

# WOMEN IN CAMBODIA'S GARMENT INDUSTRY: THEIR WORK, THEIR SAFETY.

The garment sector in Cambodia employs approximately 600,000 people and up to 85% of workers are women. The vast majority of workers have moved from rural locations to take jobs in the city. CARE's research identifies that 97% of participants working in Phnom Penh are internal migrants. A job in the garment sector is potentially an opportunity for economic empowerment. However, dignified work is only possible when human rights and labour rights are respected. Despite their high rate of participation in the garment industry, women are not on equal terms to their male colleagues and are at risk of sexual harassment. Harmful gender norms that perpetuate inequality of women and men in workplaces must be addressed to guarantee women's full participation at work.

## WHO THEY ARE



**Most women working in garment factories are young and migrants, living and working outside their home provinces.**

- 66% of female garment factory workers are under the age of 30.
- 51% are married.
- 64% of all women garment workers in Cambodia are internal migrants. For factories in Phnom Penh, 97% of the female workforce are internal migrants.

## WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE OF WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT



**Nearly 1 in 3 women experience sexual harassment in their workplaces. Of these women:**

- 68.2% were also made to feel uncomfortable or unsafe in the workplace.
- 32.5% of women were the recipients of unwanted leers, noises or gestures.
- Physical harassment and coercive behaviour by managers or supervisors also occurs.
- Women rarely take time off from work due to harassment because they cannot afford the lost pay.

## WOMEN'S SAFETY IN THE COMMUNITY



**Women cope with the risk of sexual harassment in the community through self-imposed restrictions on free movement. This limits their work and leisure options.**

- 16.5% of women experience sexual harassment outside the factory.
- Women employ multiple coping strategies to protect themselves, but these strategies will not eliminate sexual harassment, as they address only the immediate need for safety.

## WOMEN'S LIVING CONDITIONS



**When women have the option, they prioritise safety in living conditions.**

- Workers who have experienced harassment overwhelmingly turn to those factories deemed 'safer', when changing factories.
- 67% of women do not participate in leisure or social activities due to risks to their safety.

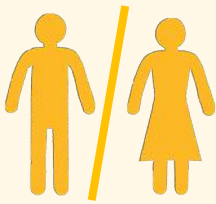
## WOMEN'S PRIORITIES



### Women workers send home an average of 40% of their salary.

- Deprivation and self-sacrifice are the norm for many migrant workers, who prioritise their families' wellbeing over basic food and healthcare.
- Despite high rates of sexual harassment, absenteeism rates are low because taking time off would impact the earnings the worker can send to her family.

## WOMEN'S STATUS AT WORK



### Although women occupy 85% of the garment sector's total workforce, women are over-represented in lower status and lower skill roles.

- Women hold far fewer management and supervisory roles. Under 4% of the female garment worker population holds a line leader or office staff role.
- Male workers are more likely than female workers to achieve promotion within the industry because of an intentional preference for female workers for lower skilled jobs.

## WOMEN'S PAY



### Women workers earn less on average than their male colleagues.

- The average basic salary (in 2015) of female workers in the industry was USD 145 per month, compared to USD 161 for male workers.
- After overtime bonuses and other benefits were factored in, women's average wages were USD 209 per month, while male workers earned an average of USD 228 per month.

This information is taken from CARE's study, *"I know I cannot quit."* *The Prevalence and Productivity Cost of Sexual Harassment to the Cambodian Garment Industry.* The study was conducted by CARE and a research team in cooperation with the Garment Manufacturers Association of Cambodia, and funded through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program, from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australian public. The research was conducted from December 2015 to March 2017, with data collection from February 2016 to June 2016.

The technical report is available at [www.care-cambodia.org](http://www.care-cambodia.org) and [www.care.org.au](http://www.care.org.au).

#### The research:

- interviewed 1287 workers across 52 factories, including 1085 women, 198 men\*
- included 9 focus groups and 16 in-depth interviews with women workers
- conducted four in-depth interviews with male workers
- carried out five in-depth interviews with factory line leaders, commune officials, and police officers
- collected qualitative data across seven sites in Phnom Penh

\*All gender analysis is based on the total of 1283 where gender was recorded for survey participants.



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