCC declared that fears of being reproached by their director prompted friendlier manner towards children, *“each time the director comes from Phnom Penh to visit, she interviews and talks to the children about certain issues. Therefore, some of the staff are afraid to mistreat the children and are very cautious about how they behave towards the children.”*

According to the staff, the children are prone to talk about the future rather than dwell on the past. This can be considered a positive measure because it is futile to reflect too much on past experiences since we cannot change the past but a proper level of reflection can be instrumental in shaping the future. Nevertheless, the staff could utilise these opportunities to encourage the children to learn and build on their past. The shelter personnel seemed to be in sync with the children regarding hope for a brighter future but were somehow contradicting themselves by thinking the children’s main worries concerned the future (78%), with family issues ranking sharply behind at 26%. *“Although they don’t talk so much about their future, I presume they consider returning to Thailand to make money because the opportunities here in Poipet, are limited,”* responded a staff member of Don Bosco shelter.

### 3.6 Physical Well-being

#### 3.6.1 Children interviewed individually

Physical health is the essence for children's well-being. It is also linked to emotional well-being and has social repercussions. A healthy child is usually a happy child, and a happy child is more likely to be healthy. Healthy children are more likely to socialise with friends and fulfil their daily obligations and chores. Being unwell puts pressure on finances as well as relationships. One of the numerous functions of shelters is to meet the basic needs of its clients or children which include the provision of adequate nutrition, clothing, accommodation, hygiene, healthcare, and playtime. Although the majority of the children are satisfied with the services rendered, standards differ among shelters. However, children's perceptions may not even mirror minimum standards because expectations will be gravely influenced by former living conditions which essentially comprise of crowded, unsanitary and dire settings. Thus, sub-standards and the slightest development or change may entail a marked improvement in the living standards of many. The following account from a 15 year old girl exemplifies the home environment for many of the children, *"Home is horrible especially during the rainy season when we have no place to sleep or food to eat. Here we have no worries about where to sleep. We get food, good education, and a chance to play with friends, and feel safe."*

Since coming to live at the shelter, the majority of the children rarely (43%) or never (31%) get sick with 44 (54%) of the children claiming that they become ill less often than before, 21 (26%) the same, and 16 (20%) more often. This positive impact is to be expected considering the current circumstances of children who can avail of a healthier diet, live in more sanitary conditions, have a more stable lifestyle, and receive health education, hygiene supplies and in most cases inoculation, in addition to medication and professional treatment when required. The common health problems of the children, headaches, cold, fever, stomach-ache, typhoid fever, dizziness, chronic bronchitis and insomnia, are part and parcel of every child's life. The majority are mild and self-limiting illnesses. The propinquity to other children in their new environment facilitates the spread of viruses and may account for more frequent bouts of sickness for those 16 children. Most children feel that current medical care is an improvement on former care because of free access to medicine (57%), living in close proximity to health centres (26%), and having a nurse or healthcare worker at the shelter (17%). A 19 year old boy remarked, *"The medical treatment I receive now is much better than what I used to get. My mother was too poor to buy any medicine or to go to a clinic. She was also too busy with her work to take care of such matters."*

Almost every child was of the same opinion that shelter food is better than the food they got at home, in terms of quantity, quality, variety, and tastiness. *“Food is much better here than at home. We get 3 meals a day, 2 dishes per meal and dessert once a week,”* were the words of a 16 year old girl. For most, the average domestic diet consisted of rice, soup and prohok (fish paste) once or twice a day. They seldom got meat or vegetables to eat. Some children who had lived at various shelters acknowledged considerable differences in food between the shelters. Stringent policies are explicable against the backdrop where the food allowance per day per child ranged from 1,500 riels (US37 cents) (Svay Rieng Orphanage) to 10,000 riels (US\$2.50) (ARM) among the shelters. The average was US\$1. *“The food was better and more delicious at KMR than here at Don Bosco. Here, we only receive 1 dish per meal compared to 2 dishes at KMR,”* were the remarks of a former resident of KMR. Although, the children currently living at SKO conveyed only positive accounts, former residents of SKO now residing at CCT commented that the latter was superior in terms of culinary delights. Among them, a 13 year old boy uttered *“The food here is very different to that at SKO. It is more delicious. For breakfast, we were served only soy bean sauce whereas here, we can have fried vegetables and meat. At SKO, we mostly just got soup for every meal and rarely were given fried fish and vegetables. I only ate fish whenever I could catch it myself.”* Another child (19 year old girl) added that *“At SKO we didn't get fruit or dessert very often.”* The staff member at SKO who was interviewed corroborated that the food there was not so delicious but that the children ate everything and did not complain. Another SKO staff member later reported in a letter soliciting donor funding the food shortages at his shelter. It is also possible that children were particularly sensitized towards expressing gratitude to current providers of nutrition and were more likely to complain about the past situation where any moral or formal obligations did not exist.

74 children (92%) expressed that they were getting more food to eat now and subsequently, 72 of the children claimed a slight to a significant increase in weight. A 16 year old female living at a shelter for approximately one year estimated that she had gained 8 kilogrammes since her arrival. Nobody stated that they had lost any weight. Based on observations, 22 of the children interviewed were considered to be malnourished or underdeveloped. Thin, scrawny and ragged looking children were most apparent in Goutte D' Eau Neak Loeung (4 out of 5 children), Goutte D' Eau Rehabilitation (2 out of 3 children), KST (3 out of 4 children), SKO (3 out of 4 children) and Svay Rieng Orphanage (6 out of 13 children). Many children (individual interviews and FGDs) at Goutte D' Eau Neak Loeung complained of not getting enough food to eat. Difficulty of providing a balanced diet to the children in the current period of recession was substantiated by staff members. Meal-times were observed at certain shelters and eating arrangements differed considerably. At some shelters, all the children ate their meals together, while at others, random groups of children sat on mats to eat their food at different times. None



of the adults joined them. This is a missed opportunity for building relationships and keeping the door of communication between the staff and children open. Eating together could be an ideal chance to share ideas and to find out what is happening in the children's lives.



**Dinner Time**

Play promotes healthy child development by contributing to the cognitive, physical, social and emotional well-being of children and youth. The benefits derived from play will accrue to the children (61) that have similar or more time to play whilst living at the shelters. In addition to having more friends, toys and sports equipment to play with, the children expressed delight at the opportunities to participate for the first time in group activities, team games (football, volleyball, tennis) and novel recreation (skipping, high jump, charades, etc.). *“Some of the games we play here at the shelter are similar to the games I played at home but, many are different. I am so happy to learn new games. I will teach them to my siblings and neighbours when I return home.”* (15 year old girl) Their appreciation of recreation is manifested in that having more fun and games ranked the sixth most popular reason (7 children) for the shelter being better than home. Nonetheless, visits and especially weekend visits to the different shelters highlighted the dearth of structured and organised activities for the children. Watching television seemed to be the main event at some shelters. Lack of supervision and left to their own devices resulted in a lot of fighting and bickering amongst the younger children. Feeling bored at weekends was a common complaint. Shelters should ensure that children's free time is better utilised. Several of the 18 children who perceived to have less time now to play

explained that they were busy with other activities, such as vocational training and literacy classes.



**Playtime**

Nearly all of the children were united in expressing a predilection towards living at the shelter rather than at home. The main themes from the data embraced both services provided and personal bonding with other children and staff. They include (1) better living conditions, (2) more food, (3) opportunity to attend school, (4) more time for study, (5) lots of friends, (6) more fun and games, (7) more free time, (8) more attention, (9) nothing at home, and (10) good staff. Many people involved in providing shelter care are concerned that the good living conditions at the shelters may act as a hindrance in the reintegration of children into the original family/community setting. Chenda (2006) rightly advocates the need for further research on the relationship between a shelter's condition and barriers to reintegration. Although, there was a gender balance for most of the aforementioned reasons, getting more attention from shelter staff was considered generally by females as the most positive aspect of shelter life. It appears that the attention being paid to females is rooted in the staff's fear of the girls becoming victims of sexual abuse. Boys are rarely viewed in a similar light or as paedophilic targets. Such unawareness is startling considering that Action Pour Les Enfants (2006) found that 80% of child victims of street-based sexual exploitation are male. Hence, girls are regularly instructed on how to behave but not necessarily in a correct or reasonable manner. Explanations as to why certain behaviour is warranted are generally left unaddressed. A 16 year old girl explains some

ungrounded concerns of the staff, *“My house mother tells me not to play with the boys here in the shelter because they will want to touch me, and do other things. Unlike the boys, the girls are not allowed to go out at the weekends because we may be kidnapped.”* It was revealed during the workshop trainings that “no falling in love” was included as an internal rule at some of the shelters. It would be more beneficial to provide proper sex education to foster healthier relationships between boys and girls and to prepare them for adulthood.

When describing what was available in the shelter and not at home, possessions (75 cases) and facilities (31 cases) took precedence over opportunities (16 cases) and relationships (1 case) for many of the children. This correlates with the perceptions of most NGOs and parents that the shelters provide a higher standard of living. It is natural that materialism or commodities which would have been regarded as intangible in the past would now possess additional attraction for the children. 3 of the 7 children who said that they have nothing at the shelter reside at SKO. A 14 year old boy staying there remarked, *“I can't think of any specific item. I don't own anything here. We have to share everything we have with all the children.”* The selection of conventional everyday things such as toys and craft materials (21 cases), new clothes (21 cases), school materials (18 cases), personal items (15 cases), modern appliances and furniture (6 cases), bicycle (5 cases), pocket-money (5 cases), good food (5 cases), a good toilet (2 cases), and so forth magnifies the stringency of the children's home environment. The following descriptions from several children shed light on the gravity of their domestic situation, *“At the shelter, I have a toothbrush and toothpaste. I never brushed my teeth before coming to live here,”* (14 year old boy) *“Here, I have clothes, shoes, toothbrush and toothpaste,”* (12 year old girl). *“I have dolls here at the shelter to play with. I never had a doll at home,”* (12 year old girl). *“I get to ride a bicycle and receive pocket money here, 500 riels per day to pay for bicycle parking at school.”* (16 year old boy) The most popular items, toys and craft materials are befitting of children and depict the child-minded disposition of some of the interviewees who have managed to maintain child-like interests and attitudes despite former adversity.

Receiving an education and going to school was the most well-liked feature of the shelters. 33 children (41%) were partial to opportunities for studying, and in particular the children at the following shelters, KMR (6 out of 6 children), Don Bosco (4 out of 5), KnK (4 out of 6 children), and Svay Rieng Orphanage (8 out of 13 children). Activities (10%), craft making (9%), children (9%), staff (6%), building and the environment (6%) were some of the other most admired aspects. *“I like the literacy classes, sewing skills training, and the opportunities I get to participate in the activities here. I enjoy playing games, dancing, singing, performing for*

*special guests, and daily exercises,” (17 year old girl).*

*“I like the good education and good advice I am getting here at Homeland,” (15 year old boy).*

*“I like the caretaker most. She teaches me a lot and encourages me to study hard,” (11 year old girl).*

*“My favourite is the vocational skills' trainer. She is very kind to me and encourages me a lot,” (17 year old girl).*

*“I am happy with the children here. They are my friends,” (16 year old boy).*

While such statements clearly have a positive note, the expectations of children appear very modest, perhaps too modest. Children certainly have developed a sense of gratitude towards the shelter staff, and it is rather impossible to tell what part of it is a natural response and what may have been directly instructed in the context of the interviews.

30 (37%) of the interviewees did not find fault with the shelter while 2 children claimed they did not know what they disliked. A 19 year old male described his current fulfilling lifestyle, *“There is nothing I dislike about my vocational training with CCPCR. Here, I receive motor repair training, earn some money, get enough food to eat, and have a good place to sleep. At the weekends, I can go out whenever I want to and meet my friends. I can buy things at the market because I have a little money. Life is so much better now. I have nothing to complain about.”* The shelters where the children seemed most content stating that there was nothing to dislike were CWCC (4 out of 4 children), CCPCR Boys (3 out of 4 children), and KMR (4 out of 6 children). Three subsequent interpretations can be drawn from the state of complacency of so many children, (1) the living conditions at the shelter may seem palatial compared to awful home conditions; (2) they may be so grateful for their present circumstances and do not feel the need to complain; and (3) they may be afraid of the consequences to be paid for criticising the establishment, especially to strangers in a formal setting.

Grievances about the shelters are typical complaints of children which can be equated with communal living. The most common criticisms referred to naughty children (15 cases), conflicts and arguments (9 cases), too noisy (7 cases), wanting more freedom (6 cases), chores (3 cases), and too crowded (2 cases). Some complaints were thematic at certain shelters, naughty children at SKO (3 out of 4 children), requiring more freedom at KnK (4 out of 6 children), and conflicts and arguments at KST (3 out of 5 children). A 16 year old boy was annoyed about the conduct of certain children, *“I don't like it when friends abuse each other*

*and tease me. When I need some peace and quiet to do something, I am disturbed by others and their shouting.”* The concern of a 14 year old boy also entailed the behaviour of children, *“I don't like it when children gamble around the shelter. Children from the community mainly do it but, sometimes the children here at the shelter join them. They get the money to gamble from their parents.”* A 14 year old girl grumbled about time utilisation, *“We have too much time to play here. It makes me feel bored and brings about headaches.”* A 16 year old girl moaned about chores, *“I don't like sewing. I have to sew clothes and bags so that the shelter can sell them but I don't receive any money. The shelter takes it all.”*



### **Private Time**

The data on necessary improvements at the shelters somewhat correlates with aforementioned criticisms. For example, the same number of children (30) as those not complaining about the shelters thought no improvements were required. Such an attitude was more prevalent at certain shelters. The interviewees at KMR were unanimous (6 out of 6 children) in their assertion that there was nothing to change. There was some consensus among the children at KnK (5 out of 6 children), and Don Bosco (4 out of 6 children). No other major trend emerged from the data as suggestions for enhancement of the shelters were specific to individual children. Nevertheless, 13 children (16%) had no idea of enhancements that could be enforced, 6 children wanted less fighting, 5 more personal items, and 4 more space. Similar trends on how the children would improve the centre's conditions were cited by Chenda (2006). It is not surprising that children (3) from Goutte D' Eau Neak Loeung would like to have more



food considering the shortage of food there. Themes for changes for the better were apparent at MMF, (3 out of 4 children) paying more respect to adults (3 out of 4 children), extra educational opportunities (2 out of 3 children) at Goutte D' Eau Residential Centre Poipet, and creating a shelter along with the workshop at Wathnakpheap (2 out of 2 children). All of the above leads to a speculation that children are not participating in any discussions regarding needs of shelter development or existing opportunities in this matter.



