Fading Hopes:

Struggles for Survival among Cambodians Repatriated from Thai Refugee Camps

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York Lanes Press

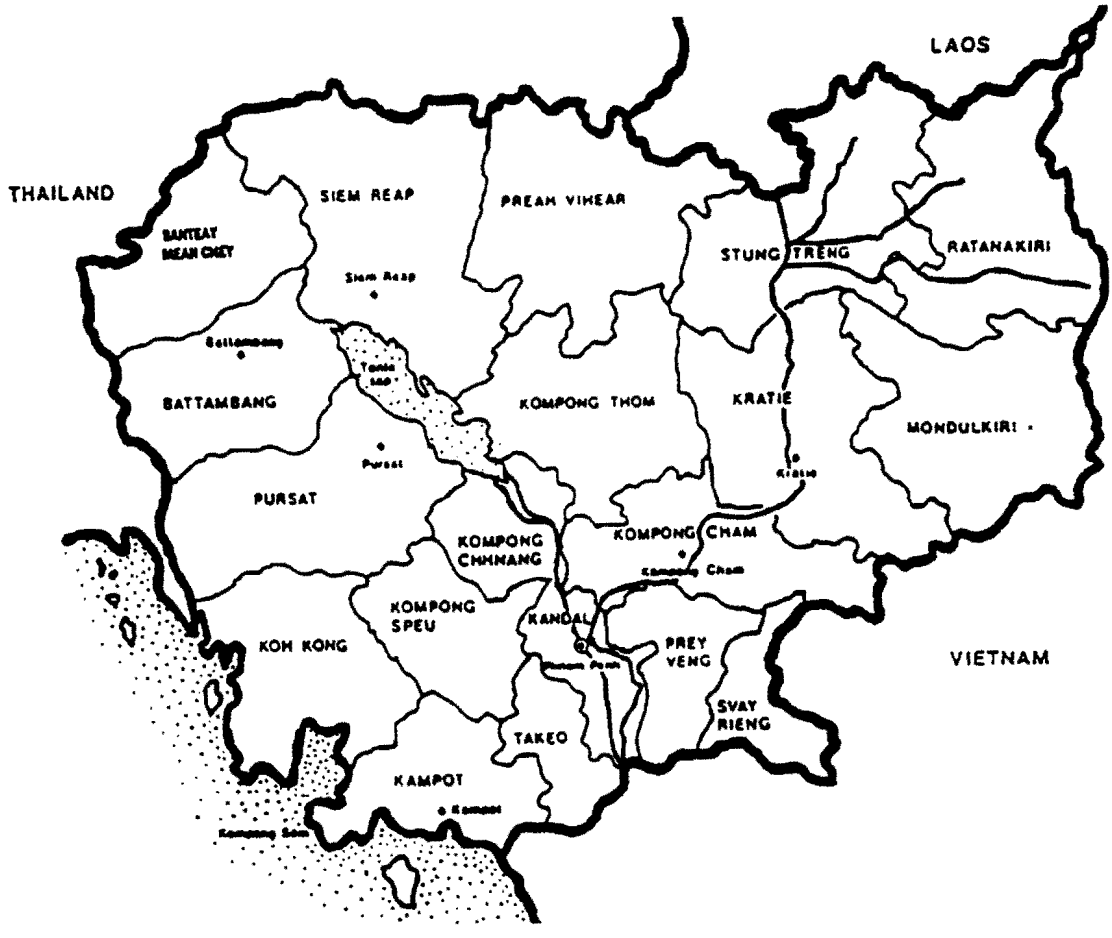
Published by
York Lanes Press, Inc.
Suite 351, York Lanes
York University
North York ON M3J 1P3

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

McLellan, Janet, 1952–
Fading Hopes: struggles for survival among Cambodians repatriated from Thai refugee camps

Includes bibliographical references and index
ISBN 1–55014–303–4

Cambodia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Dedication

This report is dedicated to the people of Cambodia.
May their suffering be eased and may their future have hope.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Howard Adelman and Michael Lanphier of the Centre For Refugee Studies, York University for their encouragement in initiating a study of Cambodian repatriation and for the provision of financial support. I am grateful to the many people in Cambodia who granted inteniews and allowed their words to be included in this report. They are too numerous to name but include government officials, NGO personnel and local administrators, both Cambodians and non-Cambodians. Their compassion towards Cambodian people, and their willingness to give of themselves, often to the point of exhaustion, makes their work heroic. Many of the NGO people have been involved with Cambodian refugees since 1979 and their continuing commitment is both admirable and inspiring, as is the involvement of Cambodians who unceasingly struggle against enormous suffering and despair. Special thanks go to Linda Hartke, Country Director for Church World Service, who arranged the visit to Sre Ampil Village, and to Brian Heidel, Country Director for American Refugee Committee who provided convoy transportation to Pursat and arranged accommodation. Lam Vong, Community Development Worker at Canadian Cambodian Development Program, was extremely helpful in organizing the Pursat survey team, notifying people of the project and allowing his house to be used as a daily meeting place. Appreciation goes to each member of the survey team —Lov Bunna, Chin Rina, Bouy Phal, Chuk Channy, Keo Chhorm, Khrm Dany, So Soh, Ros Sivay, Chea Buntaorn, Boun Leeng—for their dedication and diligence in arduous conditions. I am especially grateful to Dala Chey, for her translation and general involvement in arranging meetings with the commune and village chiefs.

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Acronyms

ARC—American Refugee Committee

CARE—Care International

CARERE—Cambodian Resettlement and Reintegration

CCDP—Cambodian Canada Development Program

CONCERN—Concern International/EC

CPP—Cambodian Peoples Party

CRC—Cambodian Red Cross

IRC—International Red Cross

EVI—Extremely Vulnerable Individuals

IDP—Internally Displaced Person

NGO—Non-Governmental Organization

QIP—United Nations Development Program, Quick Impact Projects

UNDP—United Nations Development Program

UNHCR—United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNRISD—United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

UNTAC—United Nations Transnational Authority in Cambodia

VGA—Vulnerable Individual

Introduction

Since the late 1980s, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has viewed voluntary repatriation as the most desirable solution to a refugee situation. In conjunction with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), governments, various development organizations, and aid donors, UNHCR has promoted international action to create conditions favourable for mass return movements and long-term development efforts. The ideal was that repatriated refugees (returnees) would receive immediate relief and assistance upon arrival in their country of origin to aid short-term resettlement. Returnees would then participate in longer-term social and economic development programs to ensure that viable livelihoods could be attained to facilitate their successful reintegration (Allen and Morsink 1994). Through this multifaceted cooperation it was assumed that the dangers of returnees becoming "internally displaced persons" or aggravating problems such as excessive urbanization, job competition, or land scarcity could be reduced. In reality, however, as Stein (1994, 50) notes, "there is a tremendous gap between principle (the desirable) and practice (the actual) with regard to aid to returnees." Refugees are frequently repatriated to politically volatile locations where security violations continue to destabilize the country and aid assistance is more in the form of rehabilitation than development. In Cambodia, for example, the economic, social, and political conditions under which the Cambodian repatriation took place in 1993 meant that the level and type of aid given to returnees was of short-term priority. Long-term assistance focused on rebuilding the physical infrastructure, supporting local populations, and aiding internally displaced peoples (IDPs).

As early as 1991, when the United Nations initiated plans for the voluntary repatriation of over 370,000 Cambodian refugees, Cambodia was recognized as one of the poorest countries in the world, the result of more than two decades of war and international isolation. General living conditions throughout the country were seriously deteriorated and showed little improvement over the next two years, as indicated in a 1993 report:

> Life expectancy is only 49.7 years. Just 12 per cent of rural Cambodians and 20 per cent of urban dwellers have access to safe drinking water. A relatively large proportion of the population consists of extremely vulnerable groups comprising widows with families, single elderly people, orphans and the disabled. Four of every 1000 persons are disabled. Women in particular must shoulder heavy burdens and responsibilities. They account for nearly two thirds of the population and head one third of all households. (UNRISD 1993, 1)

Charney (1992) identifies three distinct phases in Cambodia's recent history. The first is referred to as the "Emergency Period" from 1979 to 1982. This was a period of urgent rehabilitation via international intervention into all sectors of Cambodian economy and society. After four years of Communist Khmer Rouge destruction (from 1975 to 1979), the recovery of health and agriculture were priorities, specifically food production. The second period, which Charney (1992) identifies as "Isolation," was from 1982 to 1987. During this time the international community imposed an embargo an Cambodia, supposedly to force an end to the Vietnamese occupation of the country. Security violations magnified. Only scant humanitarian assistance such as basic food was available. Mysliwiec (1988) details this international isolation in her book *Punishing the Poor*. The third phase of "Transition and Liberalization" began immediately following the December 1987 meeting between various Cambodian political leaders. Lasting until 1991, this period enabled international organizations and NGOs to place expatriate staff in all provinces and lay the foundations for reconstruction and community development projects. The period from 1992 to the present has involved the holding of Cambodia's first democratic elections, the repatriation of all Cambodian refugees, and the intensification of civil war between the Khmer Rouge and Cambodian government forces.

In April 1992, the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) was established in Phnom Penh, Cambodia's capital, to organize the implementation of multiparty elections and to facilitate the repatriation of Cambodians from refugee camps throughout Southeast Asia. UNTAC's presence in Cambodia lasted 18 months and involved more than 22,000 soldiers and civilians. The overall cost exceeded $2.8 billion, making it the most expensive peacekeeping mission in United Nations' history. In addition to holding democratic elections in May 1993, UNTAC was to resolve security concerns and disarm military factions, implement de-mining activities, and expedite long-term development plans. Except for the last-minute Khmer Rouge withdrawal from the multiparty elections, the electoral organization and the final results were declared a success in democratic procedure.

When the repatriation process began in early 1993, four out of five preconditions for repatriation had not been met. Peace and security in Cambodia were not guaranteed and, despite the presence of 20,000 United Nations security forces, UNTAC failed to resolve conflicts between the Khmer Rouge and the Cambodian government. During the protracted negotiations for repatriation, continued fighting between the Khmer Rouge and Cambodian forces resulted in over 180,000 internally displaced persons (Ruiz and Robinson 1993). In addition, Khmer Rouge forces reclaimed extensive territory throughout northwestern Cambodia and continued terror tactics against civilians. De-mining efforts had been minimal and over forty percent of farmland remained littered with mines, with estimates ranging as high as eight million being scattered throughout the country's fields, roads, and hillsides (Donovan 1993). Land mines continued to claim the lives of local people and their livestock, and restrict access to agricultural lands. As a result, agricultural land that could be potentially available for returnees was scarce and equitable allocation procedures could not be developed or implemented. Further, adequate funding for long-term rehabilitation and develop-

ment assistance, either for returnees or the country itself, was not forthcoming. As Stein (1994, 52) notes, when refugees are returned to their homelands under circumstances of conflict and continued risk, the implementation of development assistance may be nearly, if not totally, impossible.

During 1992 and 1993, the efficiently planned and orderly process of Cambodian repatriation was set in motion. Cambodians were registered, bused or flown across the border, processed in reception centres, and given a 400-day food ration card along with packages of material aid. They were transported to transit centres from where they were to reunite with their families. Various degrees of integration assistance were provided by a number of international agencies and NGOs. By June 1, 1993, an estimated 362,209 Cambodians had repatriated from Thai camps via UNHCR convoys. In addition, approximately 2,000 Cambodians were repatriated from camps in Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia, and an estimated 22,000 returned spontaneously, although only 5,306 registered with UNHCR for assistance (Robinson 1994).

Due to the scarcity of available agricultural land, ninety percent of the returnees were "encouraged" by UNHCR officials to choose "Option C," an aid package which offered a house/agricultural kit, 400 days of food assistance (200 days for those settling in Phnom Penh), and $50 per adult and $25 per child under twelve. The destinations for the majority of returnees were Banteay Meanchey and Battembang provinces, areas littered with mines and surrounded by Khmer Rouge forces and factional fighting. In general, Cambodians were returned to areas ill-prepared or incapable of receiving and resettling them, and to local governments who had little interest in or commitment to facilitating their reintegration (Rogge 1994). Indeed, the UNHCR promotion of Cambodian repatriation was done in the face of vigorous criticism from development agencies both within Cambodia and in the refugee camps. Concerns were raised about the return and reintegration of "vulnerable" refugees into severely devastated areas (Ledgerwood 1992, Mollica *et al.* 1992, Thorn 1991).

Geiger (1993) notes several criticisms concerning the UNHCR information campaign, especially the push for "Option C," which concentrated on the repatriation plan and excluded the updated conditions in Cambodia with regard to social, economic, and security concerns. As a result, returnees were not prepared for the social and economic circumstances they were expected to reintegrate into, nor were they made aware of the extensive mine presence, the numerous areas of security risks, the lack of water in villages, and the high incidence of malaria and other health risks. The 1990 UNHCR pre-repatriation assessments of areas into which the returnees had indicated they would return to, provided information that led most returnees to believe that good agricultural land would be available to them upon return. By 1992, when that information proved to be grossly misleading and false, returnees were influenced to accept the landless aid package. At this time, many retained the mistaken impression that land would still be available to them. Other than the emotional desire to "return home," questions remain regarding the information on which refugees based their decisions to return. Certainly the upcoming elections and the removal of the Vietnamese-backed government were influential, but when contrasted with the scarcity of available land or employment opportunities, debilitated infrastructure, ongoing fighting, extensive

mines, and the lack of health and social services, what benefits were there in repatriating? As Rogge (1994, 32) notes, "refugees agreeing to repatriate 'voluntarily' on the basis of misinformation fed them are anything but voluntary returnees."

The urgency and scale of the return of Cambodian refugees conformed more to the tight electoral schedule set for May 1993 than to any set of objective criteria concerning the conditions returnees would face in Cambodia (UNRISD 1993, 4). As early as 1990, the UNHCR Inter-Agency Mission on Repatriation of Cambodian Refugees determined that reintegration, as part of overall development and reconstruction plans, was not a UNHCR concern. Once the logistics of return and provision of immediate assistance were complete, reintegration activities would be undertaken by other UN agencies, such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), NGOs, and bilateral aid programs (Robinson 1994, 13). As a result of this rationale, the initial reintegration-phase expenditures associated with repatriation led to an excessive emphasis on short-term humanitarian relief aid though UNDP Quick Impact Projects (QIPs), provided within the first six months of return, while returnees were still benefiting from the 400 days of food aid. Essential forms of long-term UNDP development assistance were to be implemented through the creation of Cambodia Resettlement and Reintegration (CARERE). CARERE's mandate was to expand into longer-term regional and rural projects to promote sustainable community development and self-sufficiency, which ideally would benefit returnees as well as locals (*ibid.* 1994, 49).

In providing assistance to refugees who have returned to areas seriously affected by war, NGOs and UNDP (including CARERE) generally adopt a "zonal approach" in which little distinction is made between returnees and others, since all are regarded as being in need of help (Rogge 1994). In a country such as Cambodia, where the basic infrastructure has been destroyed and needs to be rehabilitated, it is difficult for NGOs and the UNDP to prioritize reintegration needs of returnees against the overwhelming rehabilitation needs of the local population, or against the provision of emergency relief assistance to the hundreds of thousands of internally-displaced people uprooted before, during, and after repatriation. Numerous villages, especially in the northwestern provinces, remain abandoned due to mines, and huge tracts of agricultural land have reverted to bush. Schools, clinics, water supplies, and roads have been destroyed. Community health and veterinary services are still rare, and malaria, malnutrition, and other nutritional deficiencies are widespread. Food production has not yet returned to pre-1975 levels and is hampered by increasing drought, floods, and lack of technology. Cambodian villages need to be rebuilt, land recleared, roads upgraded, wells and ponds dug, all of which will take years of effort, dedication, and committed financing on the part of UNDP, CARERE and NGOs.

Against these overwhelming obstacles, Rogge (1994, 39) notes that all too often problems of social reintegration among returnees are discounted or repudiated. Within the context of major reconstruction, reintegration becomes part of long-term developmental programs. For many aid agencies providing rehabilitation and development activities, the presence of repatriated refugees is just one more factor that needs to be evaluated to make decisions on organization and allocation of funds (Stein 1994, 67). Rogge (1994, 31) questions how zonal assistance programs can be implemented that benefit both returnees and local people, yet retain the capacity to specifically target the

most vulnerable returnees. Zonal assistance may be the most equitable approach from the position of the donor agency, but for those returnees most in need (female-headed households, handicapped, landless, and unemployed), the benefits may be minimal due to the barriers preventing their access to services and assistance geared towards community development. It is an open question whether the longer-term reintegration of returnees will be significantly assisted by the current and future reconstruction programs in Cambodia.

Due to the lack of material on the reintegration of Cambodian returnees, it is also uncertain if returnees have even participated in generalized assistance programs, what their status or position is in the highly stratified community networks, or what type, extent, and complexity of reintegration problems they may be experiencing. As Allen and Morsink (1994) note, very little information is available on the social and economic dimensions of repatriation in general, or on the reintegration experiences of the returnees themselves. Most literature on voluntary repatriation focuses on three main themes—international law, political motivations and parameters, and the logistics of the return. The various publications and reports on the large-scale repatriation of Cambodians have essentially concentrated on these themes, especially the logistics of how the operation was funded, organized, and carried out. Cambodian repatriation is usually extolled as a UNHCR "success story" focusing on the organizational process and highlighting the social and emotional appeal of long-term refugees "coming home."

An exception to this hyperbole is Robinson's (1994) report, in which he provides an excellent presentation of the strengths and failures of the process of repatriation and the immediate resettlement patterns of returnees. He notes that by the spring of 1994, the majority of returnees had yet to find or develop a source of sustainable income and were deeply worried about how they would survive once the 400-day food assistance ended in May 1994. At the conclusion of his report, Robinson suggests that "What comes next?" would be the key issue for UNHCR monitoring in the months ahead. Geiger (1993) also emphasizes the socioeconomic and psychological implications for returnees once the 400-day food support program ends but, like Robinson (1994), provides few details on the coping mechanisms or survival strategies of families once their food aid is gone. According to a World Food Program (WFP) survey conducted from May to November 1993, nearly 74 percent of all returnee families interviewed fell under the classification of "needy" or "at risk" due to lack of resources; 39 percent were identified as vulnerable, being headed by women, handicapped, or elderly; and 29 percent were still living in temporary shelters (Robinson 1994, 60). Only 12 percent had access to agricultural land and fewer still held any title to land, including housing plots (*ibid.*).

During the one month of field work undertaken in Cambodia in August 1994 (upon which this report is based), I continually raised questions on reintegration, specifically on the situation of returnees who must now manage without food aid assistance. Little information was available, however, and the common response was a lack of knowledge on returnee coping strategies. The degree and extent to which returnees have reintegrated was no longer even addressed as a significant concern. Further, less than two months after the end of the 400-day food assistance program, WFP, UNDP, and all other NGOs no longer identified returnees as a vulnerable category or as distinct from

local people. The overwhelming assumption was that, after one year, returnees have resettled with family members (although this has not been demonstrated in any way) and have integrated to the extent that special consideration or attention is not required. At present, the UNDP and NGO emphasis is on bolstering community services and infrastructure, particularly in the area of agriculture and farm aid, and not identifying returnees or other "vulnerable" categories (orphans, abandoned children, elderly, handicapped, widows) for particular support or as principal beneficiaries of development assistance. It is precisely these groups, however, who have the least access to land, a fact which diminishes their eligibility for development assistance and their ability to repay credit schemes or other income-generating programs. Few UNDP or NGO personnel acknowledge that returnees may have long-term social and economic readjustment problems with little sustainable employment and uncertain status positions, or that the aid package merely postponed the issue of reintegration rather than abetting it.