**Bathing time**

### **3.6.2 Staff interviewed individually**

With regard to the physical well-being of the children, the staff is less diverse and statistically more enthusiastic in their opinion than children citing a lower relative frequency of sickness (74% staff versus 50% children) and much better treatment (61% staff versus 35% children). The distribution of typical health problems is nearly identical to that emerging from the children's responses. Both parties are equally enthusiastic and positive regarding the food received at the shelters and the staff is correct about the children's opinion about it. *“When you have 40 children, it is difficult to cater to everybody’s tastes so we let the majority decide what to have for each meal,”* remarked one staff at Goutte D’Eau Neak Loeung. Many shelters involve the children in cooking by getting them to select the menu, prepare the ingredients and cook the food but complained that their food budget was insufficient due to inflation. Staff was more affirmative than children a propos time to play (91% staff versus 68% children), but were more in tune with enjoyable activities and games for children (football 48%, structured games 30%, skipping 26%, tennis 22%, and traditional games 17%).

The reasons cited for the shelter being better than homes varied between the staff and children. Among the staff, more opportunities (70%) and better living conditions (48%) were perceived to be of significance whereas living conditions (22%) and having more food (18%) were the two key factors addressed by the children, although for not such a large number. *“The shelter is better than their homes because they have everything here. I’m worried about reintegration because it will be difficult for the children to readjust to the home environment,”* claimed a staff at CCPCR. The staff members who completed the questionnaires were mainly (83%) of the opinion that children were better off living in the shelters because they had access to better facilities, education and care (34%) and had teachers and caregivers to look after them (13%). They believed that the children were happy living at the shelters but to various degrees (somewhat 57%, quite a lot 32%, and very much 4%). They felt that the children were happy to enjoy a better quality of life (24%), more opportunities to study (9%) and felt a lot safer living at the shelters (8%). Wanting to live with the family (13%), and not having enough freedom (6%) were considered by the surveyed staff members as the major disadvantages that they children may consider. 4 of the 6 participants of the FGD ascertained that it was much better for children to live at the shelters rather than home because of the educational opportunities they provided. Missing family was cited by the other 2 members as the main reason for shelter life being somewhat better than home.

Some differences between the staff and children’s perceptions of what the children have now and didn’t have before also emerged. For example, the staff assumed that the opportunity for education is the main advantage of living at the shelter but, the children either are less concerned about education or do not see any significant difference. Additionally, food, the second in the staff’s ranking was not mentioned often by children. It is probably about presumed significance and using this as the key to answers rather than children’s perceptions where priorities were given to material objects that were probably nearly completely out of their reach before, regardless how important they may be. Thus, the staff is clearly mistaken thinking that nearly all children like the opportunity to study the most, certainly not 61% of them but about 40%. Staff from the two programmes (CCPCR Boys’ programme and Wathnakpheap) where the clients do not live at the shelter expressed a desire to have a residential facility. An employee from Wathnakpheap proposed that, *“it would be better for the boys to live at a shelter because they would be entitled to literacy classes, education on child rights, morality, health and hygiene.”* According to the social worker at CCPCR, *“if the boys were to live at a shelter, they would have more time to think about the future, rather than rushing to finish their skills training to support their families. These boys are not yet adults but shoulder a lot of responsibility. In addition, we would have more control over them.”* The staff seemed even more divergent about the negative perception of discipline (43%) and limited



freedom (35%). The first was not indicated by children at all and the latter by less than 10% of them. *“We mostly have street children here at our shelter. They are not used to having a schedule, dressing neatly or keeping themselves clean so it is onerous for them to abide by the rules,”* stated a KST caregiver. Discipline seems to be high on the priority list for the staff and children are probably not as obedient as envisioned, but on the other hand, the children do not see it as a problem.

Changes that the shelter staff who partook in the survey, imagined children would like were: opportunities to receive money (13%), go on outings (8%), more vocational training (8%), and a “voice” to share ideas with staff (8%). The FGD members cited similar issues, including go on outings, vocational training and more fun activities and resources such as books, videos, games. Giving children a voice is highly recommended but was not recognised by the children as significant. It would probably never occur to these children who are accustomed to being unseen and unheard, that their opinions or ideas would be of value. In order to give children a voice, efforts need to be made to make it easy for children to raise concerns as well as to propagate a child centred approach. The children will also need to feel confident that adults will listen to them.

### **3. 7 Social Networking**

#### **3.7.1 Children interviewed individually**

Chatting about family is a subject where children remain divided. 50% of the interviewees do not feel comfortable enough to chat about such a topic and boys (30%) even more so than girls (20%). As a 15 year old boy coined it *“Most of the children at the shelter try to hide their history.”* The reasons given were the need to keep family problems to themselves (17 children), not wanting to reminisce about families (12 children), have nothing to talk about (5 children), embarrassment about family poverty (3 children), upset with parents (3 children), getting depressed when thinking about the family situation (2 children), and have already forgotten about them (1 child). The following statements evoke the sentiments of some of those children: *“I never talk about my family because I don't know what to talk about. I also don't want anyone to know about my family's HIV history.”* (16 year old boy)

*“I can't talk about my family because I don't know anything about them.”* (14 year old girl)

*“I don't like talking about my family because I don't want to recall or be reminded of them. My mother mistreated me. She forced me to work and when I didn't obey her I was beaten”* (14 year old girl)

*“I get depressed when I think about my family and I can't study.”* (14 year old boy)

*“I feel ashamed of my family because they are so poor. If I tell others, they may look down on*

me.” (16 year old boy)

*“I feel upset with my parents because they get angry with me very often. Even if I make a small mistake they beat me. I don't want to talk about them.”* (14 year old male)

The other half of children who feel at ease chatting about family do so to various degrees, from a little (17%), somewhat (11%), to a lot (22%) but are selective and cautious about what they reveal. The most frequent topics centre on the past (16 children), living conditions at home (8 children), only the positive things (5 children), and death of parents (4 children). 5 children expressed that talking about family helped to relieve stress while one child only spoke about family when asked directly by staff. At MMF, all the children interviewed talked a lot about their family. Perhaps they are encouraged to do so because of the emphasis Christianity places on family values.

*“I only talk about my family a little because it is too painful for me. I usually tell others the real situation at home, how we have no property or food. I come from one of the poorest families. Therefore, some children in the shelter as well as children from the community look down on me.”* (13 year old boy)

*“I only speak about my family when the staff asks me about my relatives. We discuss some of the difficulties at home. I don't like talking about them because I get embarrassed.”* (12 year old girl)

*“I only talk about the beatings I got from my parents when I was little. I never tell the others that my father is in prison.”* (13 year old boy)

*“I sometimes talk to my close friends about the living conditions of my family and how they are trying to pay off their debt. My friends try to encourage and cheer me up.”* (17 year old girl)

*“I talk a lot about my family and about our experience in Thailand. I tell others about the violent acts my father committed against my mother, about how my father and mother separated, and about my siblings who are now living with my mother.”* (15 year old girl)

Many of the staff, especially the older generation experienced troubles and hardships in the past but were able to overcome all obstacles and succeed in life. By exchanging their stories with the children, the caregivers could become role models for the former as well as providing therapeutic opportunities for them. Verbalising feelings can make sadness, anger, regret and pain less intense. The problem, however, might be that the staff are not feeling comfortable about such histories either.

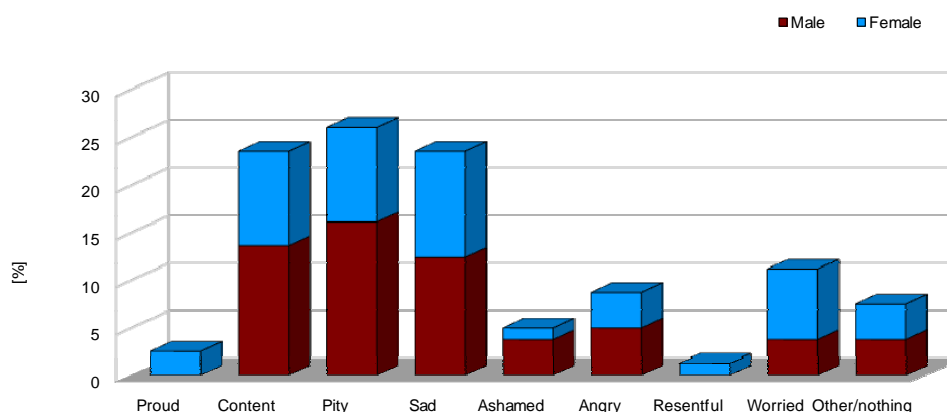
Among the gamut of emotions the children expressed towards their parents, pity (26%), sad (24%), and content (24%) were the most prevalent, and all three can be considered neutral in terms of emotional intensity (Figure 12). Nothing special (7%) can also be classified as a detached or neutral feeling. This corroborates the assertion that Khmer women and children who consider *themselves to be an essential part of the household (even though they may have little contact with it), their own worth is also tied to the social 'value' of the household, and will usually be reluctant to criticize it, especially to outsiders.*<sup>26</sup> In general modern societies, children are either highly negative or highly positive in their attitudes towards parents. This would correspond with the negative emotions cited, worried, angry, ashamed, and resentful which represented only 25% of all responses and proud, a positive feeling stated by only 2 children.<sup>27</sup> The dispassionate stance of the children towards their parents might be due to the lack of close relations with parents, a reaction of traumatic relations with parents, or the result of therapeutic actions undertaken at the shelters. The children reported that their feelings emerged from circumstances of parental death and not knowing their whereabouts, family poverty, hardship, and responsibility along with gratitude for support, including the decision of bringing them to the shelter. A 15 year old girl depicted her feelings towards her parents, *"My family is different to other families. I feel angry with my father because he often beats my mother. I pity my poor mother because she tries to work hard but my father doesn't care. He takes all the money to drink and gamble."* A 14 year old girl expressed strong feelings of animosity towards her father, *"I hate my father because he raped my sister and I when our mother died. He threatened us and told us not to tell anyone or he would kill us both. I'm scared about the future after he is released from prison. I worry whether he will come to kill me?"* A 13 year old boy shared a common attitude with many other children, *"I pity my parents because they are poor and living in a difficult situation."* A 13 year old girl who is an orphan stated that *"I pity my grandmother. She is old but she has a big responsibility. She has to take care of my younger siblings."* A 12 year old girl was content with her parents, *"they are good parents because they work hard and would like me to come home to do a little work from there."* *"Since joining the workshop training here at Wathnakpheap, my parents have started to treat me differently. They have become happier and are kinder to me. They hope that I will be able to earn money for the family when I finish the training,"* related a 16 year old boy. A 17 year old female loves her parents because they gave birth to her. This is a typical Asian sentiment, often expressed at matrimonial ceremonies in Japan, for example.

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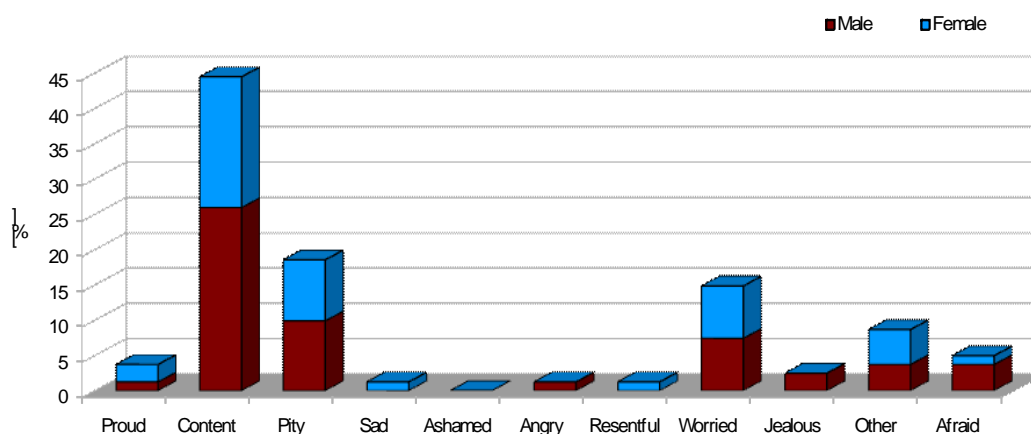
<sup>26</sup> Eleanor Brown, *"The Ties that Bind: Migration and Trafficking of Women and Girls for Sexual Exploitation in Cambodia,"* (Phnom Penh: IOM, 2007), 17-18.

<sup>27</sup> As some children gave multiple answers, the cited percentages exceed 100.