Issues Addressed in the Report

This report addresses two basic issues. The first concerns reintegration, specifically what has happened to returnees who no longer receive food aid and, for the most part, do not have employment, adequate housing, and access to agricultural land. The second issue involves the type and extent of assistance that has been available to help reintegrate returnees, the perceptions from NGOs, locals, and returnees concerning this assistance, and the extent to which returnees have participated in zonal-based community development. The scope of this report is narrow. Time constraints of less than five weeks for data collection, and field-access barriers, precluded a broad country-wide analysis. Data collection was restricted to two provinces: Kandal (which includes the capital city, Phnom Penh) and Pursat. Although the majority of returnees initially returned to four provinces (Banteay Meanchey, Battambang, Siem Reap, and Pursat), only Pursat was considered safe to conduct survey research. Within Pursat, most rural areas were inaccessible, either due to impassable roads during the rainy season, or because security was not guaranteed, especially for independent research.

Methodology

Returnees are living in a diversity of situations throughout Cambodia and the question of reintegration is complex, obscured as much by the scarcity of agricultural land as by the extensive and unmet needs of local people everywhere. I explored the numerous issues related to repatriation and reintegration in two sets of interviews with personnel from various international organizations and NGOs. The following is a list of the international organizations and NGOs with whom I was able to procure interviews:

American Refugee Committee (ARC)
Cambodia Canada Development Program (CCDP)
Cambodian Red Cross (CRC)
Care International (CARE)
Catholic Relief Services (CRS)

Church World Service (CWS)
CONCERN
Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC)
Halo Trust International (HT)
Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)
Medecins Sans Frontieres Holland/Belgium (MSF H/B)
Pursat Women's Association
United Nations Development Program (UNDP including CARERE)
World Food Program (WFP)

The initial set of interviews took place in Phnom Penh during the first two-and-a-half weeks of August 1994. In some organizations, several personnel were interviewed, ranging from executive directors to field workers to returnees. During this time, one day was spent in Sre Ampil village, a new returnee settlement in Kien Svay District, Kandal Province (approximately one hour south of Phnom Penh). There I spoke with several returnees through a CWS translator. The next phase of the research (approximately two weeks) occurred in Pursat province. In Pursat town, interviews were held with representatives of the same international organizations and NGOs previously interviewed in Phnom Penh, as well as with government officials at the district levels. Visits were made to established villages in Pursat Ville and Kravanh Districts. One day was spent in a new settlement for returnees at Keo Moni village in Banteay Deay commune, Kandieng district, in the company of a Khmer field worker from WFP, Pursat. During visits to villages, interviews were held first with commune-level leaders, then village leaders, and then with returnees, all of which had to be conducted through translators.

In addition, a survey questionnaire of almost 100 returnee households in several villages throughout Pursat Ville District in Pursat Province was conducted. Ten Cambodian survey assistants were hired (all of whom had previous survey experience with NGOs in Pursat), as well as one translator and a driver. Three communes were involved in the survey, Phteas Prey, Roleap, and Prey Nhi, which include some 18 villages. The number is approximate because villages exist side by side with little visible boundary, causing one or two returnee households from an adjacent village (same commune) to be included in the survey of a particular village. Communes and districts also exist side by side so that some surveys include returnees from other communes in Pursat Ville district and even other districts, such as Keo Moni village in Banteay Deay commune in Kandieng district.

Structure of Report

This report consists of two parts. Part One includes five chapters, the first providing discussion of the general repatriation process. Chapter Two details the extent and type of aid assistance provided for returnees, and a review of the aid organizations active in Pursat province who have worked with returnees. Chapter Three provides an overview of Pursat Province highlighting demographic characteristics, environmental

conditions, and the general social and economic context into which the refugees returned. Chapter Four details the issues of land, including its importance and absence in the lives of most returnees. Two new returnee settlements are contrasted: Sre Ampil village in Kandal Province and Keo Moni village in Pursat Province. Chapter Five is an analysis of returnee reintegration, focusing on resettlement choices, employment opportunities, local responses to returnee resettlement, and a typology of returnees, differentiating those with access to land or working for local NGOs with those who remain in extreme poverty.

Part Two presents the survey data that was collected during the month of August 1994 in several villages in Pursat Ville District, Pursat Province. Construction of the data base, analysis and the presentation of results was done by Dr. R. Dion.

The report concludes with a general assessment and analysis of Cambodian reintegration.

Difficulties Involved in Studying Returnees

Two inter-related difficulties were involved in studying Cambodian returnees. The foremost concern during the entire fieldwork was that of personal safety. Security conditions have rapidly deteriorated since the UNTAC withdrawal in December 1993, making independent research generally dangerous throughout Cambodia. Conducting fieldwork without the support and assistance of an international organization or NGO was impossible in several areas, especially in northwestern Cambodia. In August 1994, the entire country was beset by endemic security violations. Robberies, violence, assaults, kidnapping, extortion, and political intimidation by bandits, government troops, and the Khmer Rouge occurred daily in cities and towns, on highways, and near Khmer Rouge encroachments. Even though certain areas (such as Krakor District in Pursat Province) were considered "safe" by NGO workers in Phnom Penh, local government officials would not grant me authorization to do research, citing the ongoing security problems. Travelling along any highway was not recommended without the presence of at least two NGO- or UNHCR-related convoys, so transportation to and from Pursat Province had to be requested. The hiring of local people to assist in survey research was also problematic in that no one was willing to venture more than a few kilometres from the town of Pursat and people insisted on being returned well before three P.M. every day.

The second difficulty in conducting fieldwork was that after the 400-day food assistance ended in May 1994, there was no longer any monitoring of returnees by UNHCR officials, other UN agencies (UNDP/CARERE), international organizations, NGOs, or Cambodian administrators and leaders at the local, commune, district, and provincial levels. By August 1994, the previously up-to-date lists of the number of returnees in each area (at the provincial, district, commune, and village levels) were inaccurate. Returnee families had quietly disappeared from villages and no information was available on their whereabouts. Large numbers of returnees are said to be in flux, moving across the country in search of work, accessible land, and family. It was also difficult to identify some returnees in the newly-created settlements, especially when they no longer referred to themselves as former refugees. In particularly devas-

tated areas, such as the northwestern provinces, there are no clear distinctions between returnees, internally-displaced people, or those categorized as "vulnerable." Since early 1994, many UNDP/CARERE and NGO workers no longer ask if there are returnees in the villages. Therefore, little up-to-date information is available on the returnee presence, and on whether returnees have adapted or have re-established kin and community networks.

Part One

1

Cambodian Repatriation

Seeking Asylum

Cambodians sought asylum in two distinct phases. The first group of more than 200,000 who fled the Communist Khmer Rouge takeover in 1975 went to Thailand (34,000), Laos (20,000), and Vietnam (150,000). One-hundred-and-seventy thousand ethnic Vietnamese also left Cambodia for Vietnam during this initial flow (Rogge 1992, 179). In Thailand, Cambodian refugees were placed in three UNHCR-assisted camps, Aranyaprathet, Lumpuk, and Kamput, from which more than one-half resettled overseas by 1978 (*ibid.*). In Vietnam, Cambodian refugees were accommodated in UNHCR-funded camps but were free to engage in small trade, to associate with Kampuchea Krom relatives, or live with family members outside the camps. Many of the Cambodians who fled to Vietnam were ethnic Chinese and Vietnamese from urban backgrounds (Robinson 1994, 64).

The second Cambodian refugee flow began in early 1979, immediately following the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia. In April 1979, as restrictions were lifted on internal movement (due to the breakup of country-wide Khmer Rouge labour camps), and Vietnamese attacks on retreating Khmer Rouge forces intensified, thousands of Cambodians began to mass on the Thai border seeking asylum. During this time, Thai military forces subjected numerous Cambodian refugees to a "forced repatriation" in which over 45,000 recently arrived Cambodians in Thailand were pushed back across the border into heavily mined territory (Rogge 1994). It was not until October 1979 that Thailand agreed to an "open-door" policy, enabling Cambodian asylum seekers to enter the country unimpeded by government soldiers and without the threat of forced return. The UNHCR created two "holding centres," called Sa Kaeo and Khao I Dang, which quickly filled with 30,000 and 110,000 persons respectively, and Thailand officially closed its borders to new arrivals (Robinson 1994, 5). Unofficially, however, thousands of unregistered Cambodians continued to arrive in Khao I Dang and, although safe from military conflict, their unauthorized status left them vulnerable to threats of extortion, physical abuse, or expulsion by Thai security forces (*ibid.* 10).

By early 1980, almost one million Cambodians were gathered in various encampments along the contested Thai/Cambodian border. Border relief (food, water, shelter, and the provision of basic supplies) was first organized by the United Nations Children's Fund, then transferred to the World Food Program in 1981 and, by July 1982, fell under the newly-established UN Border Relief Operation (UNBRO) (*ibid.*) In March 1980, Thailand was still advocating a mass repatriation of Cambodian from the two UNHCR holding centres (*ibid.*). With UNHCR approval, 7,000 people from Sa Kaeo chose to return to Khmer Rouge areas, and 1,700 left Khao I Dang for non-Communist resistance sites along the border during the week of June 16–23 (*ibid.*). Immediate repercussions followed, however, with Vietnamese soldiers intruding into Thai territory and Thai military retaliating with shelling along the border, causing numerous civilian deaths and over 50,000 new refugees fleeing into Thailand. Still, UNHCR continued negotiating repatriation agreements between Bangkok and Phnom Penh (*ibid.*).

Initial Repatriation Process

To further the repatriation process, UNHCR opened an office in Phnom Penh in September 1980 to distribute "resettlement kits" and provide some food aid (50 kilograms of rice per family) to an estimated 310,000 returnees, of which 115,000 were from Vietnam (Robinson 1994, 6). This cross-border movement, occurring during the second half of 1980 and throughout 1981, was identified by Rogge (1992) as the second Cambodian repatriation. Rogge (1992) considered this repatriation as "spontaneous," because most refugees returned to Cambodia with virtually no assistance. Rogge (1994, 23–24) notes that had the over 95 international relief agencies and NGOs servicing refugees at the border phased themselves out during this time, many of the remaining refugees would also have returned to Cambodia.

For Cambodians living along the borderlands between Thailand and Cambodia, the period from 1980 to 1984 was marked by constant relocations of unsettled people continually on the move, and several more attempts at "spontaneous" repatriation. Robinson (1994, 5) notes that, from 1979 to 1984, most Cambodian displaced persons living in this "volatile no man's land" spent some part of every year evading military action. Fighting was between the PRK Vietnamese-backed government in Cambodia and the U.S.- and Thai-backed Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) comprised of the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF), the National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC), and the Khmer Rouge. Although statistics on repatriation to Cambodia during the years 1979 to 1985 suggest movements of large numbers (up to 520,000), Robinson (1994, 6) questions their validity as the figures do not distinguish between forced and voluntary repatriation or between spontaneous and organized return. The UNHCR maintained lists of Cambodians who received food aid (90,000 in 1981; 60,500 in 1982; 49,000 in 1983, and 10,000 in 1984), but officials did not distinguish between returnees and the internally displaced, or implement monitoring and accurate documentation (*ibid.*).

In 1985, UNBRO, in conjunction with the International Red Cross and the Thai government, attempted to separate Cambodian civilian populations from the military and consolidate the numerous border sites into eight camps within Thailand. Two distinct types of refugee camps were established: UNHCR holding camps, where residents were eligible for resettlement (for example, Khao I Dang), and border camps affiliated with political factions and operated under the military authority of these factions. Site K, O'Trao, and Site 8 were controlled by the Khmer Rouge. Sok Sann and Site 2, with over 200,000 refugees, were controlled by KPNLF, and Site B by FUNCINPEC. During the time the population of almost 300,000 Cambodians remained relatively stable within the border camps as movement between Thailand and Cambodia was deemed traitorous by either side (Robinson 1994). Spontaneous return also became increasingly unsafe, due to constant fighting and millions of land mines, laid in part by all military groups. Forced relocations continued to occur, however, primarily out of the UN-assisted Khmer Rouge camps in Thailand to military Khmer Rouge resistance camps. The estimates of between 60,000 to 100,000 civilians living in these resistance camps along the "hidden border" gave rise to the Vietnamese-backed PRK government perspective that people from the camps were traitors (*ibid.*). From 1985 to 1988, the growth of resistance groups and the intensification of conflict impeded any attempt for organized repatriation.

Repatriation plans recommenced on January 26, 1989, with the signing of the Aide Memoire on voluntary repatriation between Phnom Penh and UNHCR. This breakthrough was soon followed by the Paris Peace Conference, held from July 31 to August 20, in which repatriation plans and provisions for returnees began again to be formulated. On November 21, Thailand, Cambodia, and the UNHCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding detailing the conditions under which repatriation would take place. Subsequently, cross-border movements grew significantly, despite the menace of land mines, continued fighting, and KPNLF prohibitions.

Final Repatriation

The third repatriation process of Cambodian refugees has been well documented. Robinson (1994), for example, has admirably summarized the array of legal and political parameters surrounding this repatriation, as well as the elaborate system that channelled Cambodian returnees through the various centres (processing, transit, reception, and dispersal). In his detailed account of the repatriation process, Robinson (1994, 11–22) has also written an excellent synopsis of the extensive inter-agency consultations, the numerous surveys conducted, the overall costs, and the continual revisions to resettlement plans. Of particular importance in this report are the numerous revisions to the extent and type of resettlement support, the manner in which refugees were "encouraged" to accept these changes. There is little, however, on the subsequent impacts of returnee reintegration.

Early concepts of repatriation were premised on several assumptions, the primary ones being that reintegration would occur within one year after return, that returnees would return to families or locales they were familiar with, and that, in addition to the allocation of housing plots, returnee farmers would receive agricultural land. Chal-

lenges to these assumptions, however, were immediately forthcoming. The Ford Foundation Border Survey, conducted by James Lynch in November 1989, identified difficulties of returning to family or villages of origin. Forty-seven percent of those surveyed were from Battambang province, 59 percent chose it as their preferred destination, and the vast majority of respondents in each camp (Site 8, Site B, and Site 2) had no contact with relatives in Cambodia since before their arrival on the border, meaning that they had no way of knowing if family members would be there when they arrived (*ibid.* 12).

Assumption Concerning Available Land

The assumptions concerning land remained a central part of the early planning procedure. The UNHCR 1989 "Absorption Capacity Survey," although highlighting numerous problems returnees would face, such as lack of drinking water, limited medical services, and the ability of returnees to regain farming skills, remained generally optimistic that farmland was available, even though the land was second choice (not the best or the most accessible land), and left over from the recent (1979) land reforms (*ibid.*, 13). The 1990 UN Inter-Agency Mission on Repatriation in Cambodia, which detailed immediate assistance, was primarily concerned with integration into existing villages and the resumption of farming as a subsistence base, neatly coinciding with Lynch's (1989) study, which indicated that 88 percent of those surveyed were farmers and most expected to farm upon their return. Based on this information, the UNHCR proposed an assistance package which would provide food rations for one year, household kits, farming tools, a homestead plot, and one to two hectares per family. In late 1991, UNHCR officials were showing videos and distributing flyers highlighting the promise of two hectares of land (Robinson 1994, 22). Returnee movement into towns and cities was considered undesirable because of the already large numbers of vendors, beggars, and other marginal people in Phnom Penh and Battambang (*ibid.* 15).

The increasing numbers of internally displaced Cambodians from Banteay Meanchey and Battambang provinces (186,000 in 1991), combined with new information from later surveys, challenged the idea that return to villages of origin or access to land was feasible (*ibid.*, 16). The 1992 Halo Trust survey of the mine problem in potential areas of returnee settlement, for example, destroyed any lingering assumption that cultivated and fallow lands were available for returnees. As Robinson states:

> Out of 70,000 hectares surveyed, Halo Trust found that 30,200 hectares were "probably clear of mines," 28,200 hectares were "probably mined," and 11,200 hectares were "heavily mined." The cost of mine clearance, Halo Trust estimated, would be $6 million for each of the first two years and $3 million per year for three years following. (*ibid.* 19)

Non-Land Options

A March 1992 survey of the four northwestern provinces, conducted by the Cambodian Red Cross, identified suitable land for only 8 percent of the returnee population (*ibid.*

22). Realizing that a return to agricultural activities could no longer be supported, UNHCR began to emphasize other options and the necessity of temporary resettlement in urban or peri-urban areas where returnees could pursue non-agricultural activities (Robinson 1994, 21). Cash grants or "reintegration money," rather than land, would supposedly assist returnees in this choice and, for the remainder of 1992, UNHCR de-emphasized access to farming land and focused instead on returning to the place of origin (*ibid.*, 23). As no land was available, more than 85 percent of all returnees chose Option C, the resettlement package which included cash ($50 per adult and $25 per child under 12), a household/agricultural kit, and food for 400 days (but only 200 days in Phnom Penh). The less than 10 percent of returnees who opted for Option A (agricultural land of up to two hectares per family, housing plot, wood for house construction, household kit, and WFP for 400 days), received either only one-half hectare of land on loan, or were given no land at all (*ibid.* 25).

Although 95 percent of Cambodian refugees registered for repatriation in late 1991 and appeared eager to return home, there was in fact little choice other than to stay in Thailand and be treated as illegal immigrants subject to arrest and deportation (*ibid.* 64). Five hundred and seventy-three "refuseniks" from Khao I Dang, who were still hoping for resettlement opportunities overseas, were deported to Cambodia in 1993.

Return to Cambodia

Immediately upon crossing the border, returnees went to one of six UNHCR reception centres (most of which were in the northwestern provinces, and one in Phnom Penh), where they stayed up to one week before travelling to their final destination. At the Phnom Penh reception centre, Martin Fisher, Executive Director of WFP in Pursat (personal communication, August 1994) described the differences between returnees, reflecting where they had sought asylum:

> Returnees who stayed in Vietnam are very different from those who were in Thailand. They look[ed] different, wore different clothes, brought back different material goods (lumps of charcoal, broken bicycles), and had a different attitude. They were in the reception centre at the same time. Also, planeloads of Cambodians came in from Indonesia and Singapore and a handful from Malaysia. Most of them were young men who fled to avoid conscription from the Vietnamese. Again, they were very different, having an elite, upper-middle-class mentality and being very demanding. Thai returnees kept apart from all these other groups, especially the ones from Vietnam. There was great suspicion towards them for having gone to Vietnam. Most of the non-Thai returnees went to urban centres, especially Phnom Penh.