**Figure 12: Feelings towards Parents**



**Figure 13: Feelings towards Siblings**



Feelings towards siblings somewhat reflected those towards parents but were less compassionate (Figure 13). This shows a general tendency towards more vertical than horizontal relations within Cambodian families. 44% expressed content meaning a relatively neutral satisfaction with their relations. 20% worry about their siblings whereas 18% pity them. There were very few negative attitudes towards siblings such as jealousy (2 cases), anger (1 case) and resentment (1 case). Among the reasons for such sentiments, the predominating one was mutual love (32%) followed by the rational understanding of the importance of education (11%). A 13 year old boy had perhaps warmer than neutral comments about his siblings, “*I am content with my brothers and sisters because we love each other. They also give me good advice and encourage me to study hard.*” “*I pity my siblings. My older sister tries to earn money because my mother is sick. My younger siblings cannot go to school, like me. I wish I could help them,*” were the feelings of a 16 year old boy). A 16 year old girl worried about her siblings because “*They have to go to work in Thailand and can't go to school.*” A 17 year old

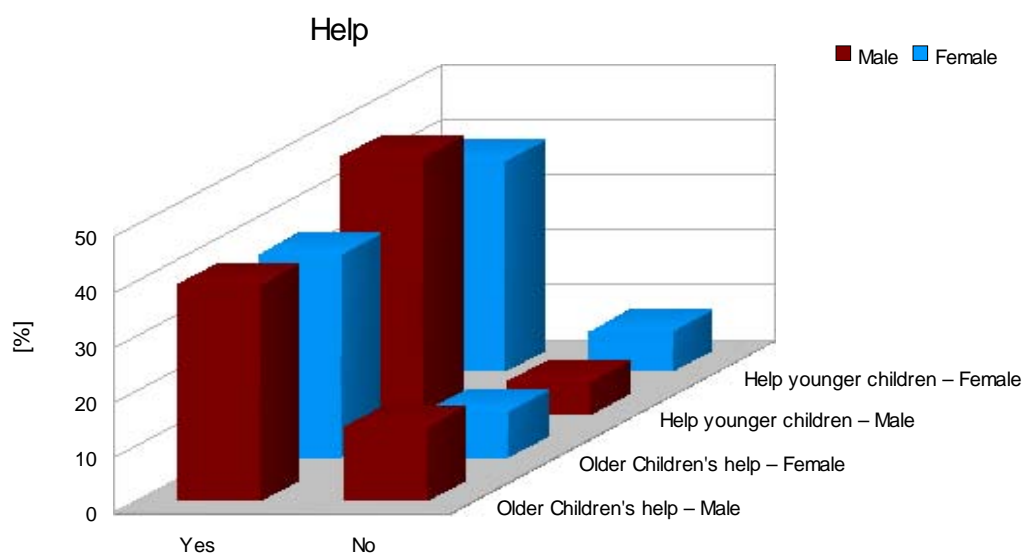
female stated neutral emotions, *"I have two step-siblings but I feel nothing towards them."* An 18 year old male reported negative feelings, *"My siblings are not friendly or kind to me but I envy them. You know, they can stay at home and live with my father whereas I have to live in the shelter."*

67% admitted to missing their families a lot with an equal division between boys and girls. Very few (5 boys and 1 girl) mentioned that they do not miss their families at all. This is understandable especially since the interviewees rarely/less than once a year (38%) or never (15%) have a chance to meet their families. However, 18% often (about once a month) meet their family and 25% sometimes get such an opportunity. *"My mother comes to visit me here at the shelter for a few hours about once a year. I would like her to visit me more often but she is busy and has no money to travel,"* pondered a 16 year old boy who has been living at a shelter for over three years. The shocking ulterior motives of some parental visits to shelters are revealed from the following account by a 9 year old boy, *"when my mother came to visit, she gave my sister and I 10,000 riels and asked us to come home with her. However, my grandfather arrived at the shelter during the visit, and warned us not to leave because our mother was planning to sell us to a broker. I haven't seen my mother since."* During home visits, the present life at the shelter featured as the main topic of conversation for 55% of the children and another 18% described the contents as nothing special which may also include the present life at the shelter. A 15 year old girl explained that *"I used to talk to my family about Jesus but they didn't like it, so I only spoke to them about life at the shelter."* A 17 year old girl described her conversations as follows, *"I talk about my life at the shelter. I tell my family how the shelter staff love and support me a lot. My mother feels happy when she hears how kind they are to me. My siblings are also happy and want to come and live at the shelter too. My mother tells me about the situation at home, how she had to sell the land to repay her debt and had to borrow money from the neighbours to buy rice."* Very few look to the future (5 cases) and even fewer at the past (1 case). As a 19 year old male maintained that *"I talk about my studies and discuss my plans to open a motor repair business with my parents. They want me to return home when I will have completed my training."*

Regardless of feelings, the majority of the children (54%) do not have any desire to live with their family in the immediate future and some (18%) never want to live with their parents again. *"I don't want to live with my family until I have finished my education and get a job because their living condition is still quite difficult. If I stay with them now, I will face many problems,"* was a common perception shared by a 19 year old female with many other children from various shelters. Another 19 year old female cited that *"I'd just rather visit my family than*

go back to live with them. I haven't lived with them now for over 6 years and my seven brothers and sisters are still living at home.” “It will be difficult for me to live at home again because my heart is here,” was a striking remark of a 14 year old girl. This data indicates problems with achieving the goal of reintegration and efforts need to be made to make the home and community a place where the children feel they belong and can participate. The remaining 27% of the children want to be reunited with their families as soon as possible/in the near future. An 11 year old girl remarked that “I will be able to go home soon because my mother told me so. I will be happy then.” “I visit home twice a year and stay around one week. When I'm home, I want to stay with my mother and not come back to the shelter;” uttered a 17 year old girl.

**Figure 14: Receiving and Helping Other Children at the Shelters**



The majority of older children in the shelters can be considered responsible or altruistic towards the younger mates because 77% of the children declared that they received help and support from their seniors (Figure 14). Assistance comes mainly during housework (27%), homework (25%) and giving advice (18%). “When I get stuck with work or homework, the older children and my friends usually come to my rescue.” (15 year old girl) “Sometimes the older children give me money and cakes because I look gentle.” (16 year old boy) A 12 year old disabled boy was grateful for the assistance he gets from his peers, “All the children here help me. For example, when I am taking a bath, they help to wash me because I can't use the scoop.” Likewise, the majority of interviewees (85%) deemed themselves helpful to younger children when it came to homework (33%), house chores (22%), taking care of them (18%), and giving advice (16%). A 17 year old girl declared “Yes, I help the younger children here. I

help them to prepare food, to brush and wash their hair, and to set up the mosquito net before they go to bed at night.” “I enjoy teaching the younger children because they like how I help them with their homework,” stated a 14 year old boy. The following negative example came from a 16 year old boy, “I don’t help the younger children because I don’t have enough time. I have to study the whole day because I am now in Grade 7 in public school.”



### **Friends**

Many children (44%) owned up to fighting, in particular boys (27%). 17% admitted to a little altercation, 22% sometimes, 6 boys often, and an equal number of boys and girls (2 cases each) to squabbling very often. “We often fight over little things at the shelter while we are playing. If we get upset with someone, we don’t allow her to continue playing or talk to her,” remarked an 11 year old girl while a 12 year old boy explained “We argue and fight often when people borrow things and don’t return them.” “We never fight or argue because the housemother encourages us not to. I ignore those who want to quarrel with me,” remarked an 11 year old boy. Similarly, bullying was not admittedly practised by 62% of the interviewees. 28% confessed to being a bully at times, whereas 10% divulged that other children in the shelter were the perpetrators of bullying. “The older boys here bully me every day because I’m from a very poor family. They say bad words that make me feel very angry. I want Mr Sophea to say something to them so that they will stop,” were the grievances of a 12 year old boy. “I do not bully anyone but I see the older boys bullying the younger ones for disobeying them,” (16 year old boy). It was observed during the workshop training that bullying was a concept not

easily grasped by many of the participants. Thus, it is highly likely that the children did not fully comprehend this problem either.

Feelings towards other children in the shelter were somewhat similar to attitudes towards siblings (in some cases siblings were living in the shelters). 60% of the children interviewed characterised their feelings as empathy or love and another 20% as friends. *"The children here are my best friends,"* concluded a 15 year old girl and *"I love the children here just like I love my siblings,"* cited a 16 year old girl. Very few uttered negative sentiments. Positive attitudes also prevailed towards newcomers with 41% of the children acting friendly, 33% being helpful, and 14% empathising. *"I introduce the new children to the shelter by showing them around and telling them the rules,"* conveyed a 16 year old boy. Those who ignored (4 boys and 1 girl) or bullied (1 boy) newcomers were mainly boys. Exemplary behaviour could be the result of shelter education as children are aware of how to behave according to the situation at hand or they may only be trying to present themselves in a positive light and not admit to any wrongdoing. During a visit to Goutte D'Eau Residential Centre Poipet shelter, two newcomers had arrived and were briefly welcomed and made to join ongoing activities. Very little commotion was created and one was left with the impression that they would assimilate naturally. After all, newcomers would not be such a novelty for children living in shelters who are accustomed to frequent adjustments at the shelters and upheavals in their lives.

45% of the interviewees believed that they are no different to community children with 14% expressing amicable feelings. *"Some of the children from the community are my friends. We attend school together and sometimes they come to the shelter to play football with us"* (13 year old boy). On the other hand, 18% sensed that the community children are superior and another 28% expressed rather negative sentiments. *"The children from the community are better than us because they have money. However, at school when I have no money my friend from the community often buys me food and snacks"* (16 year old girl). A 13 year old boy complained that *"The community children look down on me but they shouldn't do this. They don't understand my problem or my family's situation."* A 17 year old girl had a contrary opinion along with a 16 year old boy from another shelter *"We are better and luckier than the children in the community. We get enough food to eat and an opportunity to study,"* and *"The children from the community are not good like us. They are naughty and are rude to their parents. Here the children are better because we have people to advise us."* A negative statement from a 14 year old girl was *"I do not like the community children because some of them are gangsters and steal from others."* Other unfavourable comments came from an 18 year old male, *"Most of the community children use drugs and spend a lot of time loitering*



around.” A 17 year old girl boasted that, *“We speak more politely than the community children. They say bad things and play inappropriately. We are much better than them.”* A 13 year old girl expressed compassionate thoughts, *“I pity them because they are poor and have to go around collecting recyclable items from the garage.”* Only girls (6 cases) were envious of children from the community. *“Even though they are also children and could be my close friends, I envy them because they can live with their parents and receive warm affection whereas I can't,”* (15 year old girl). The wide range of opinions regarding “community children” has to account for variation among and within local environments the shelter inhabitants are exposed to. Unfortunately, due to the limited scope of this project it was impossible to independently assess the communities outside the specific shelters.



**Like Sisters**

The shelter personnel were regarded by children as very kind (65%) or kind (9%). The shelters where all the interviewed children gave high appraisals (very kind) included CWCC, Goutte D'Eau Residential Centre Poipet, KST, and SKO. Another 25% declared that staff members were sometimes kind, and only 2 children indicated that they were unkind. At CCT, all the children stated that the shelter personnel were only kind sometimes. *“All of the staff are not kind because sometimes when I ask them questions they never explain or answer me,”* (16 year old boy). 84% of the children felt that there is no favouritism and that everyone is treated equally by the staff. 10 children perceived the staff as being less kind to them, boys (8 cases) more so than girls. *“The staff is not so kind to me. They are mostly kind to the older children*

*and especially those who are obedient and study hard” (16 year old boy). “The shelter staff here is less kind to me than to the other children. When I make a mistake, they punish me. They make me carry water, clean the toilets and the yard,”* were the grievances of an 18 year old male. However, most of the children referred to the main caregiver in their house as “mother”, but then again, Cambodians rarely address each other by name employing descriptive or relational phrases instead.

There is no clear baseline to gauge the level of kindness or unkindness, and it can be presumed that the children compared their previous experiences with adults to the current situation. Even though the children considered the staff to be kind, the topics of conversation seem rather impersonal (daily life, family, chit chat, greetings amounting to 50%). Some topics denoted functional relations (telling tales, asking for things, greetings, missing things, food and chores totalling 30%) as opposed to warm friendly conversations. There were a significant number of children (14%) who revealed that staff never talked to them. If true, this would indicate a serious communication problem and may have an adverse impact of the psychosocial development of the children. Greenfield (2005) quotes Sonkoff and Philips (2000, p.389) to argue that *“Young children who do not have a relationship with at least one emotionally invested, predictable available caregiver-even in the presence of adequate physical care and cognitive stimulation-display an array of development deficits that endure over time.”*



**Care and Affection**

Only 8 (7 boys) of the children interviewed admitted to meeting some problems in the shelter. The problems did not appear to be grave. A 13 year old boy revealed that *“While I was living at SKO I got beaten by the older children quite often during playtime. I just cried because no-one ever came to stop them or to help me.”* *“The other boys at the workshop swear at me a lot and want to fight with me,”* said a 16 year old boy. Unlike former studies, TPO (2005) and Chenda (2006), cases of physical or psychological abuse committed by either staff or peers were not reported by any of the children interviewed. However, it came to light during interviews with former staff members and residents of one shelter that some children had been physically and sexually abused there. Another case concerning a sexual relationship between two teenagers was reported at another shelter but it remains unclear whether the relationship was consensual or rape.

### **3.7.2 Child Participants of Focus Group Discussions:**

Contrary to children individually interviewed (50%), all of the FGD children reported that engaging in conversations about family did not appeal to them because it was too painful. Data shows that feelings towards parents, siblings and shelter children, missing family, family visits and talk topics, meeting and living with the family, as well as helping others are somewhat similar as with the previous group. Unlike the former group, all the children claimed that nobody argued or fought. To quote one female participant, *“For me, I can tolerate anyone or any situation in the shelter”*. Bullying was associated with younger children's conflict and menacing during play while the older children helped to negotiate between them. Feelings towards newcomers varied from the individually interviewed children. The FGD children only expressed neutral sentiments, mainly of pity because the new children cried a lot when they first arrived and they came from troubled backgrounds. However, the FGD participants also stated that they were happy for the newly arrived children because they would get many opportunities and have a better life at the shelter. Attitudes towards community children differed considerably from those of individually interviewed children, with feelings of pity and superiority prevailing as opposed to the latter's main feelings of normalcy and friendliness. However, the children may have had in their minds completely different groups of possibly contrasting habitats. The shelter staff were reported by all to be very kind to everyone in the shelter, and were even regarded as second parents and called “mum”. In spite of these feelings, the children revealed that they felt closest to their friends at the shelters.

All the children's drawings on the people they felt closest to either illustrated friends from the shelter or shelter staff. The fact that the children are not receiving the emotional protection from being alone from their family members is not a promising outlook for reintegration. Many

of children did not draw pictures of people they disliked because in their words *“they have normal feelings towards everyone and there was no-one to dislike.”* Some of those who drew pictures depicted their father or other children at the shelter who they claim are mean and aggressive.