Over one-half of all final destinations, as of June 1, 1993, were concentrated in Battambang and Banteay Meanchey provinces, and almost 40 percent in Siem Reap, Kandal, and Pursat provinces, with the rest scattered throughout the southeastern and central parts of Cambodia (Robinson 1994, 31). It is possible that the popularity of the Battambang and Banteay Meanchey areas reflected anticipation of a speedy return to Thailand. Rogge (1994, 31) coins the term "periodic repatriation" to describe the movement of people who cross the border in time of conflict, but then return when there

is a lull in fighting that allows a crop to be cultivated, crossing over again when hostilities resume. Stein (1994, 66) refers to this practice as "ebb and flow repatriation," reflecting cycles of peace and turmoil. Both accurately describe the current behaviour of thousands of returnees who are periodically caught up in the incessant fighting between the Khmer Rouge and government forces, such as in March 1994, then briefly became refugees again as they flee into Thailand. According to Anne O'Mahoney, Field Director of CONCERN:

> After the election and the repatriation process, returnees had tremendous hope. But, as the Khmer Rouge insecurity continues, compounded by the increasing banditry, returnees feel the corruption throughout the country is as bad as it was in 1972. This worries returnees and many stay in the Western provinces with easy access to Thailand and the continued hope that they can resettle in Western countries. This is a bad indication that what the returnees have been dreaming about, the idea of returning home and reintegrating, has not worked out and people are not developing the commitment to stay. (Personal communication, August 1994)

In early 1994, it was evident that numerous returnees had chosen to settle in places that differed from their final destination, areas where most had never lived before or in which previous relations with local people had not been developed (Robinson 1994, 57). Martin Fisher, Executive Director of WFP in Pursat, noted that 88,000 returnees from Thailand, who came through the Phnom Penh transit centre, resettled in the southern areas, Takeo, Kandal, and the surrounding provinces (personal communication, August 1994). He comments:

> In retrospect, the repatriation was a huge task that somehow was accomplished successfully. I'm glad it's over. But, the entire planning process could have done with an extra year. The number of poor people and street people are increasing rapidly in Phnom Penh. Every family has extended relatives staying with them. In the last two years there has been massive, rapid change ... Even the town of Pursat has gone through extensive change.

After living for years in well-organized refugee camps with basic services and chlorinated water provided by NGOs, returnees have come back to areas in Cambodia where primary health care and clean water are lacking. Those refugees who lived in the best-serviced camps would not be prepared for conditions in Cambodia, and may well have reduced natural immunity to endemic disease. Diarrhoea, malnutrition, malaria, and tuberculosis remain common ailments, and health care treatment in Cambodia is chronically impaired by shortages of drugs, medical supplies, inadequate health care buildings, and questionable medical treatments (Anderson 1992). This impacts especially on the highly vulnerable individuals who have been most dependent on institutional support structures. These include individuals with physical or mental handicaps, the elderly, orphans, and women who are the sole support for their households. As Rogge (1994, 40) notes, absence of serious deficiencies in services in areas of repatriation can become a major catalyst for secondary migration of returnees to the city. To date, there is no clear idea of where some of the returnees have resettled, nor how many have migrated to Phnom Penh or other towns and cities throughout Cambodia.

2

Provision of Assistance for Returnees

Assistance for Returnees

Stein (1994, 57) notes that in order to facilitate returnee reintegration in the area to which they return, the international community, as well as most NGOs, adhere to the principles of development-oriented assistance. Despite the desirability of development-oriented repatriation assistance, however, the concept of refugee aid and development remains ill-defined and subject to changing definitions concerning aid purposes and responsibility (*ibid.*) Further, there is often great dissimilarity between short- and long-term refugee aid and development.

In general, short-term relief assistance is geared towards meeting the basic needs of returnees, such as food, transport, shelter, and water. Once back in Cambodia, returnees immediately received temporary in-transit assistance (provision of clothes, food, blankets, and health care, if necessary) and orientation to the 400-day food support program. Longer-term assistance was determined according to the particular aid option chosen. The majority of returnees chose Option C—food for 400 days (rice, fish, oil, and salt; 200 days if returning to an urban area), a household kit, and reintegration money ($50/adult and $25/child). Lesser numbers took Option B—food for 400 days, a small housing plot, a shelter package valued at 110,000 riels, and a household/agricultural kit that included a water container, or Option D—food for 400 days, and a household kit. Very few choose Option A—food for 400 days, agricultural land, a shelter package, and a household and agricultural kit. Option E was an aid package geared for returnees who were offered a job in Cambodia, in which they received transportation expenses, food for 120 days, and similar reintegration money as Option C. Several individuals and families who returned spontaneously were able to access the 400-day food aid program.

Geiger (1993) suggests that the Option C assistance package of cash and participation in the 400-day food program essentially represented self-settlement, meaning that returnees had to either rely on ties to villages, if they settled in rural areas, or go to urban

areas. Although Option C did give returnees the option to resettle in areas of their choice, it did nothing to lessen the expectation or need for land of their own to develop some sense of self-sufficiency, either through a housing plot or larger areas for agricultural use.

An additional type of assistance funded by the UNHCR was the development of "Quick Impact Projects" (QIPs) to benefit communities in areas where returnees might resettle. The idea of QIPs is to rapidly implement projects that would provide benefit and assistance to local needs, thus setting up the conditions in which further development could be co-ordinated with NGOs (Allen and Morsink 1994). Areas in Cambodia that were heavily settled by returnees (as well as internally displaced and demobilized soldiers) received most of this short-term development assistance. Through UNDP organization, QIPs were geared primarily towards infrastructural improvements (roads, bridges, buildings), but also included the building of wells and ponds, some health clinics, and a few schools.

Longer-term development needs of both returnees and the areas they returned to were addressed by the UNDP Cambodia Reconstruction and Rehabilitation (CARERE) program, international organizations, and several NGOs. Longer-term reintegration assistance is oriented towards zonal development approaches, in which local populations are included in assistance programs and projects are devised to generate work and income opportunities and enhance self-sufficiency. Such development-oriented projects would include seed banks, credit schemes, well and pond digging, the provision and clearing of land in new settlement sites, vocational training, and rebuilding of infrastructure such as schools and clinics. Other priority assistance activities focus on the rehabilitation of community infrastructure such as road, bridge, and water channel repairs. These developmental investments aimed to benefit locals as well as returnees are based on access to land, primarily that associated with rice agriculture, which has the most marketing potential for income generation. The problem with this kind of development-oriented reintegration assistance in Cambodia, however, is that most returnees have no access to land, and those that do are restricted to vegetable and fruit growing. Further, unless assistance was provided directly to returnees, such as those living in a new settlement site, it is not clear whether returnees participated in generalized zonal assistance programs to villages or if they gained any long- or short-term benefits.

International Organizations, NGO, and UNDP/CARERE Activity in Pursat

Many of the following international organizations and NGOs have either actively assisted returnees during the repatriation process during their initial period of resettlement while receiving the 400-day food aid, or are involved in longer-term reintegration through zonal approach community development programs in two or more provinces. Several NGOs active in Pursat, such as American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), Handicapped International (HI), Medecins Sans Frontieres Holland/Belgium (MSF H/B), or Stiftung Kinderdorf Pestalozzi (SKIP), which do not provide direct assistance to returnees, are not included.

American Refugee Committee (ARC)

ARC has been working with Cambodian refugees since 1979 in Thai camps. In 1990, ARC began work in Cambodia with a mission statement to focus on the health care infrastructure. They provide a program of Maternal and Child Health Activities at the Kon Dien District Hospital in Pursat. In Pursat, ARC has expanded to include water sanitation through construction of wells, water storage systems and latrines, and technical sanitation training. The project of Literacy Education for Local Women and Day Care Centre is targeted for women to help them access health care programs. This approach rests on educational outreach to encourage women to access literacy programs. Without literacy, it is problematic to disseminate information and to keep women aware of health concerns.

Care International (CARE)

In Pursat, CARE was involved in the early stage of repatriation, delivering people from reception centres to particular locations and distributing WFP-provided food to areas every 40 days. CARE bought all the trucks and set up the system, which was subsequently turned over to CRC. CARE is now mainly active in the Bakan District, especially with the Bakan Integrated Rehabilitation and Child Health programs. The overall community development focus is on:

1. Water Sanitation (hand-dug wells, water use education, a latrine pilot program);
2. Community Based Rehabilitation for the Disabled (CBRD).

This is broad-based program aimed at community education, awareness, disabled children's access to school, working with the physically handicapped, skills training for amputees, small loans, working with the blind, and eye referrals. CARE works with individuals, families, and communities recommended through the Department of Social Action on the provincial and district levels;

3. Women in Development (WID).
   a. Animal-health sector (because women are in charge of the animals). CARE sponsors village livestock agents (most of whom are men) for preventative and curative treatment of the animals.
   b. Village bank and credit on a five-family basis, on the GRET model.
   c. Adult literacy, aimed at women.
   d. Maternal and Child Health.

Canada Cambodia Development Project (CCDP)

CCDP lists several ongoing projects: Agriculture/Agronomy, Vaccination Program, Funding of Local Initiatives, Institutional Health Strengthening, Hydrology, and Women In Development Study Tours.

CCDP has been in Pursat for over two years. Most of their activities have been focused on research and surveys on agriculture and irrigation. At present, they are beginning a new phase of projects geared towards community development, such as providing agricultural support to extend gardening for families in groups of ten, or the implementation of a credit system for cows in three villages of Prey Nhy Commune, Pursat Ville District (Sala Komrou, Krang Tasen, Sras Srang).

CONCERN (Concern International/EC)

CONCERN began activities in Pursat in May 1992 to do area rehabilitation and development. Up to twelve villages were targeted in three districts: Bakan, Kravanh and Krakor, all of which were selected on the basis of being impoverished. The focus was on agricultural extension and credit (such as schemes to purchase oxen/buffalo and fertilizer, organize training in agriculture and animal husbandry), repair and rebuilding of schools, bridges and road construction, district nursery establishment, and digging wells and ponds.

Bakan District: 10 villages in 7 communes; Kravanh District: 3 villages, 2 communes; Krakor District: 2 villages, 2 communes.

Initially the villages CONCERN works with were selected on the basis of a high number of returnees in the area. The criteria were based on the overall level of poverty. CONCERN aid now targets particular problems in the village, such as scarcity of animals. CONCERN does community development through focusing on community organization committees so that people can move into positions of authority. Particular attention is given to older established local women (the younger women tend to be hesitant and not so vocal), who are more willing to organize themselves and suggest ideas for development. Most of them are over 40 and are widows who have experience in doing things themselves. Many of the projects suggested by older women are either not supported by the village men, or their ideas get taken over by the men.

Cambodian Red Cross (CRC)

The Cambodian Red Cross is the major conduit for the distribution of food and other items donated by NGOs and international organizations. In 1993, over 75,000 tons of World Food Program rice was distributed to about 800,000 beneficiaries at 150 distribution points throughout Cambodia's 19 provinces. Most of this food went to returnees, internally displaced people, and vulnerable persons who normally have access to land but who are in temporary emergency or disaster situations (drought or flood). In addition, the Cambodian Red Cross distributes clothing, shelter kits, sanitation, water, emergency kits, educational materials, and medication, and engages in public health outreach programs and hospital construction/development. Because of its national network and capacity for reaching into rural areas, the Cambodian Red Cross has played a central role in assisting the repatriation and reintegration of returnees. The CRC managed reception centres, provided shelters, and coordinated resettlement food distribution with UNHCR.

Of increasing importance is the CRC's role as a liaison between returnees and local authorities in accessing land for returnees and site preparation, especially now that the food distributions have ended. At first, land access was only discussed concerning Option A returnees who were few in number. The money Option C returnees received was to be used to help them integrate in the towns. Now, however, access to land is seen as the best means to further integration for most of the returnees. In addition to land access, the CRC helps to organize committees at the village, commune, and district levels with NGOs, to identify vulnerable returnee families and to help support them through the WFP "food for work" programs—road construction, pond creation, digging land and canals—which remain the basis of most community-development programs.

HALO Trust International (HT)

HALO Trust has been active in Cambodia since 1987. It specializes in clearing minefields and disposing of unexploded bombs and shells, and in sustaining projects in hazardous areas of conflict for extended periods. HALO Trust is also involved in providing awareness training concerning the presence of mines, especially to children. In Pursat province, HALO Trust has de-mining projects in all five districts, clearing mines from rice fields, village centres, school buildings, road sides, bridges, and footpaths. There are two de-mining teams in Pursat, each with 20 de-miners locally trained under the direction of two British specialists. Several previously mined areas that have been cleared are now available for returnees, IDPs, and displaced locals. HALO provides returnees with awareness training about mines and their possible presence in areas that are declared "de-mined."

Pursat Women's Association

The Pursat Women's Association, sponsored by the Cambodian government, has developed assistance projects with returnees in the new villages. It is especially concerned with planting via seed banks (both rice and vegetables). In other villages, the Women's Association has helped to establish cow banks, pond digging, and credit schemes where five families must join to qualify. In Pursat Province, UNDP uses the Women's Association to implement its projects such as credit schemes. Many of the early credit schemes were directed at returnee women, but their ability to pay back was problematic. Returnees were said to have a tendency to move and this created credit problems. Now the system is to establish five families to support each other in the business and in repayment. Local people remain hesitant to trust returnees because of their perceived tendency to move and lack of long-term commitment.

Since the negative evaluation of returnee women's repayment (which was considered not to be reliable), the Women's Association no longer includes them in the credit system. Because of this, the most vulnerable and needy returnee women do not get assistance. It is a Catch-22 situation. Returnee women cannot get loans until their capacity for business and repayment is first improved, but they cannot improve their capacity for business until they get a loan. This is compounded by their lack of networks

to be able to join with other families. Most of the loans go to established local people, who represent between 30 and 60 percent of the population. Overall, the Women's Association loans are only available in 10 target villages. If they are successful, they can be expanded to other targeted zones. This is needed in order to monitor the loan and to assess for example, who gets the benefit of the money.

Through UNDP funding, the Pursat Women's Association is also implementing adult literacy programs geared towards women by providing child care. They want women to raise their awareness of capital and interest and to increase their capability to benefit from credit. Literacy classes also include issues of health care, and the Women's Association staff are sent to UNICEF for relevant training. The Women's Association wanted to make literacy training mandatory for women who received credit, but UNDP thought this was too great an imposition.

United Nations Development Program (UNDP)/Reintegration and Resettlement Operation (CARERE)

UNDP's original mandate was the rehabilitation of infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and public buildings. The purpose of CARERE was to meet the needs of returnees in their integration into villages. Both kinds of assistance were implemented through government funding to the province, district, and commune authorities who also selected projects. Returnees were never themselves consulted as to their needs; they had to request assistance through the local authorities. After the expiry of the 400-day food aid, Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) that involved activities at the commune and village levels, (such as sanitation/water, schools, and other public facilities) have been replaced by a development priority geared towards income generation, employment training, and agricultural production (such as the provision of seeds, cattle, and land for housing). Most of these programs are directed towards the rural poor and community development.

The selection criteria are the poverty of the area, accessibility, security, the number of vulnerable groups, and local receptiveness to programs. Priority groups are female-headed households, internally-displaced people, returnees, and disabled and demobilized soldiers. Returnees are still recognized as a vulnerable group but are no longer designated as having "special needs." Some small villages, such as Kambeng village in Kravanh District, have up to 30 vulnerable families who are targeted for assistance through QIPs and seed programs. UNDP emphasis is on the improvement of life for the rural poor and on the development of official standards to sustain this activity in the future. In creating a strong community organization, the hope is to build the capacity for direct negotiations between the community and the government. UNDP works through community district people. They are responsible to UNDP and are the liaison between people in villages and local leaders. A new role of UNDP is to facilitate community dialogue and decision making.

In 1993, UNDP/CARERE implemented development projects in 17 villages throughout the five Pursat districts. In 1994, 13 more villages were included, primarily in Kandieng, Pursat Ville, and Krakor Districts. The 1994–96 Workplan projections are to expand programs to one commune in Kandieng, three communes in Pursat Ville, and

two in Krakor and Kravanh. UNDP initiates development of model areas in specific communes to set an example. In model areas, there may be intensive activity in the villages, such as the construction of a new road in a particular village or the building of a commune district school. CARERE projects also give loans for starting small businesses (if individuals can organize in groups of five). In 1994, UNDP targeted three villages (Sala Komrou, Sras Srang, and Spean Thmar) in Prey Nhy commune, Pursat Ville District for community development. Previously, the only community development in Pursat Ville District was in Toul Makak and Prey Ormal villages in Roleap Commune.

World Food Program (WFP)

The WFP and UNICEF are the only two agencies that have been in Cambodia since 1979 because their assistance was considered humanitarian rather than developmental. During repatriation, WFP was actively involved in the procurement, delivery, distribution, and monitoring of food supplies to returnees. WFP distributed more than 85,000 metric tons of rice, fish, vegetable oil, and salt to 372,000 returnees. The food aid was crucial in facilitating early resettlement negotiations between returnees and their relatives or other people with whom they were able to find accommodation. During the food distribution, the WFP worked in conjunction with CRC. In Pursat province, the WFP has their own offices, but in other provinces they share offices with CRC.

Now that the 400-day food ration has ended, the only remaining support and safety net against hunger is through the WFP-sponsored Food For Work programs operating throughout the country. At present, the WFP Food For Work program remains the most important assistance organization for returnees in Pursat. The Food For Work program is village-based in Cambodia, which makes it unique. In other countries, Food For Work tends to be government-implemented for major public works. In addition, the food does not come from the UN but directly from bilateral support countries, and is guaranteed for the next three years.

Since the beginning of 1994, WFP expanded their staff to 15 provinces, beyond the four main repatriation provinces of Battambang, Siem Reap, Pursat, and Bantheay Meanchy. The spreading out through Cambodia reflects the change in WFP emphasis, from that of giving food to that of community development. Food For Work is now involved in development schemes through infrastructure building. The actual word WFP uses is "rehabilitation." In Pursat, Food For Work is geared towards road construction and land clearance. WFP has looked for high concentrations of returnees in villages and has invited comments on priorities. Some have requested roads, some canals, some ponds, and some clearance of land. When returnees have been given land, construction of an access road has often been necessary.

Before January 1994, the rare Food For Work projects were usually offered in conjunction with NGOs. Later in the year, the mandate of and demand for WFP activities expanded greatly. The program is not as practical as cash, but its very success means that people in Pursat will not starve. In road construction, for example, if an individual can clear one square metre of land this will equal 4 kilograms of rice, an amount which will basically feed a family for one day. If the demand for Food For Work

dies down, then it is obvious the need for food is not there. The Food For Work will continue as planned until 1996, an extension of the original projection of 1994–95 to keep in sync with the Cambodian government and NGO three-year plans. Before implementing a food-for-work program, an assessment is done in the targeted area to identify individuals in need and to decide what type of assistance they could receive and for what work.

In some of the better-established villages, villagers will volunteer to do work for certain vulnerable individuals or families, such as female-headed households, where the women cannot work on road construction or engage in the heavy labour involved in clearing land. In one Pursat village, 80 square metres of road construction were donated for 8 vulnerable families, 10 square metres each. This equalled about 40 kilograms of rice. WFP personnel note that in the older, well-established villages, there is a greater tendency to help others. WFP personnel also note that in the new villages, such as those in which most returnees reside, there is less evidence of this willingness. In this case, WFP field staff will consult with village leaders to help identify and locate vulnerable families. When vulnerable individuals are identified, the field officer can exercise flexibility in attempts to give work, usually something simple for the family to do around their house, such as composting. A new idea, yet to be tried, is to provide Food for Work for women to look after other people's children while they work. The women would receive 2–3 kilograms of rice per day. The handicapped, those with one leg, are also kept busy and given light road work. One man in Keo Moni village, Kandieng District, Pursat province, has a double handicap (both legs amputated). His wife works on road construction but since the man can repair bicycles, the WFP field officer has requested headquarters in Phnom Penh to find money in the budget to get him some tools so he could earn an income.