### **3.7.3 Staff interviewed individually**

Data obtained from the staff confirms that children do not talk much about their family and if they do it is about the general family situation, and rather to the staff (twice more likely) than to other children. *“What I have observed during art therapy sessions is that children tend to feel upset and angry with themselves rather than parents or family. They don’t like to talk about family issues,”* responded an ARM counsellor. *“The younger children are more inclined to talk about their families than the older ones as the latter do not want to be reminded of their past. The usual topics are beatings from parents, being forced to work hard, being poor or having to live with relatives,”* said a CCT staff member. The staff had an impression that children are content as far as feelings towards parents are concerned. It is more than likely some children are not fully revealing their actual more neutral or even negative feelings, delivering to the caregivers what they all consider more typical. *“The children may feel upset with their parents but they rarely get angry with them. They have no idea about what to do or say to make them change.”* (Don Bosco) *“The children are always thinking about how to please their parents. Even when they receive gifts, they save them to give to their parents,”* was the impression of a staff from Svay Rieng Orphanage. It is often the case that children in crisis often feel there is something wrong with them or that they are responsible for any trouble within the family, hence the greater need to be accepted.

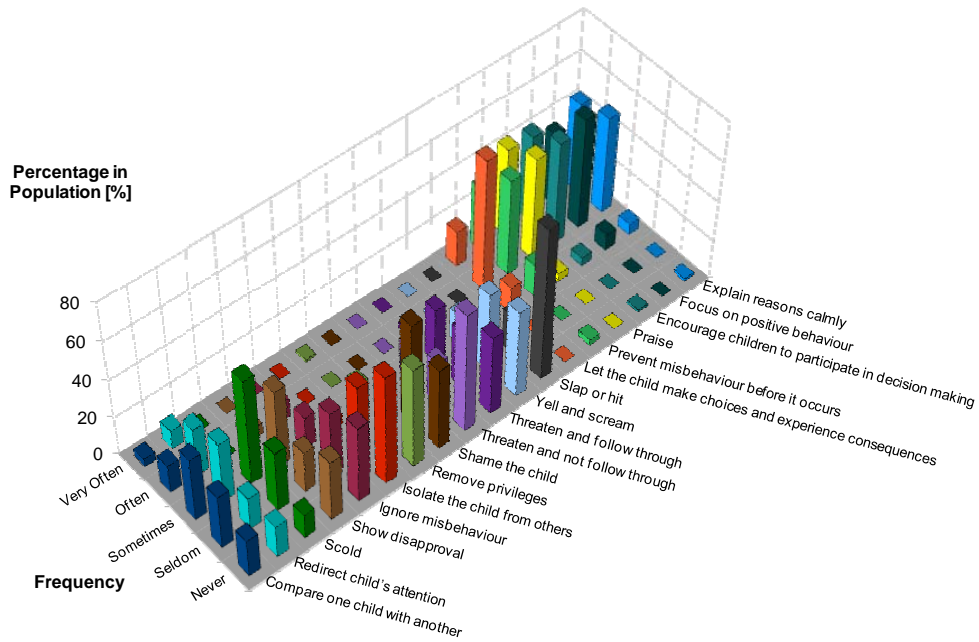
There is less ambiguity regarding feelings towards siblings, which are reported in nearly the same proportions as by the children themselves. It was indicated by the majority of the interviewees that many of the children request the shelter to take their siblings because they worry about their welfare, and would also like them to be educated. Nonetheless, in most cases their requests cannot be granted. Similarly there is a good agreement with regard to the fact that children miss their families a lot (78%) which probably correlates with meeting them (in majority of 57%) only about twice a year that is rarely, as described by about 50% of the children. Some staff declared that children are not so keen to visit home. *“Most children especially those from Poipet do not want to visit their families. They say that they want to meet their siblings and not their parents,”* stated a caregiver from Don Bosco. *“When the children first arrive, they ask to visit the family often. Once they are here a while they stop asking,”* remarked a staff at KST. *“Some children return earlier from home visits because they feel*

*bored or they have nothing to eat at home,”* explained a Svay Rieng Orphanage employee. The reasons cited for infrequent home visits were lack of financial and human resources. The staff was more convinced that the children do not want to return home until the distant future (83% staff versus 54% children) when they have completed their studies and vocational skills training. This attitude of the staff is not conducive for reintegration.

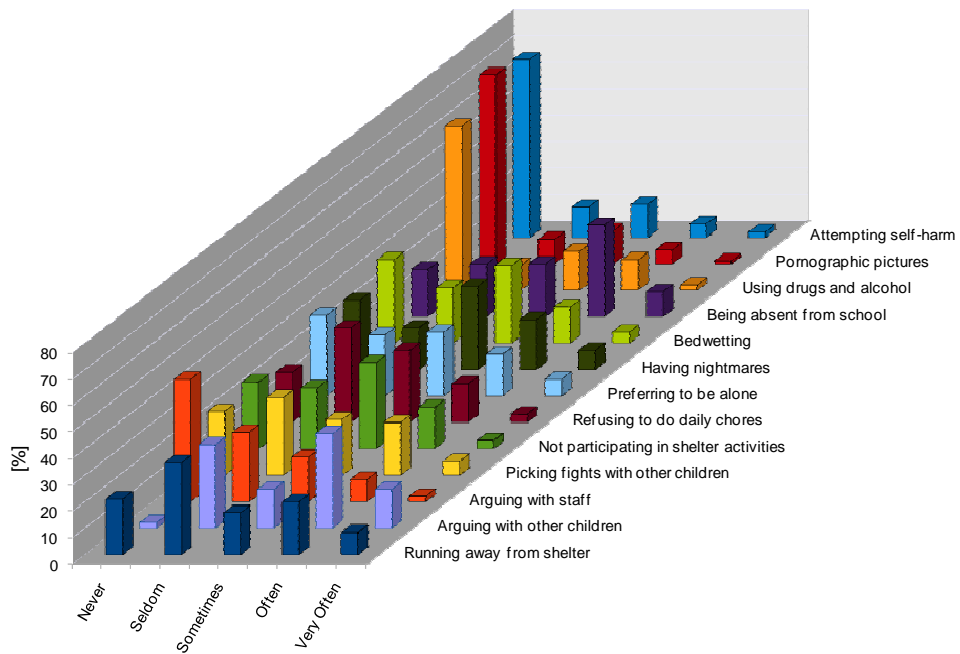
Good relations between younger and older children, and towards newcomers are confirmed. *“After settling down, the children treat each other as siblings. They have a family life here,”* reported a Don Bosco employee. Reported feelings towards community children illustrating a sense of friendliness (35%), superiority (30%) and envy (22%) diverge from the children’s feelings. *“The children are afraid to make friends with children from the community. They feel envious because of their freedom,”* was the opinion of a KMR staff. The children here feel that they are better than the children in the community. They have more opportunities and a better lifestyle, cited an employees at CCPCR. This view is reinforced by a staff from MMF, *“Some of the community children are envious of the children here at the shelter and say that they are lucky. They approach us and ask to live here. We have to explain the policy and selection criteria to them.”* This is not too surprising as the building alone resembles a fancy guest house. Diversity of answers to such questions correlates with variation of living standards among shelters involved in the study.

Fighting frequency reported as observed "sometimes" by about 50% seems higher than indicated by children, which shows that some children do not admit obvious misbehaviour or maybe many of those with frequent offences of this type were not allowed to participate in the interviews. Data collected from the workshop training participants depicted in the Figure 15 illustrates the behavioural problems encountered by shelter staff on a daily basis, especially from trafficked children. Serious problems such as attempting self-harm and using drugs and alcohol are fairly rare whereas the more regular occurrences of arguing with staff, arguing with other children, refusing to do daily chores and being absent from home are to be expected from children who have been traumatised. However, the behavioural management strategies employed at the shelter staff (Figure 16) such as focusing on positive behaviour, praising, redirecting child’s attention, and letting children make choices demonstrate the tendency to discipline the children rather than to punish. The data also reveals that there is still a lot of room for improvement by adopting positive measures to seek behavioural change rather than penalising negative behaviour.

**Figure 15: Behavioural Problems at Shelters**



**Figure 16: Behaviour Management Techniques**



Interviews with staff established that bullying is either nearly non-existing or undetected, perhaps not fully understood. Nevertheless, a survey on bullying completed during workshop trainings illustrates that bullying does occur at the shelters, the most prevalent incidents include name calling, picking on other children, making threats, hiding other people's property, hitting, kicking and pushing, and rumour spreading. Many behaviours that seem harmless can escalate into bullying, hence staff need to be able to distinguish between types of aggression. The renowned psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner stipulates that *"the peer societies of even young children veer towards anti-sociality and apathy without prudent adult guidance"*<sup>28</sup>. Mutual knowledge and communication between the worlds of children and adults is vitally important, especially at shelters and schools.

All the staff were unanimous in declaring that the atmosphere between the shelter staff and children was very good because the former educated them (39%), held regular meetings (26%), were approachable (22%), shared worked together (13%) and were involved in play activities (13%). The majority of the staff (74%) acknowledged that the children spoke regularly to them but rarely shared their worries or concerns. According to a caregiver at Goutte D'Eau Residential Centre Poipet, *"the children rarely come to us with problems because they don't have any."* One may assume that the children only speak when spoken to. Another caregiver was concerned that the children at her shelter were more likely to ignore the Khmer staff and approach the foreign staff member instead which she deemed was not favourable for nurturing Khmer life skills, which all together may suggest that something is wrong with relations between Khmer staff and children. This kind of attitude is probably itself a reason to be concerned about.

### **3.8 Readiness for Post-shelter Life**

#### **3.8.1 Children interviewed individually**

The majority of children like going to school (73% like it a lot, and 10% like it) but such preference is questionable. 12% thought school is only OK, while as few as 2 children stated that they did not like school and 4 don't know whether they liked it or not. 60% of the children interviewed had attended school previously. It is not clear if attendance was regular or how long they attended school. Nevertheless, 36% were keen to continue their education even after leaving the shelters. *"I will continue to study as long as I receive support,"* was the attitude of a 16 year old boy. The distribution of grades illustrates that most (51%) of the children are in

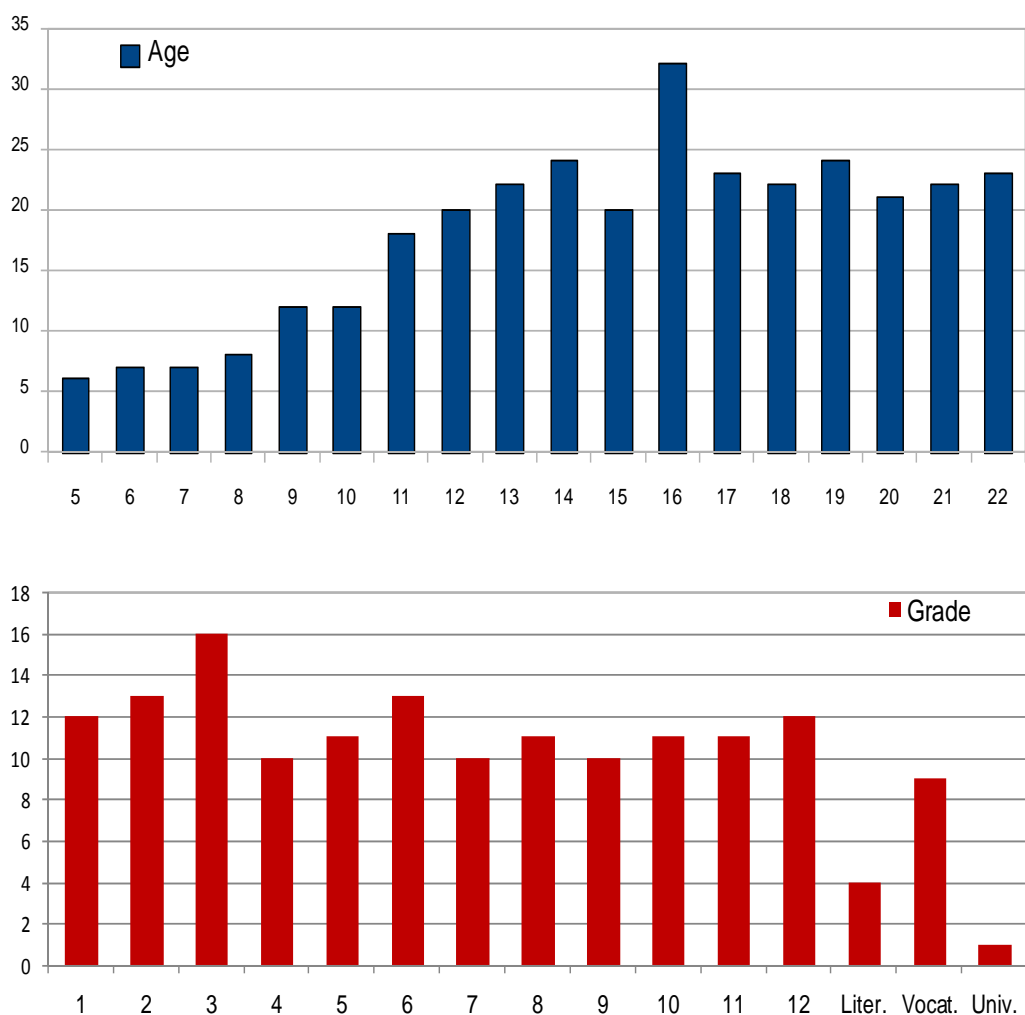
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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.education.com/reference/article/hidden-bully-popular-aggressive-children/page=2>



Grade 1 to 4.<sup>29</sup> The age distribution shows that 54% are in the age range of 9 to 15 years old (Figure 17). Although, it is not true that older children are necessarily in higher grades, this relation shows that many children are in lower grades than expected for their age. 30% of the children are currently undertaking vocational training, and a further 31% would like to pursue such skills in the future. The children stated that they were encouraged to make their choice regarding study explicitly, and in most cases children's decisions were respected. Subsequently, the majority of the children are enjoying their area of specialisation.

**Figure 17: Age Distribution and School Grade of Children Interviewed Individually**



It is cited in J.K Reimer et al. (2007) that the ability to articulate a future is an indicator of

<sup>29</sup>In Cambodia, there are four levels of education: primary (grades 1-6); lower secondary (grades 7-9); upper secondary (grades 10-12). Grades 1-12 are considered general education and in theory are free for all Cambodian children.



hope or even a pre-cursor to hope because the opportunity and encouragement to envision a “better” future, may act as a catalyst for children to grow into that vision. The occupations most popular among the children were teaching (13 cases), beauty therapy (9 cases) and then barbering, motor mechanics, and tailoring with 5 cases each. 9 children did not know what they wanted to do yet. Their choice is influenced by exposure to certain types of professions and vocational training they may be receiving. For example, at SKO one member of staff was a monk and one child, a 14 year old boy expressed *“I want to become a monk because I will be able to pay my respects to my mother,”* while at a Christian shelter, a 12 year old boy wanted to be a “servant of God”. It was evident from conversing with both children and staff that some of the Christian organisations were proselytising, and one member of staff admitted that he hoped all of the children at the shelter would devote their lives to *“spreading the word of God and caring for underprivileged children”*. Many children have a practical outlook and look for professions that are easily obtainable in the sense of getting qualifications and secure in terms of job market. *I want to repair motors because a lot of people are using them now. If I have this skill, my living standard will improve. I think I will be able to make between 20,000 to 30,000 riels a day,*” (19 year old male). *“I want to own a food stall and sell food, so that I will have enough food for my mother until she grows old,”* maintained a 12 year old girl. Only 6 children thought about jobs requiring special talent such as artist, actress, scientist, doctor, and wrestler that combine higher promises of prosperity or a celebrity status but also related to a high level of uncertainty regarding success. *“If I become an actress and appear on Cambodian television, I may have a bright future,”* (14 year old girl) *“I want to become a doctor so I’ll be able to help and save patients,”* (9 year old boy).



**Classroom at Goutte D'Eau Poipet**

Some visions of the future may be considered alarming, especially from a point of view of aid programmes. *“I think I will have a good life in the future. I hope I will have my own children. If I don't have enough money to educate them I will send them to live at a shelter,”* (11 year old girl) and *“when I grow up and have my own children I will send them to live at a shelter because life is better here than at home”* (11 year old girl). However, positive examples were found even in unexpected cases: *“When I grow up and have my own children I won't send them to a shelter because I will work hard to feed them* (13 year old disabled boy). These attitudes highlight the concerns of MoSALVY and UNICEF, *“...alternative care is perceived in Cambodia as an option for poor families with very limited resources and/or capacity to ensure that some of their children have access to food, education, and medical care. Education appears to be the one common and greatest priority among providers, and the need for education was the third most mentioned reason that children enter into alternative care.”*<sup>30</sup> More vigilance is required in admission of children to shelters, and parents should not be encouraged to relinquish their parental responsibilities.



**Vocational Skills Training at Wathnakpheap**

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<sup>30</sup> J.K. Reimer et al., “The Road Home: Towards a Model of Re-integration and Considerations for Alternative Care for Sexual Exploitation in Cambodia,” (Cambodia: Hagar/World Vision, 2007), p.58.

Most of the children held themselves accountable for helping with shelter housework (80%), taking care of younger children (65%), and reporting problems to staff (62%). Their outlook was based on logical and mature reasoning. *"I am happy to help with housework because the shelter is my home now, and doing chores here is like doing chores at home,"* uttered a 16 year old boy. From personal observations at various shelters, children seemed to enjoy doing their chores such as washing dishes, doing laundry, cooking, and gardening. At some shelters, members of staff were also engaged in these activities, thus facilitating communication between the two parties. Regarding the shelter as home was a common sentiment shared by many of the children at various shelters *"The older children at the shelter should take care of the younger children because their parents are not here to advice or support them,"* were the words of a 16 year old girl. *"I should help the younger children here because I look upon them as my siblings,"* explained a 12 year old girl. *"Yes, we have to look after the younger children because they are at risk and vulnerable to be lured,"* warned a 14 year old boy. *"Yes, staff should be informed because some children are lazy. I reported children to the staff when they stole fruit outside the shelter grounds. They were scolded and told not to do it again,"* described an 11 year old boy. *"I have never reported any problem to the staff but I think we should because problems will never be solved if we don't,"* was the attitude of a 12 year old girl. Irrational or incorrect discernment underlay the obligation conveyed by an additional number of children to engage in the aforementioned activities, 18%, 23% and 16% respectively. *"I want to help with housework because I want to keep the place clean so that visitors will be impressed,"* claimed a 13 year old boy. To cite a 16 year old boy, *"No, we don't need to take care of the younger children because the caregivers are already looking after them."* Those with contrary beliefs of accountability for helping with shelter housework (1 case), taking care of younger children (7 cases), and reporting problems to staff (9 cases) provided coherent arguments to support their opinions. *"I don't like taking care of the younger children because they are so naughty,"* elaborated a 14 year old boy. *"I am afraid to report anything to the staff or to tell tales on the other children because they might make trouble for me,"* admitted a 16 year old boy.

48 interviewees recognised the importance of participating in decision making along with shelter staff but, only 27 children gave plausible explanations whereas the rest (21 cases) could not specify why or justified with unfounded reasons. A 17 year old girl shared her opinion, *"I think children should be allowed to express and share their ideas with members of staff."* *"Yes, we should participate in the process because we have to understand the rules first before we can follow them,"* declared a 12 year old girl. An additional 22 children did not know if they should participate or not. *"I have never participated in discussions on shelter rules but I don't know if it is good for us to participate or not,"* stated a 16 year old girl. 8 children did not

support the idea of participating in decision making with 5 giving logical reasons and 3 illogical explanations. *“No, children shouldn't participate in decision making because we already have shelter rules,”* voiced a 16 year old boy.



### **Laundry Time**

66% of the children acknowledged that they can be of assistance to other people, with 48 of them giving cogent examples and 6 insubstantial examples. *“Yes, I can help others. I can encourage and motivate people, give advice and ideas, and share everything that I have learned here at the shelter”,* asserted a 17 year old girl. *“I can help others by behaving correctly and doing good things such as, not fighting,”* declared a 16 year old boy. *“I can help because when I see other children fighting I can ask them to stop,”* claimed a 14 year old boy. *“I may be able to help someone when they meet a problem such as a traffic accident or drowning,”* was an implausible argument from a 16 year old boy. *“I can help the people in Thailand by studying for them,”* was the feeling of an 18 year old male. 22% of the interviewees failed to conclude if they could be useful or not. Very few (8 cases, 6 logical and 2 illogical beliefs) felt that they could not be of help to anyone.

The majority of the children interviewed (62%) could justify the necessity of continuous support for their post-shelter life. *“I will need capital to start my own bamboo furniture business,”* stated a 16 year old boy. *“I would like my friends to encourage me,”* was the request of a 14 year girl. *“I will need school materials because my family won't be able to afford to buy*



them for me,” were the demands of a 13 year old boy. *“If I haven't finished my hairdressing course by then, I will need support to finish it,”* indicated a 16 year old girl. *“I will require help to find a job, a bicycle and some kitchen utensils,”* said a 17 year old girl. Immediate assistance was requested by a 16 year old boy, *“I need support now as well as in the future. I have been wearing the same clothes and underwear for the past six months so I would like another set of clothes. I also need material and equipment to become a barber.”* 27% indicated that they did not know as they had not given it any thought yet. *“I will probably need something but I can't think of anything at the moment,”* were the words of an 11 year old girl. Only 4 cases negated the need for post-shelter support. *“I won't need any support from others because I want to be independent,”* claimed a 14 year old boy.

### **3.8.2 Child Participants of Global Group Discussions:**

All participants of the FGDs at Goutte D'Eau Neak Loeung and Goutte D'Eau Residential Centre Poipet attended school. The majority of the children are in higher grades (3, 5 and 6) than the individually interviewed children, but the children are also older with 75% between 14 to 18 years old. All of the children reported that they enjoyed school for various educational as well as non-educational reasons such as, having friends to play with, living in close proximity to the school, learning new things, and having devoted teachers. The knowledge acquired at school was considered by all as useful because to quote one student, *“When I have enough knowledge, I will get a job and earn money to help my family”*. Only 2 of the FGD children had not attended school prior to living at the shelter but attendance for the majority was irregular and classes were bigger. Almost all of the children (10 cases) wanted to pursue vocational skill training including barber, beauty therapy, motor repair and electrician and engage in blue collar jobs. These choices are realistic considering the age group and current level of educational attainment of the FGD children. Responsibility for helping with housework, younger children, reporting to staff and participating in decision making was acknowledged by all but unlike the individually interviewed children, the FGD children expressed little confidence in helping others and that their assistance could only be extended to family and relatives after the completion of vocational training.

Most of the drawings depicting the future or life after 1 year and 10 years later share similar themes by focusing on the home, family members and occupations. The houses are simpler in the first drawings, made of wood and straw and are on rented land but later, as the children become richer, the houses become slightly more modern (concrete and tiles), and are built on their own land. The family members are happy and the “artists” are happily employed in their perspective jobs such as beauty therapists, barbers, mechanics, a teacher, an architect

and owner of a guest house. Their pictures illustrate dreams that are simple and not so ambitious. However, it is clear that the family, the home environment and the ability to earn money are of major significance to the children. An interesting point to note is that the workshop training participants drew very similar scenes (house, garden, family members and car or motor bike) as the children did in their illustrations of the future.

### **3.8.3 Staff interviewed individually**

The staff felt that the children were not as enthusiastic about school as they claimed to be (61% staff as opposed to 83% children). A few of the staff alleged that some children had to be forced to go to school. According to a housemother at Svay Rieng Orphanage, it was difficult for some children to settle in because so few children attended school previously. They are usually afraid of school and of the other children at school. Many (48%) were convinced that children are likely to have difficulties to continue education if /when leaving the shelter and according to a Don Bosco employee, boys more so than girls. Interviewees were pessimistically realistic about the support required after reintegration. They envisioned a need to help children with either job seeking (35%) or setting up a small business (22%). It is expected that girls would encounter more difficulties in seeking formal employment because the skills (sewing skills and beauty therapy) they focused on were less diverse and marketable than vocational training for boys, yet no effort is being made to rectify the situation. *“In addition, many of the girls lack capital to start their own business,”* (Don Bosco staff). It is reported by Vijghen (2004) that approximately 75% of the young women who received vocational training do not find a job or fail with business. Traditional labour division between men and women still prevails in Cambodia. It is assumed that women are good at cooking, taking care of children and the household while men are supposed to be the head of the family and honour that should have good jobs and earn income. According to the MoLVT (2008), these beliefs have discouraged girls from learning non-traditional skills that are in high demand in the labour market. Many of the responses from the staff indicated that they do not see chances for reintegration of the children with families until they reach adulthood.

It was acknowledged by approximately one third of the staff that shifts and chores determine the children's execution of housework duties. They do not like doing such chores but have to do them as is the general case for children universally. During the workshop trainings, some staff admitted to assigning a few “dirty” household chores (cleaning the toilets and animal sheds) to children as a form of punishment. Such work can be quite demeaning and embarrassing for children. However, these concerns were brought to the attention of the staff attending training. The majority of the staff agreed that younger children were looked after by

the older ones. One employee at CCPCR explained that such caring comes from the heart as the shelter has no policy concerning such behaviour. Likewise, a counsellor at ARM made a similar argument that children's attitudes towards each other change once they have stayed at the shelter for a while. They start to help the younger ones with difficult tasks and begin to look upon them as siblings. However, it was observed on several occasions that children were undertaking the role of babysitters even for caregivers' offspring at a shelter.



**Babysitting**

It was corroborated that children participate in the decision making process within shelters but there was a wide gap between shelters vis-à-vis the kind and extent of engagement. Although, children were not responsible for drafting the code of conduct at any of the shelters (the ideal form of participation), children were encouraged to make suggestions and comments on the internal rules at some shelters while at others, children were allowed to make personal decisions. A disciplinary committee consisting of children who dealt with forms of punishment for children who misbehaved was the norm at some shelters. Suggestions from children such as beatings were often inappropriate (KST, shelter manager). According to Abidi (2007, p.52) children's decision making committee at one shelter was found to be *"very authoritarian in nature and consisted of older children who handed down judgement or punishment to younger children."* It was verified that children rarely reported anything substantial to the staff preferring to tell tales of their peers or acted as messengers for the bashful.

The interviewees placed little value on the children's potential to contribute to society by helping others. This was in stark contrast to the children's assumption (66%) of their self-

worth. 47% of the staff interviewed believed that the children could be of no help to others and as one employee at Goutte D'Eau Neak Loeung stated, *"What can they possibly do? They can't even help themselves."* It was rather disheartening to see caregivers having such little faith in the children. Such negativity cannot empower the children. Positive attitudes towards helping one another were confined to assisting children within the shelters and emphasised sharing new experiences (17%), helping with housework (13%), giving advice (9%), encouraging others (9%), being a role model (4%), training others (4%), and solving conflicts (4%). While chances for all the children to be successful in their lives are realistically small, in order for just one to succeed they all, including the staff, have to believe that there is such a possibility. It should be the staff who delivers such a message on a daily basis.

### **3.9 Effects of Global Issues**

#### **3.9.1 Children interviewed individually:**

55% children asserted that people in other countries experience similar problems like them. 25% gave reasonable descriptions of problems and countries where they might be occurring whereas 30% did not fully comprehend the problems or countries. *"Yes, other countries have similar problems such as India, Egypt and Vietnam,"* expressed a 17 year old girl. *"Australia and Japan have the same problems as us,"* believed a 19 year old girl. 28% of the interviewees thought that other countries do not have similar problems and 17% did not know.

43% of the children interviewed did not think they are capable of doing anything important for people in other countries and an additional 23% did not know. *"I can tell them not to migrate to other countries and that migration is bad,"* stated a 14 year old boy who had been repatriated from Thailand. *"I can't do anything important for foreigners or foreign countries. I can only help to develop my own country but if I lived abroad perhaps I could do something. I would like to get a scholarship to study overseas,"* explained a 21 year old male. Of the 29% children who sensed that they could help foreign countries, 22% were able to explain how. *"When I become a car mechanic I will be able to repair cars for people in other countries,"* said a 16 year old boy. *"I can spread the good news about Jesus, because he has rescued all of us, got rid of sin and died for us,"* espoused a 12 year old boy. A similar response was given by a 13 year old girl, *"I can pray for people all over the world."* A more practical example was provided by a 13 year old boy, *"I can grow vegetables and flowers to export and sell to other countries."* *"When I complete my university degree, get a good job and earn a lot of money I will be able to donate money to vulnerable children in poor countries that are facing problems like mine now,"* answered a 16 year old boy. However, this same participant stated that he wanted to be a car mechanic in the future.