In 1993, WFP conducted a survey to identify "vulnerable" individuals (VGAs). In Pursat, about 25,000 were listed as VGAs. Returnees who finished the 400-day food aid were identified as VGA and automatically included in Food For Work programs. The "vulnerable" classification proved problematic, however, because it was difficult to draw the line between those who qualify and those who do not. A very poor family could be characterized as being in need, but not fit into the "vulnerable" criteria. Also, village head people tended to show favouritism so WFP questioned their assessment of "vulnerable." As a result, in 1994, groups who may fall into vulnerable categories (returnees, female-headed households, IDPs) are no longer designated for special consideration, but instead are lumped together in Target Areas. WFP targets geographical areas marked by high concentrations of returnees, vulnerable populations, or IDPs, low rice production, or environmentally fragile regions affected by drought or flooding, to provide both emergency aid and longer-term labour-intensive community work.

Examples of WFP specific target areas can include:

1. Food Deficit Areas, where the amount of rice produced is inadequate. The Food For Work is then targeted at the commune level. The basis for selection of the commune is a survey analysis of the rice harvest. New returnee settlements in Pursat are always included as a target area because their land is for vegetable production rather than rice. The question of land and

sustainability is the bottom line. Returnees as well as locals are eager to participate in the food-for-work projects to prepare them for the future months without rice.

2. The northwestern area of Cambodia, especially where IDPs are numerous. They can get Food for Work in the more settled areas where they are placed.
3. Banteay Meanchey province, where two areas get free food assistance: Kong Va Reception Site (where returnees first came through Cambodia) is now a temporary IDP shelter, and Krakon (also a temporary IDP site). These two places are the closest to a refugee camp. Most of the inhabitants are displaced returnees. But WFP is not so generous as to keep people in the camps beyond necessary need. For example, when the area is safe to return to, the last food distribution will be in the local village to encourage people to go back. If they want the food, they have to return.

Because WFP is so decentralized, the administrators are acutely aware of what is going on in each province and can make decisions accordingly. If a security situation deteriorates, or during environmental stress such as drought or flooding, WFP is prepared with an emergency component that can be mobilized quickly. At the provincial levels, NGOs work together with WFP to determine village needs. Food for Work depends on NGOs like CRC to go out to the villages and communes to do analysis of need. NGOs are present in greater numbers in some provinces than in others and this determines the amount of WFP input. Programs arise very much on an ad hoc basis. Approval for Food for Work assistance is from WFP provincial level of consultation. Once a month, WFP provincial personnel meet with the central administration in Phnom Penh to discuss emergencies, such as the August 1994 flooding in Kompong Speu, and these then become priorities.

Attitudes to Returnees

Most NGOs interviewed asserted that returnees in general have a dependent state of mind and an inability to make decisions. Since repatriation, returnees remained dependent on the supply of food provided by UNHCR, CRC and, since May 1994, on the Food For Work programs run by WFP. The following statements are included in this section on assistance to returnees to illustrate a certain degree of animosity that is felt towards returnees by the aid organizations' personnel that are currently helping them. In context, these attitudes may be a reflection of the enormous needs facing all Cambodians and the difficulties of international organizations and NGOs in addressing or resolving them.

WFP Official in Phnom Penh:

> There is no problem with "acceptance" per se, but returnees do have a certain "mentality." Long-term dependency in the camps has impacted on their attitudes; for example, it was hard for returnees to really accept that they would be "cut-off" after 400 days. They didn't think it would really happen. WFP constantly had to face returnees who were asking for more food once it had been cut off. Other aid agencies also experience this sense of expectation.

WFP Official in Pursat:

> There are two main groups of returnees: the returnee elites who work for the NGOs and the returnees with a dependency mentality. Those with the dependency mentality are the ones who always have expectations of food and aid on a constant basis. Most returnees have not accepted that they will not get dependency assistance any longer and that they must operate on their own. After twelve years, this attitude had permeated people's psyches.

Pursat NGO Official:

> In one area where people are all returnees, a new village, materials were made available for road construction, but during the night all the sand and stones were taken and spread across the individual housing plots. The next day, the NGO was stuck in the mud because all the top layer of the road had been removed. But the returnee people would not help the NGO get out. This attitude is unheard off in the established villages where there is a strong sense of community still.

UNDP/CARERE Official in Pursat:

> There have also been occurrences of manipulations. For example, returnees say they need fertilizer from the UNDP for their land. This is given on a credit basis. But instead of putting it to agricultural use, they sold it for profit. They keep the money and then they say their vegetable gardens or their rice harvests are no good and they don't make payback for the fertilizer. They make a good profit because fertilizer costs $40 a load and UNDP loans it out at a $20 subsidized rate. This year UNDP must first verify that in every household which requests fertilizer there is cultivated land to put it on.
>
> Returnees have great awareness of the aid packages available. If one community gets one package, then the other groups are quick to have a "me too" mentality.
>
> Returnees are more ready and more equipped to request assistance from UNDP or NGOs than local people.

NGO District Nurse in Pursat:

> Being provided for on the border has made returnees too used to being in a state of dependency, not being independent enough. Returnees express great dissatisfaction and they complain much more about everything. Many NGOs note that returnees are full of complaints and that locals are much more content with what they have. This attitude of always complaining impacts on their resettlement. Only returnees ask the foreigners for jobs. Locals do not do this. Also, many of their complaints are exaggerated. For example, many returnees will say "we have no family here," but on investigation, they really do. Returnees are also not interested in applying for government jobs because the wage is considered too low. There is a dangerous attitude among returnees that everything should be free here, like it was on the border. But even on the border when things were free, they were always sold again and again ... In Krakor, only CCDP is here and this could be why there are so few returnees in this district. In Pursat Town, there are a lot of returnees because there are a lot of NGOs.

NGO Official in Phnom Penh:

> Returnees have a "survivor mentality." This keeps them trapped in only thinking about next week and not about their children's future. This mentality severely limits what they are able to do, to imagine, to plan, or to work towards a longer time frame. It also creates a lot of mistrust within villages in that people take what they need to survive, it is not a mindset that shares ... Another common mindset with returnees is that they expect things to be done for them, for example, to have land cleared, or to have had their house kits built. In Battambang, returnees would not assist in helping to build homes for the aged or widows unless they were paid. Like most other Khmer, returnees have an unwillingness to engage in altruistic behaviour or any sense of self-sacrifice.

In the Church World Service 1993 annual report, it was noted that returnees have problems with their attitude towards self-sufficiency and support:

> They are focused on their own situation and want all assistance to be directed to them. This hampers reintegration and sometimes creates confusion because assistance is requested by the returnees from many agencies who are often uninformed about the existing involvement of other groups. It will take time before the returnees fully realize that agencies are not just there to "work for them" and that they will have to be responsible for themselves outside the artificial refugee camp community. (p. 17)

3

Pursat Province—General Overview

Demographic Characteristics

As of May 1993, the total population of Pursat Province was 254,587 (UNTAC Election Component). Pursat is divided into five districts: Bakan, Kandieng, Pursat Ville, Kravanh, and Krakor. The districts are further subdivided into 44 communes with a total of 440 villages (Shams 1994). Pursat Ville District is where most of this study's field work was carried out. It has seven communes and 60 villages. UNTAC figures from the May 1993 list indicate 8,028 households and 42,866 people in Pursat Ville District. In the Shams (1994) report, Pursat Province is noted as having the largest number of widows and women-headed households in Cambodia. In some villages, female-headed households account for up to 70 percent of all families. On average, 50 percent of the total population is less than 17 years old (*ibid.*).

According to figures from Pursat Women's Association, the numbers of returnee families are slowly decreasing in most Pursat districts:

Arrival May 1993		As of April 22, 1994	
District	Number of Families	District	Number of Families
Bakan	3,407	Bakan	2,339
Kandieng	389	Kandieng	345
Pursat Ville	876	Pursat Ville	621
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Figures from CRC lists indicate that, by January 1994, a total of 23,433 returnees (5,286 families) and 3,293 internally displaced people (IDPs) (824 families) had resettled in Pursat, representing over 10 percent of the provincial population. Figures from 1994 World Food Program lists show even higher numbers of IDPs in Pursat, totalling 5,823 persons (1,022 families). Of the 23,433 returnees in Pursat, the vast majority (20,464 individuals in 4,341 families) resettled with Option C; a smaller number (2,622 individuals

in 856 families) took Option B; 28 families (135 persons) returned with Option D; 21 families (65 persons) chose Option A; and three families returned through Option E. Thirty-eight families (131 persons) returned spontaneously, although they were able to access the 400-day food program (World Food Program).

Lack of Accurate Statistics on Returnees after May 1994

During May 1993 and May 1994, district authorities kept an accurate registration of returnees in specific villages so they could inform CRC about any changes in food distribution. After the end of the 400-day food aid package, however, the monitoring of returnee families ended. By August 1994, there were no longer up-to-date figures of how many returnees were in each district. In Roleap and Prey Nhi communes, Pursat Ville District, there were many empty houses in the villages. Neighbours stated that these were the houses of returnees who have moved far away. Mr. Samrith Bo, Krakor District Authority, noted:

> The number of returnees on my present list is different from [those of] UNHCR and WFP. Major changes have occurred after the expiry of food [aid]. Many returnees have moved out of the district. People just leave within a day, they just disappear. We have no idea where they have gone. Eighty-nine families are left in the district and these are just the temporary statistics. Returnees move because they find other relatives in other provinces.

Commune leaders in Pursat also stated that they no longer knew anything more about the returnees, what they are doing, where they are living, or even if they had any rice to eat. Mr. Say Mang, Chief Officer of Phtas Prey Commune, stated:

> There are about 126 returnee families, but this is according to the 1993 list and I'm not sure how many are left. After the 400-day support has ended some returnees go to another province.