### Stickers

Most of the children (90%) liked foreigners, but were selective. *“My favourite foreigners are the Japanese because they are our donors. Some Japanese come to the shelter once a year to give us a medical check-up and play with us. I like it when they visit us,”* indicated a 14 year old boy. An 11 year old girl at the same shelter declared *“I like the Japanese because they are good looking people but I hate the Vietnamese and Thai. I’m afraid they will kidnap me.”* *“I like the French because they teach us good things but some foreigners play with children in an inappropriate manner,”* stated an 11 year old girl. *“I like white people because they give more assistance to Cambodia than other countries,”* was the statement of a 12 year old girl. *“I like white people because they help Cambodia but, I don’t like Thai or Vietnamese because they hate Khmer people,”* acknowledged a 16 year old boy. *“I like Thai and white people because the Thai people who worked with my mother helped us. They gave us food and clothes,”* remarked a 9 year old girl. 7% of the remaining children cited rational reasons for their dislike of foreigners or xenophobia. A 14 year old boy claimed, *“I don’t like Africans because they have black skin,”* whereas another boy, a 16 year old confessed, *“I don’t like Africans because they look ugly.”* *“I don’t like Thai people because they treat Khmers badly, and the Vietnamese because they want Cambodia to imitate their culture,”* was the attitude of a 15 year old boy. Some of the irrational reasons included *“I don’t really like foreigners because their countries*

*are different to Cambodia” (18 year old male).*



### **Khmer Traditional Music**

51 children (63%) mentioned that international organisations are supporting them and Cambodia, but only 27 had some idea of the assistance received. *“International organisations are helping Cambodia a lot. They are helping children to survive, especially those who have been to Thailand. They are educating parents that trafficking is bad and that it is better to live at a shelter,”* was the acute observation of a 15 year old girl. *“Donors develop infrastructure by building roads and bridges,”* stated a 17 year old girl. *“International organisations are providing funds to support vulnerable children but I don't know who is supporting CCPCR,”* claimed a 17 year old resident. *“World Vision is providing Homeland with school materials and some food,”* confirmed a 17 year old girl. *“ASPECA is helping our orphanage and my sponsor in France sends me gifts, school materials, a bicycle and toys which I share with other children,”* said a 13 year old girl. 26% claimed that they had no idea while 11% believed that no help was being provided.

47% would like additional assistance for their shelter from international organisations whereas 49% did not know whether any foreign support is required. Only 4% seemed to be sure that shelters are not in need of such help. Non-specific funding was ranked highest among the desired forms of support (20%) while other forms (school materials, funding for food and

equipment) paled in comparison ranging between 6% and 7%. *“Our orphanage needs more money to buy things such as kitchen utensils, school materials, food and clothes,”* explained a 12 year old boy. *“We need child protection along with other support,”* was the desire of a 15 year old boy. *“More shelters should be created,”* was the opinion of an 18 year old male also from the same shelter. Other items such as clothes, personal items, kitchen utensils, more skills training, grants for small businesses, and continuous support for children were also stated.

### **3.9.2 Child Participants of Focus Group Discussions**

Focus discussions with children at Goutte D'Eau Residential Centre Poipet and Goutte D'Eau Neak Loeung proved to be more instrumental in eliciting concrete details than from individual interviews. The group unity may have facilitated nationalistic inclinations and created a sense of “us” versus the world. Both FDGs concluded that most countries have comparable problems as Cambodia but, not to the same extent. These problems included alcohol and drug addictions, along with domestic violence. However, places such as India, Africa, Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia have the same problems including poverty, child labour, and trafficking. FDG children at Goutte D'Eau Residential Centre Poipet believed that some countries such as the United States have no problems and that *“it must be a very happy place for the people who are living there”*. All children were unanimous in their assertion that they could do something important for people in other countries. The reported help that could be extended echoed some of the suggestions made by individually interviewed children. The main parallels incorporated eliminating drug addiction, refraining from domestic violence and sharing their acquired knowledge.

As with the individually interviewed children, these FDG children were selective in their approval of foreign countries and foreigners. Western countries, for example Australia, England, France, Italy, United States were highly ranked by the majority of the children for their altruistic assistance to Cambodia, and for helping to improve their lives. One boy at Goutte D'Eau Neak Loeung exclaimed that *“if we go to war the United States will help us because they have a lot of aircraft”*. In addition to historical reasons the neighbouring countries Thailand, Laos and Vietnam were not appreciated because they promote child trafficking, drug addiction and sexual abuse. Malaysia was also cited as a popular destination for traffickers. China was considered an enemy because *“they helped Pol Pot in the past and they like to fight”* (FGD Neak Loeung).

There was a slight awareness of international organisations such as UNICEF and IOM, and

the support given to Cambodia and to their shelters including food, school materials, clothes, and education. Appeals for support varied little from those individually requested with children asking for more funding, food, school materials and clothes as well as serving vulnerable and trafficked children by providing education.

The maps of the world drawn by the children at Goutte D'Eau Residential Centre Poipet resembled patchwork quilts or a large area of land divided into various segments representing the countries without sea, mountains or continents. Countries were randomly placed and included those most familiar to the children such as Thailand, Vietnam, India, China, Korea, France, United States, Switzerland, Malaysia, Canada, the Philippines and of course, Cambodia. It is evident that the children had very little knowledge about other countries but were interested to know if human trafficking, domestic violence and drug abuse were prevalent in France. The children at Goutte D'Eau Neak Loeung drew scenes from various countries such as England, Japan, and Switzerland but the main focus was on Cambodia. Every scene portrayed a house indicating once again, the importance of the home setting.



**Map of the World**

### 3.9.3 Staff interviewed individually

Over 20% of the staff admitted that they do not know if there are similar problems in other countries, while 9% stated other countries had no problems. *“I don’t really know if other countries have similar problems but maybe they do because foreigners come here to teach and train us,”* explained a CCPCR employee. Those who thought that there were similar problems elsewhere usually mentioned other Asian countries, predominantly neighbouring countries such as Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, India and Myanmar. *“MMF has another shelter in Thailand so, I suppose other countries have similar problems as Cambodia,”* reasoned a caregiver at MMF. Nobody mentioned any African country whereas some cited the United States (9%) and France (4%). Nearly 50% of the interviewees were not sure if the children at the shelter could be useful or of any interest to foreigners while 13% were convinced that they could not be of any help, sometimes confusing potential capability with unwillingness. *“The children here don’t have the capacity or the ability to help others,”* declared a staff member at SKO. A similar response was reiterated by one of Goutte D’Eau Neak Loeung personnel, *“No, the children don’t have the ability to help others. They are lazy, poor and have no confidence, they would never think about helping people in other countries.”* Examples of how the children could contribute to the global community included those who may become highly educated could invent new things (13%), share past experiences (13%), teach (9%), be advocates for justice (4%) or with the staff’s help contribute ideas (4%). *“The children here have lower education than in other countries and our standard of education is not so high. What they can do is to share their experiences and past especially regarding trafficking issues,”* was an opinion expressed by a Don Bosco member. *“Those who are intelligent may become ministers, doctors and teachers and then they can help people in other countries,”* remarked a KnK employee. However, not everyone was so unenthusiastic, *“Of course, as human beings children can do something according to their capacity and when they grow up they will be able to do more. What they need is a good education,”* (Svay Rieng Orphanage, director). Education is clearly needed for the staff before children can be expected to understand global issues. This is an obvious recommendation and among the easiest to implement, especially as they seem to like foreigners, although selectively. A few staff members stated that children preferred westerners or Caucasians to other foreigners or even other visitors to the shelter because they usually brought them things and are mainly assisting Cambodia. Consequently, children are eager to study English to communicate with foreigners. Shelter staff (65%) is usually aware of international help (hopefully not just when interviewed by IOM representatives) and can collectively identify major contributors to their organisations.

## **Chapter 4: Conclusion**

### **4.1 Conclusion**

The trends yielded from this study portray the current environment of orphanages and shelters as generally successful forms of alternative care. Children are content with life in residential care and wish to remain there until adulthood despite the majority having biological families. They have caregivers who are happy and dedicated to providing quality care and services. The combination of selected research methods allowed achieving the objective of revealing key issues related to performance of the investigated shelters which derived from the children's perspectives can be categorised as benefits and shortcomings of living in residential care.

The strengths are manifold and include opportunities to attend school and vocational skills training, more friends, relatively good relations with staff, some optimism regarding future, better healthcare and diet, more food, more time to play, a higher standard of living, personal possessions and toys, more care and attention, share of daily chores, taking care of younger children, good relations among the children, kind staff, responsible attitudes and accountability towards school attendance, vocational training, decision-making, housework, childcare, and ability to help others, no major problems such as physical or sexual abuse and hope for a better future. The weaknesses can be summarised as following: limited range of conventional and gender oriented opportunities, insufficient praise and alternative recognition for achievement, low expectations, insufficient and inadequate advice and counselling, unwillingness to reintegrate, over protectiveness of females, insufficient knowledge of sex education/abuse, many naughty children, a lot of conflicts and arguments, detached feeling towards parents and siblings, homesickness, infrequent home visits, inability to confront past experiences, unhealthy attitude towards community children, limited knowledge of basic global issues and their role as global citizens. It is evident that there is a strong bias towards fulfilling basic needs such as food, clothing, education and shelter to the detriment of emotional and psycho-social counselling, which is an equally important component of child development and protection. This is not that such issues are ignored as a general strategy but many of the staff are simply unable to cope with more complex problems.

The findings confirm validity of the presumption that there would be some discrepancies between staff and children's perceptions of residential care. The most significant results establish that the staff believe the children to be less talented and capable than community children; a general unawareness among staff of children's feelings and factors that contribute to

their happiness and sadness; too formal and authoritative relations with children; more optimistic concerning the service provided by the shelter such as health care, opportunities to play, education and vocational training, and shelter atmosphere; unfamiliar with the children's situation, attitudes towards shelter life, and feeling towards parents; more cognisant of fighting and conflicts within the shelter; more realistic in terms of attitudes towards school and shelter chores, and future opportunities for children; place little on children's potential or contribution to society. In some cases responses from the staff explain children's similar level in terms of global knowledge. These shortcomings indicate that more interpersonal communication between shelter staff and children is warranted.

#### **4.2 Recommended Areas for Further Research**

Differences in perception or acknowledgements of the staff and children validate the approach of combining the two opinions in attempts to reveal the state of alternative care in a more objective way. Gathering data from further sources, such as parents, local community members (children and adults) and authorities, and particularly some who have no direct interest in either promotion or demotion of any alternative care programmes would be highly beneficial.

A more balanced or comparable representation of children from various categories and backgrounds would allow for more definitive conclusions regarding the impact the given circumstances have on their well-being. The under-representation of ethnic minorities and disabled children at the shelters is an area that requires further investigation.

A comparison between reintegrated children from various shelters may determine which shelters were more successful in preparing the children for adulthood or for their roles in society. Issues such as psychological balance, physical well-being, social networking, livelihood, and future prospects, could be considered measures of success or failure.

It would be interesting to conduct research on traditional Khmer perspectives on how children are regarded, especially non-related children. An insight on why non-biological cannot be extended the same regard and care as biological children may help to understand and perhaps improve the general half-hearted attitude of caregivers and social workers towards children in their care. The same issue correlates with reintegration perspectives for children who came to the shelter due to problems with step parents.



IOM needs to investigate the impact of alternative care on the prevention of trafficking and the correlation between the vulnerability of children from the alternative care environment and those at the community level and the risk of re-entering the trafficking cycle or leaving themselves open to exploitation and abuse. The mandate of shelters requires their organisation to be instrumental in the prevention of irregular migration, and child trafficking. If shelters are found to be ineffective in influencing attitudes towards trafficking and irregular migration, and reintegrated children enter the trafficking cycle, appropriate capacity building will be designed in support of such shelters.

#### **4.3 Recommendations**

To ameliorate the current advances in the quality of residential care and to mitigate major problems, the following strategies are recommended:

First of all, in the context of some obvious confusion among the staff and children, it is extremely important to clarify the purpose, goals and objectives of the shelters – including the role of international aid. Goals of reintegration with the local communities, including families as well as the prevention of irregular migration of children, whenever possible, should be confirmed with the funding organisations and then emphasised to the key shelter staff and the children.

In order to meet the re-integration objectives specific programmes featuring interactions with local communities and families of the children should be implemented and monitored. Examples that could be utilised include open days (or family days) of the shelter, sport competitions, artistic performance or voluntary work of children and staff for the local community. The shelters should have a specific policy and planning for home visits in accordance with the minimum standards of residential care.

The study established that most children expect to grow up in residential care including those with immediate or extended families. Efforts should be made to support both immediate and extended families to care for their children in the home environment as the study has established that most children do not come from indigent families. More emphasis should be placed on providing services such as micro-credit lending and other income generation programmes, scholarships to support education of children, counselling, etc. which could all prove useful in enhancing the quality of the children's lives as well as combating trafficking.

If funding permits, training programmes and workshops should continue, and their effectiveness should be periodically assessed through research projects. This is pivotal to the successful implementation of the minimum standards on alternative care. There are certain important areas where insufficient knowledge and experience of the staff, and consequently ignorance of the children, are quite obvious and need actions urgently:

- sexual education and other gender-related issues where undertakings should go much further than prevention of sex crimes; professional experts should become involved;
- further development of healthy self-esteem and confidence in children through the role models of caregivers, praise, encouragement and constructive criticism;
- the style of management skills that is congruent with the care that is provided: that it is respectful and valuing of staff, encourages growth and the development of potential;
- recognition of bullying as a common pattern of children misbehaviour with potentially very serious consequences, which appears to be a concept not fully understood by the shelter staff- the hidden bully or in other words, the bully hidden in plain sight (usually children with high social skills who can easily manipulate their peers as well as their school teachers, caregivers and administrators) is an important issue that needs to be addressed;
- awareness of global and international issues as well as global citizenship of Cambodians (including the shelter children), which should become primary topics in workshops and training provided by the international community.

The enthusiasm of the staff towards capacity building has emerged throughout the study. However, it is important to develop and support a curriculum appropriate to the educational level of the shelter staff, which is well below university standards. Efforts should also be made to invite new staff members and those who have yet to receive adequate pre-service and in-service training to future seminars, workshops and trainings.

Child specialists in certain areas such as literature, art and crafts, dance, music, sports and recreation, should be invited to the shelters to conduct occasional interactive workshops for the children. This will not only break the monotony of daily routine but also provide opportunities for the children to experience the joys of childhood and to expand their minds. Children with a lack of confidence may be transformed with activities that inspire them to explore their hopes and dreams, to respect others and live in a world where anything is possible. The children will subconsciously develop social skills, communication skills, body language, and etiquette.

Increased access and development of communication tools such as informational, educational and communication (IEC) materials along with behaviour change communication (BCC) materials in a Khmer context would be instrumental in encouraging constructive dialogue between the staff and children, augmenting certain life skills activities (decision making, problem solving, creative and critical thinking), as well as helping the latter to overcome stigma. The utilisation of memory books and journals will enable the children to understand the past and hence, to be stronger to face the future.

The standard of care provided by most of the investigated shelters indicates the successful intervention of international aid. However, IOM along with other development partners should shift their attention to shelters that are providing a lower quality of care i.e. Goutte D'Eau Neak Loeung, SKO, Svay Rieng Orphanage and KST as well as reaching out to other shelters that have received insufficient support from the donor community which will narrow the gap between shelters and bring them all to the minimum standards of care. Support could comprise of technical and financial aid as well as institutional and staff capacity building.

IOM and its partners should continue to work towards increasing awareness among both shelter staff and children hosted in shelters on the dangers of irregular migration and child trafficking and on the higher trafficking risk faced by children in vulnerable situations. The 2008 Cambodia Anti-Trafficking Law criminalising all forms of trafficking is a powerful tool in efforts to prosecute and convict traffickers and have them face stringent punishments. Shelter staff need to be educated about the intricacies of this law to encourage victims to file civil suits and seek legal action against traffickers.

There is a need to initiate and support opportunities for on-site mentoring at the shelters. It would be worthwhile for technical advisors to undertake the role of mentor and spend a couple of days at each shelter. All concerned parties (the mentor, the mentees and the organisation) can gain from participating in mentoring sessions. The staff can achieve better levels of professional success, as well as enhancing collaboration, goal achievement and problem solving within the organisation. For the mentor, it is a golden opportunity to observe and assess conditions at the shelter, being in a position to advise and structure policies or programmes accordingly.

Considering the limited resources of international aid, all the shelters and local organisations should be encouraged to share their experience and knowledge as it became

obvious that the level of expertise can vary dramatically among different shelters, even between those belonging to the same organisation. Local organisations and the key personnel of the shelters should be made aware of the intermittent role of the aid organisations and the need to aim for development of self-sustainability, at least on the national scale.

Echoing the recommendation from Chenda's research (2006), caution is required from shelters, especially those experiencing food shortages that they do not exceed their maximum quota of children as this will put more pressure on fragile services and resources as well as contributing to the unpleasantness of over-crowding for children.

Essentially all the shelters succeed in satisfying physical needs of the children but everything is handled in a general atmosphere of realistic minimalism and pessimism. Children have no dreams and all what they are hoping for is basic survival. Both staff and children would benefit from more spontaneity and creativity. Proper training may help in this matter but it will be essential to recruit staff with adequate abilities and motivation.

Due attention should be paid by the managerial staff of shelters during the recruitment process of caregivers and other staff that those candidates with a predisposed attitude of negativity and hopelessness towards children in alternative residential care are not employed no matter how qualified or experienced they appear to be otherwise. Having such people around the children will only serve to further undermine the latter's self-esteem and confidence. Children will pick up on these negative vibes and may actually believe them and feel that things cannot be changed.

Girls and boys should be equally encouraged in their development and given the same opportunities to study non traditional skills that are in high demand in the labour market. This would make girls less vulnerable to exploitation and more employable, and give boys opportunities to better understand issues of gender equality. This correlates with the aforementioned training on gender issues for caregivers, social workers, educators and children which is prerequisite for the necessary change in attitudes concerning the roles of both men and women in economic and social development.

Peer education should be increasingly utilised as a method for providing information and advice to children and young people, especially on topics such as nutrition, substance abuse,

violence prevention, HIV prevention, sexual and reproductive health. Placing children in the role of educator can be instrumental in modifying knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and behaviour, as peer education is based on the premise that people make changes not only based on what they know, but on the opinions and actions of their close, trusted peers. Children at the shelters share similar experiences and social norms and may be better placed than adults to provide relevant, meaningful and explicit information.

The typology of children residing at orphanages and shelters comprise of a relatively large number of children who had been trafficked. Each child has a unique story to tell and shelter staff should capitalise on their experience and firsthand knowledge of trafficking. Those children who are willing should be encouraged to share their stories during the shelter's session on raising awareness on trafficking issues. Drama and plays based on their experiences can be performed and community children could be invited to attend. Reflection and discussion with all the participants should follow. Such initiatives could kill two birds with one stone by enabling the children to protect themselves against exploitation and by strengthening bonds between community children and those in residential care.

As this study reveals, children have clear ideas about their circumstances and have a lot of ideas to contribute. These ideas are at times different to those of the staff. Since there is a dearth of interpersonal communication between shelter staff and children, the former have to learn to listen to the children more and incorporate their suggestions into shelter policies and plans. The children need to be given a "stronger voice" to become more involved in decision making processes at the shelters. Therefore, efforts need to be made to set the stage and make meetings a comfortable environment where children are not afraid to express their worries and concerns or to make suggestions.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### Questionnaire for Individual Interviews with Children

##### Background:

- 1. Shelter Provider:**
- |                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Public            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Local NGO         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| International NGO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Public/Local NGO  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- 2. Shelter Type:**
- |            |                          |
|------------|--------------------------|
| Long-term  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Short-term | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- 3. Residential period:**
- 4. Life history:**
- |                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Trafficked        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Vulnerable        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Domestic Violence | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sexually Abused   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Orphan            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Street Children   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- 5. Gender:** Male ☐ Female ☐
- 6. Age:**
- 7. Ethnicity:**
- |                  |                          |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| Khmer            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Chinese          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Vietnamese       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Khmer/Chinese    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Khmer/Vietnamese | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- 8. Hometown:** **Village:**  
**District:**  
**Province:**
- 9. Family:**
- |                 |                          |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Both parents    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Single parent   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Step-parent     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Orphan          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Extended family | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- 10. Family Property:**
- |              |                          |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| Land         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Car          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Motorbike    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| TV           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mobile phone | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Stereo       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- 11. Roof of Family Home:**
- |          |                          |
|----------|--------------------------|
| Tiles    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Straw    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Concrete | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tin      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Asbestos | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Wood     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- 12. Family Situation:**
- |                              |                          |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Poorest in the neighbourhood | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Poorer than most of others   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Average                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Used to be worse             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Used to be better            | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### 13. Number of Siblings:

14. Experience of siblings: Similar ☐ Different ☐  
How?

### Migrant Experience:

- 15. Why did you decide to work?
- 16. Who did you go with?
- 17. What did you do?
- 18. Who did you live with?
- 19. How much money did you earn?
- 20. Was your life at that time different to what you were expecting?
- 21. How do you feel now about your life at that time?

### Psychological Balance:

- 22. What are you good at?
- 23. Are you as good as the other children at doing things?
  - Much better ☐
  - Slightly better ☐
  - Similar ☐
  - Worse ☐
  - Much worse ☐
  - Don't know ☐
- 24. Do you get many opportunities to try new things here?
  - A lot ☐
  - Same ☐
  - A little ☐
  - Don't know ☐
- 25. What opportunities do you get to try new things?
- 26. Do you get a lot of praise and encouragement when you have done something well?
  - A lot ☐
  - Somewhat ☐
  - A little ☐
  - Don't know ☐
- 27. What kind of praise and encouragement do you get?
- 28. When do you feel happiest?
- 29. When do you feel unhappy?
- 30. Do you have many friends here?
  - More than before ☐
  - Same ☐
  - Less ☐
  - Don't know ☐
- 31. Do you find it easy to speak to staff members? Why?
  - Very easy ☐
  - Somewhat ☐
  - Difficult ☐
  - Don't know ☐
- 32. Will you be happy when you leave the shelter? Why?
  - Very Happy ☐
  - Happy ☐
  - Don't know ☐
  - Unhappy ☐
  - Very Unhappy ☐
- 33. Do you think you can have a better life after leaving the shelter than before coming to the

shelter? Why?

- Much better ☐
- Better ☐
- Same ☐
- Worse ☐
- Much worse ☐

34. Who do you usually talk to the most?

- Parents ☐
- Siblings ☐
- Relatives ☐
- Shelter staff ☐
- Teachers ☐
- Children at shelter ☐
- Others ☐

35. What do you talk about most?

- The past ☐
- The future ☐
- Present life ☐
- Problems ☐
- Family ☐
- Other ☐

36. What do you say about it?

37. What do you worry about most? Why?

- Future ☐
- Present day ☐
- Families ☐
- Poverty ☐
- Being bullied at the shelter ☐
- Being abused after leaving the shelter ☐
- Global Problems ☐
- Problems of Cambodian Economy ☐
- Other ☐

38. Who do you talk to about your worries?

- Parents ☐
- Siblings ☐
- Relatives ☐
- Shelter staff ☐
- Teachers ☐
- Children at shelter ☐
- Others ☐

39. What advice or help do they give you?

**Physical Well Being:**

40. How often do you get sick?

- Very Often ☐
- Often ☐
- Average ☐
- A little ☐
- Never ☐

41. Do you get sick less often now than before?

- More often ☐
- Same ☐
- Less often ☐
- Don't know ☐

42. What type of illness do you get?

43. Do you get better treatment now than before? Why?

- Much better ☐  
 Better ☐  
 Same ☐  
 Worse ☐  
 Much worse ☐  
 Don't know ☐
44. Is the food different here from what you were used to?
45. Do you like it?
46. Has your weight increased since coming here?
- A lot ☐  
 Somewhat ☐  
 A little ☐  
 Same ☐  
 Don't know ☐
47. Do you get more to eat here than before?
- Much more ☐  
 More ☐  
 Same ☐  
 Less ☐  
 Much less ☐  
 Don't know ☐
48. When (how often) do you play with friends?
- More often than before ☐  
 The same ☐  
 Less often ☐  
 Don't know ☐
49. What do you play/ do for fun? Different or the same as before?
50. Is the shelter better than your home? Why?
- Much better ☐  
 Better ☐  
 Same ☐  
 Worse ☐  
 Much worse ☐  
 Don't know ☐
51. What do you have in the shelter that you don't have at home?
52. What do you like most about the shelter?
53. What do you dislike about the shelter?
54. How could you improve the shelter or make it a better place to live?

### **Social Networking:**

55. Do you like talking about your family? What do you say about them?
- A lot ☐  
 Somewhat ☐  
 A little ☐  
 No ☐
56. How do you feel towards your parents? Why?
- Proud ☐  
 Content ☐  
 Angry ☐  
 Sad ☐  
 Ashamed ☐  
 Resentful ☐  
 Worried ☐  
 Other ☐
57. How do you feel towards your siblings? Why?
- Proud ☐

- Content ☐
- Angry ☐
- Sad ☐
- Ashamed ☐
- Resentful ☐
- Worried ☐
- Jealous ☐
- Other ☐
58. Do you miss your family?
- A lot ☐
- A little ☐
- Not at all ☐
- Don't know ☐
59. How often do you meet your family?
60. What do you talk about during visits?
61. Do you want to live with your family soon?
- As soon as possible ☐
- In the near future ☐
- In the distant future ☐
- Never ☐
62. Do the bigger/older children help you? How?
63. Do you help the smaller/younger children? How?
64. Do the other children ever fight or argue with you?
- Very often ☐
- Often ☐
- Sometimes ☐
- A little ☐
- Never ☐
65. What do you fight or argue about?
66. Were you ever bullied at the shelter?/Did you ever bully anyone? Who? What? When? Where?
67. How do you feel towards other children in the shelter?
- Empathise ☐
- Friendly ☐
- Helpful ☐
- Bully ☐
- Ignore ☐
- Superior ☐
- Other ☐
68. How do you treat newcomers?
- Empathise ☐
- Friendly ☐
- Helpful ☐
- Bully ☐
- Ignore ☐
- Superior ☐
- Other ☐
69. How do you feel towards other children outside the shelter?
- Friendly ☐
- Envious ☐
- Inferior ☐
- Same ☐
- Other ☐
70. Are the shelter staff kind to you?
- Very Kind ☐
- Kind ☐

- |  |             |                          |
|--|-------------|--------------------------|
|  | Sometimes   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Unkind      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Very unkind | <input type="checkbox"/> |
71. Are they kind to other children?
- |  |                      |                          |
|--|----------------------|--------------------------|
|  | Kinder than to me    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | The same             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Less kind than to me | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Don't know           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
72. What do you talk about to the shelter staff?
73. Did you ever have any problems at the shelter? What?

#### **Readiness for Post-shelter Life**

74. Do you like school?
- |  |               |                          |
|--|---------------|--------------------------|
|  | Like it a lot | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Like it       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | OK            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Dislike it    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Don't know    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
75. Did you go to school before you came to the shelter?
76. Will you continue going to school when you leave the shelter?
77. What vocational skills are you learning in the shelter? Would you like to learn?
78. Do you like any of them?
79. Did you decide yourself what skill you wanted to learn?
80. Do you feel you should be helping with shelter housework?
81. Do you think you should watch over younger children in the shelter?
82. Do you think you should report to the shelter staff if you see anything wrong?
83. Do you think you should be allowed to decide along with the staff such things as shelter rules?
84. What do you think you can do to help other people?
85. What support will you need once you leave the shelter?

#### **Effects of Global Issues**

86. Do you think people in other countries have similar problems like you?
87. Do you think you can do anything important for people in other countries?
88. Do you like any foreigners and foreign countries?
89. Do you think international organizations are helping you or your country?
90. What assistance does your shelter need?

## Appendix 2

### Focus Group Discussions for Children

#### A. Psychological Balance

**Picture Drawing: Happy Day/Sad Day**

**Objective:** To encourage children to talk about events that made them happy and sad.

**Activity:** The children are given a sheet of paper and crayons. They are asked to draw a picture of a day they were very happy on one side and a day they were very sad on the other side. They will be asked to explain their pictures and their stories will be written down. They will also be asked about what made them feel better on the day they felt very sad.

1. What are you good at? Examples: singing, drawing, maths, fighting, running, etc.
2. Are you good at many things?
3. Do you like trying new things?
4. Do you get many opportunities to try new things here?
5. Do you get any praise and encouragement when you have done something well?
6. Were you happy before coming to the shelter?
7. What things make you happy here at the shelter?
8. When do you feel happiest and unhappiest?
9. How many friends do you have here?
10. Do you have more friends now than before coming to the shelter?
11. Do you prefer to spend time alone or with others?
12. Has living at the shelter helped you to make friends easily?
13. Do you like meeting new people (strangers)?
14. Do you find it easy to speak to staff members?
15. Will you be happy when you leave the shelter?
16. Do you think you can have a better life after leaving the shelter than before coming to the shelter?
17. Do you think you will be successful/rich in the future?



## **B. Social Networking**

### **Picture Drawing: Our closest Friends**

Objective: To encourage children to talk about the people who are important to them.

Individual Activity: The children will be given a sheet of paper and asked to draw a picture of the people whom they feel closest to on one side and those whom they dislike on the other. They will be asked to explain the reasons for these feelings and their stories will be written down.

1. Do you like talking about your family? What do you say about them?
2. How do you feel towards your parents? Why?
3. How do you feel towards your siblings? Why?
4. Do you miss your family?
5. How often do you meet your family?
6. What do you talk about during visits?
7. Do you want to live with your family soon?
8. Do the bigger/older children help you? How?
9. Do you help the smaller/younger children? How?
10. Do the other children ever fight or argue with you?
11. What do you fight or argue about?
12. Were you ever bullied at the shelter?/Did you ever bully anyone? Who? What? When? Where?
13. How do you feel towards other children in the shelter?
14. How do you treat newcomers?
15. How do you feel towards other children outside the shelter?
16. Are the shelter staff kind to you?
17. Are they kind to other children?
18. What do you talk about to the shelter staff?

### C. Readiness for Post Shelter Life

**Picture Drawing/ I year from now/10 years later.**

**Objective:** To encourage the children to talk about their future hopes and expectations.

**Activity:** The children are given a sheet of paper and crayons. On one side of the paper, they are asked to draw a picture of how they see themselves one year later and on the other how they see themselves ten years from now. They will be asked to explain their pictures and their stories will be written down.

1. Where do you go to school now?
2. What grade are you in?
3. How do you like school?
4. Do you think what you learn is useful for yourself, your family or others?
5. Was the school you went to before coming to the shelter different from your present school?
7. Would you like to continue going to school when you leave the shelter? Why? Why not?
8. What skills are you learning in the shelter?/ Would you like to learn?
9. What do you like and dislike about it?
10. Who decided what skills you should learn?
11. Would you like to study more?
12. Do you think you can help others with anything? What?
13. Do you feel you should be helping with shelter housework? Why? /Why not?
14. Do you think you should watch over younger children in the shelter? Why?/Why not?
15. Do you think you should report to the shelter staff if you see anything wrong? Why?/Why not?

#### **D. Global Issues**

##### **Picture Drawing: Cambodia and the World**

Objective: To encourage children to talk about Cambodia and its relation to the world.

Group Activity: The group of children will be given a large sheet of paper and asked to draw their own perception of the world and Cambodia's place in it. The children will be asked to explain their map of the world. Their story will be written down.

1. Do you think people in other countries have similar problems like you?
2. Do you think there are problems common to people of all countries?
3. Do you think you can do anything important for people in other countries?
4. Do you like foreigners?
5. Do you like your neighbour countries/their people like Thailand, China, and Vietnam?
6. Do you like overseas countries/their people like USA, Australia, and Japan?
7. Do you like European countries/their people like Germany, England, and France?
8. Which countries do you like and dislike most?
9. Do you think international organizations are helping you?
10. Do you think international organizations are helping your country or are important in other ways?

### Appendix 3

#### Questionnaire for Individual Interviews with Shelter Staff

##### Background - Shelter:

1. Shelter Provider:
- |                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Public            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Local NGO         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| International NGO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Public/Local NGO  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
2. Shelter Type:
- |            |                          |
|------------|--------------------------|
| Long-term  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Short-term | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
3. Categories of children in the shelter:
- |                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Trafficked        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Vulnerable        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Domestic Violence | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sexually Abused   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Orphan            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Street Children   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
4. No. of boys  
No. of girls

##### Background – Caregiver answering the questions:

5. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐
6. Role, qualifications and experience with the children:
7. Number of years working at shelter:

##### Background - Children

8. Ethnicity of children (%):
- |                  |                          |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| Khmer            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Chinese          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Vietnamese       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Khmer/Chinese    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Khmer/Vietnamese | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
9. Hometowns of children:
10. Family Background:
11. How many have siblings living at the shelter or at another shelter?
- |                 |                          |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| None            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Very Few (<10%) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Some            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Many (>50%)     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
12. Have the children had similar experiences as their siblings? Why not?
- |                 |                          |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| None            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Very Few (<10%) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Some            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Many (>50%)     | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Psychological Balance:**

13. What are the children here generally good at?
14. Are their abilities similar to children outside the shelter?
- |                 |                          |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Much better     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Slightly better | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Similar         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Worse           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Much worse      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
15. Is there a gap in the abilities of children?
- |            |                          |
|------------|--------------------------|
| Large      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No gap     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Small      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> |
16. What opportunities do the children get to try new things here?
17. Do they get more opportunities to do new things now than before coming to the shelter?
- |            |                          |
|------------|--------------------------|
| A lot      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Same       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A little   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> |
18. What kind of praise and encouragement do they children get when they have done something well?
19. When do the children feel happiest?
20. When do they feel unhappy?
21. Do the children have many friends here?
- |                  |                          |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| More than before | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Same             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Less             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
22. How do you ensure good relations among the children?
23. Is there good communication between staff and children?
- |             |                          |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| Very good   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Good        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Average     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Little      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| None at all | <input type="checkbox"/> |
24. Do you think the children will be happy when they leave the shelter? Why/Why not?
- |              |                          |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| Very Happy   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Happy        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unhappy      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Very unhappy | <input type="checkbox"/> |
25. Do you think they can have a better life after leaving the shelter than before coming to the shelter? Why/Why not?
- |             |                          |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| Much better | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Better      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Same        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Worse       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Much worse  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
26. Do the children talk about their past?
- |            |                          |
|------------|--------------------------|
| A lot      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A little   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not at all | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> |
27. Who do they usually talk to about past experiences? What do they say about it?

28. Do the children talk about their future?
- A lot ☐
- A little ☐
- Not at all ☐
- Don't know ☐
29. Who do they usually talk to about their future? What do they say about it?
30. What do the children worry about most? How do you deal with it?
- Future ☐
- Present day ☐
- Families ☐
- Poverty ☐
- Being bullied at the shelter ☐
- Being abused after leaving the shelter ☐
- Global Problems ☐
- Problems of Cambodian Economy ☐
- Other ☐
- Physical Well Being:**
31. How often do the children get sick?
- Very Often ☐
- Often ☐
- Average ☐
- A little ☐
- Never ☐
32. Do you think they get sick less often now than before?
- More often ☐
- Same ☐
- Less often ☐
- Don't know ☐
33. What kind of sickness do they usually get?
34. Do the same children get sick over and over again?
35. Do the children get better treatment now than before? Why?
- Much better ☐
- Better ☐
- Same ☐
- Worse ☐
- Much worse ☐
- Don't know ☐
36. Do the children like the food here?
37. What kind of food do they usually get?
38. Has their weight increased since coming here?
39. Do the children get enough to eat?
- Much more ☐
- More than before ☐
- Same amount ☐
- Less ☐
- Much less ☐
- Don't know ☐
40. When (how often) do they play with friends?
- More often than before ☐
- The same ☐
- Less often ☐
- Don't know ☐
41. What do they play/ do for fun?
- Different or the same as before?
42. Do you think the shelter is better than their homes? Why?/Why not?
- Much better ☐

- Better ☐
- Same ☐
- Worse ☐
- Much worse ☐
- Don't know ☐

43. What do you think they have in the shelter that they don't have at home?
44. What do you think they like most about the shelter?
45. What do you think they don't like about the shelter?

**Social Networking:**

46. Do the children talk about their families? What do they say? To whom?
47. In general, how do the children feel towards their parents?

- Proud ☐
- Content ☐
- Angry ☐
- Sad ☐
- Ashamed ☐
- Resentful ☐
- Worried ☐
- Other ☐

48. In general, how do the children feel towards their siblings?

- Proud ☐
- Content ☐
- Angry ☐
- Sad ☐
- Ashamed ☐
- Resentful ☐
- Worried ☐
- Jealous ☐
- Other ☐

49. Do you think the children miss their families?

- A lot ☐
- A little ☐
- Not at all ☐
- Don't know ☐

50. How often do they get to meet their families?

51. What do they talk to their family about during visits?

52. How soon do you think the children want to live with their families?

- As soon as possible ☐
- In the near future ☐
- In the distant future ☐
- Never ☐

53. Do the bigger/older children help the younger children?

54. How?

55. How often do the children fight or argue?

- Very often ☐
- Often ☐
- Sometimes ☐
- A little ☐
- Never ☐

56. What do they usually fight or argue about?

57. What kind of bullying is there within the shelter? Who does it to whom? Is there a lot?

58. How do the children feel towards other children in the shelter?

- Empathise ☐
- Friendly ☐
- Helpful ☐



- |  |          |                          |
|--|----------|--------------------------|
|  | Bully    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Ignore   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Superior | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Other    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
59. How do they treat newcomers?
- |  |           |                          |
|--|-----------|--------------------------|
|  | Empathise | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Friendly  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Helpful   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Bully     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Ignore    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Superior  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Other     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
60. How do the children feel towards other children outside the shelter?
- |  |          |                          |
|--|----------|--------------------------|
|  | Friendly | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Envious  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Inferior | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Same     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Other    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
61. How do you promote good relations among the children in the shelter?  
 62. What is the atmosphere like between the shelter staff and the children?  
 63. How do you promote good relations between staff and children?  
 64. What do the children talk to the shelter staff about? Do they share their worries and concerns?

#### **Readiness for Post-shelter Life**

65. How do the children feel about school?
- |  |               |                          |
|--|---------------|--------------------------|
|  | Like it a lot | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Like it       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | OK            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Dislike it    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Don't know    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
66. Did many go to school before coming to the shelter?  
 67. Will many of them continue going to school once they leave the shelter?  
 68. What vocational skills are the children learning in the shelter?  
 69. Do you like them?  
 70. Who decided what skills they should learn?  
 71. Do the children help with shelter housework?  
 72. What do they do?  
 73. Do you think they like doing this work?  
 74. Do the older children watch over younger children in the shelter?  
 75. Do they often report to the shelter staff when they see something wrong/strange?  
 76. Do the children participate in any decision-making along with the staff? What? How?  
 77. What do you think the children can do to help other people?  
 78. What support will the children need once they leave the shelter?

#### **Effects of Global Issues**

79. Do you think people in other countries have similar problems like the children here?  
 80. Do you think the children can do anything important for people in other countries?  
 81. Do you think the children like any foreigners and foreign countries?  
 82. Do you think international organizations are helping the children or your country?

## Appendix 4

### Shelter Staff Focus Group Discussion

**Background:**

Work place:

Role/responsibility:

How many children are under the supervision of one caregiver?  
or how many children and how many caregivers are working at this unit?

Working period at shelter:

Previous work experience:

Training received as shelter employee:

Educational background:

1. What do you like and dislike about your job?
2. Why and how did you become a social worker?
3. Do you think you get enough training for the job?

As an expert	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Adequately for the job	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
A little	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Would you think about changing jobs if opportunities with similar benefits were available?

Definitely yes	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Maybe	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Definitely no	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Why/Why not?
5. Would you change jobs if you could get better benefits or opportunities?

Definitely yes	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Maybe	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Definitely no	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Why/Why not?
6. Do you like working with children? Why?

Very much	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Much	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
A little	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7. What are the biggest challenges facing social workers in Cambodia?
8. What are the biggest changes (organisation, funding, law, policies, and infrastructure) that have taken place since you started working at the shelter?
9. Do you think that most of the children are happy to be living at the shelters? Why or why not?

Very much	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Much	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
A little	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Not at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Don't know ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

10. What changes would you like to see happening at your shelter?

11. What changes do you think the children would like?

## Appendix 5

### Questionnaire on Background and Motivation of Shelter Staff

- 1) The name of your work place:
- 2) Your role and responsibility:
- 3) How many children are under the supervision of one caregiver or how many children and how many caregivers are working at this unit?
- 4) How long have you worked at the shelter?
- 5) Do you have a second job?
- 6) What job did you have before working at the shelter?
- 7) What is your educational background?
- 8) What training have you received as a shelter employee?
- 9) What do you like about your job?
- 10) What do you dislike about your job?
- 11) Do you think you get enough training for the job?
 

As an expert	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adequately for the job	<input type="checkbox"/>
Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/>
A little	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/>
- 12 a) Would you think about changing jobs if opportunities with **similar benefits** were available?
 

Definitely yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maybe	<input type="checkbox"/>
Definitely no	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
- b) Why/Why not?
- 13 a) Would you change jobs if you could get **better benefits** or opportunities?
 

Definitely yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maybe	<input type="checkbox"/>
Definitely no	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
- b) Why/Why not?
- 14 a) Do you like working with children?
 

Very much	<input type="checkbox"/>
Much	<input type="checkbox"/>
Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/>
A little	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/>
- b) Why/Why not?
- 15) What are the biggest challenges facing social workers/caregiver in Cambodia?

16) What are the biggest changes (organisation, funding, law, policies, and infrastructure) that have taken place since you started working at the shelter?

17 a) Do you think that most of the children are happy to be living at the shelters?

- |            |                          |
|------------|--------------------------|
| Very much  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Much       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Somewhat   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A little   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not at all | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> |

b) Why/ why not?

18 a) Is it better for the children to live at shelters than live at home?

- |                |                          |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| Definitely yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Maybe          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Definitely no  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know     | <input type="checkbox"/> |

b) Why/Why not?

19) What changes would you like to see happening at your shelter?

20) What changes do you think the children would like?