Mr. Mil Ben, Chief Commune Officer of Prey Nhy Commune, stated:

> These numbers are from the 1993 list. Now the exact numbers are not known because many returnees have moved without saying anything. I do not know where they go or why. The first time the returnees came to stay here with relatives, but when they hear that other relatives are in another province they think the land is better or is available so they move.

Mr. Martin Fisher, WFP Director in Pursat, noted that returnees are moving in (e.g., from Kompong Thom) as much as they move out. Some of the returnees I spoke with indicated that they had come to Pursat province after their 400-day food aid ended. One man, his wife, and their four children (one son and three daughters), for example, came from Siem Reap Province three months earlier to settle in Tonsay Kol village, Anlong Thnot Commune, Krakor District, Pursat province. They came because the wife was born in this commune. She had one family member left here, her brother-in-law. At first the family was sent to Siem Reap because that was the husband's birthplace, even though they had no relatives there. The man said:

> We stayed as long as the food ration card was good, but once it finished we came here. Also, Siem Reap has not got good security. The house we live in

> now is not our own, we share it with another returnee family, two adults and their children. The house is less than 12 by 12' and is very crowded for over nine people. No one has any rice land. The women prepare food to sell on the road to the passengers in the bus. This only provides enough money for the morning and evening rice so we do not eat during the day.

Another returnee woman in the same village also spoke of just coming to Pursat from Battambang because of increasing security concerns. She came with her husband, five children, and her parents. She also helps to prepare and sell the food along with another returnee widow whom she met here.

Internal Secondary Migration

Between May 1993 and May 1994, the primary internal movement was the search for family reunification. The cash/food aid provided a buffer for an initial attempt at resettlement with family members. Ms. Linda Hartke, Executive Director of CWS, commented on this secondary migration among returnees:

> The pattern is that returnees first move in with relatives for a short term, three months, six months, or nine months. But problems arise with the shortage of space within a house and the small size of the land. Most Cambodians have less than one-half hectare of land, which is too small to support one family, let alone an extended one. Chances are that the returnee family will move out to another place in the village or another commune.

The search for fertile land has been the motivating factor in much secondary migration among returnees. In their search for land, returnees are usually the first to settle on housing land wherever a new access road has been created. Returnees have also gone to "no-go" areas (mined, malarial, difficult to access, or lacking water) as well as areas of growing insecurity and military conflict. Robinson (1994, 32–44), for example, describes the more than 25,000 returnees who chose the rich agricultural lands of Rattanak Mondol in Battambang province as their final destination, despite the fact that it is also the most heavily mined area in Cambodia and subject to continual fighting. Other push factors can include the hostility of neighbours and kin; mistrust from local levels of government, and employment discrimination; not finding family; the lack of health, education, or social services; and no tenacity to struggle in the development of new settlements. Pull factors in secondary migration may be to find other family members, to gravitate towards urban environments, or to engage in military activity.

Pursat Environment

With a land area of over one million hectares, Pursat is the fourth largest province in Cambodia. Three distinct agro-ecosystems are predominant in Pursat—forests and mountains covering 67 percent of the land area, upper terraces, and the great lake Tonle Sap and its plains (Shams 1994). There are distinct dry and wet seasons. During the wet season (April to December), rice is grown in all three land areas—upland rice cultivation in the mountains, rain-fed lowland varieties in the upper terraces, and floating rice in the Tonle Sap system. The upper terrace ecosystem is the most predominant used

land in Pursat province. It consists of poor rain-fed fields that are characterized by sandy and acidic soil, resulting in low rice yields. The variety of rice grown depends on the water regime of particular fields, canals, or ditches.

The average family in Pursat Province is 5.59 persons, indicating high pressure on small plots of land (*ibid.*). In the late 1980s, when land began to be de-collectivized, initial land distribution was made on the basis of family size. Through marriage, inheritance, and migration, however, land holdings got smaller. In Pursat Ville, for example, Shams (1994) found the average yield of paddy is 1,483 kilograms of rice per hectare, indicating that 1.15 hectare of rice land is needed to fulfil the basic requirements of an average family of 5.91 people. In surveyed villages, however, the average female-headed household holds just 0.93 hectare, significantly lower than that of the average male-headed household which holds 1.46 hectare.

Shams (1994) lists numerous types of rice cultivation: 13 varieties of early rice, 9 varieties of medium rice, and 15 varieties of late rice. The one variety cultivated by everyone is Dom Neup (used for making cake), whereas all other varieties are grown for subsistence. In Pursat Ville District, where rain-fed lowland rice is predominant, almost 50 percent of the farmers grow the early variety of subsistence rice due to its short growing duration, good volume expansion, suitability for high fields, and drought tolerance (*ibid.*). Although the late-variety rice yields the highest production, its cultivation requires a long maturity in deep-standing water, and few farmers have these "pond fields." All rice cultivation begins with seeds sown in highly fertilized seed beds. After 40–45 days, the seedlings are bundled together in stacks and transplanted into the main field.

Rice is the staple food. Corn, sweet potato, cassava, beans, and backyard cultivation of fruits and vegetables supplement the diet. In addition, a significant amount of protein comes from foraging small animals such as frogs, shrimp, eels, turtles, birds, snakes, and crickets. Domestic animals represent the family savings, particularly draft animals. A wealthy family will have cows, water buffaloes, one or two pigs, and at least five chickens or ducks. Pigs and chickens are fed recycled agricultural bran or unhusked rice, kitchen waste, and whatever they can forage. Pigs are raised for up to nine months and then sold on the market. Chickens are eaten when they die naturally or when they become too numerous. Cows and buffaloes forage and are also fed hay, which the owner must buy. Draft animals are eaten only after they have died naturally. Cow's milk is not used.

In well-established villages, numerous palm and banana trees provide shady areas as well as food. Without NGO community development assistance, water sources in most villages consist of hand-dug family ponds, hand-dug wells, possibly one drilled well at the local temple site, and numerous cement jars to store rainwater.

Traditional Labour Patterns

Cambodian women traditionally engage in pig fattening, planting rice seedlings, weeding and planting gardens, harvesting rice, and all domestic chores including child and animal care. Many also operate small businesses selling cooked food [vegetables, fermented fish (pra hoc), meat, salted egg, noodles, fish sauce (tuk tray)], fresh

vegetables and fruit, general supplies (salt, herbal medicine, MSG, cigarettes), and dried coconut shells or rice husks along the main roads or in the market town. Some women also produce handicrafts such as weaving, basketry, or jars that are also sold in the market. Local vegetables that women can grow in gardens around their house include the sponge gourd, wax gourd, pumpkin, cucumber, taro, onions, long beans, chilli, basil, slec ngob (local leafy vegetable), as well as numerous spices.

Men are active in construction, ploughing, fencing, climbing sugar palm, coconut, and banana trees, hunting, fishing, cutting wood for sale, producing charcoal, and administering village and religious activities, including village militia and defense groups. Only a small number of men are engaged in small businesses as repairmen (bicycle, motorcycle), carpenters, blacksmiths (for ornaments and tools), tinsmiths (watering cans), motor taxi drivers, or barbers. Many men work for the government (as soldiers or attached to specific departments), but the pay is so low that most have additional jobs. Most farmers have secondary occupations as well, needed to supplement their food budgets that are at best classified as marginal (Shams 1994).

Children are generally engaged in looking after cows, water buffaloes, and smaller children, collecting firewood for household use, carrying water, and foraging for extra food (frogs, fishing, catching snakes).

Since 1979, however, many women, who are now heads of their households, engage in traditional male labour involving intensive agricultural activities. A few women have assumed managerial and administrative work at the province, district, and village levels, in addition to ongoing domestic and child care responsibilities. Among returnee men, gender responsibilities have also shifted. Several unemployed returnee men spoke of how they have had to assume domestic labour activities in their families because their wives often travel long distances to sell vegetables or other products at the markets, or are employed in other people's houses. As one returnee said: "When the men have no jobs, they are left at home to do everything."

Pursat History since 1975

During the Khmer Rouge regime (1975–79), the population of the provincial and district towns of Pursat was moved into rural villages to work on the newly-created collective farms. All the province's cattle and buffalo were herded together to be used for transportation purposes, and humans became the supply draft power (Shams 1994). The absence of disease control and proper care severely depleted the draft animal population, which today remains low in all villages. Throughout Pursat, large areas of forest were cleared for extensive rice cultivation. After 1979, however, most of these areas have lain dormant and regrown with scrub brush.

The families who returned to their land immediately following the Khmer Rouge withdrawal in 1979 were allowed to occupy their former lands, up to 1,500–2,000 square meters in size (*ibid.*). Individual agriculture was still not allowed, however, and people were forced to farm through solidarity groups known as Kram Samaki (*ibid.*). The involvement of the UN and some NGOs in early 1980 helped to transform the agricultural system from the rigid Khmer Rouge collective farming and labour brigades into a resource-sharing structure. Under Vietnamese Communist control, land

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land in Pursat province. It consists of poor rain-fed fields that are characterized by sandy and acidic soil, resulting in low rice yields. The variety of rice grown depends on the water regime of particular fields, canals, or ditches.

The average family in Pursat Province is 5.59 persons, indicating high pressure on small plots of land (*ibid.*). In the late 1980s, when land began to be de-collectivized, initial land distribution was made on the basis of family size. Through marriage, inheritance, and migration, however, land holdings got smaller. In Pursat Ville, for example, Shams (1994) found the average yield of paddy is 1,483 kilograms of rice per hectare, indicating that 1.15 hectare of rice land is needed to fulfil the basic requirements of an average family of 5.91 people. In surveyed villages, however, the average female-headed household holds just 0.93 hectare, significantly lower than that of the average male-headed household which holds 1.46 hectare.

Shams (1994) lists numerous types of rice cultivation: 13 varieties of early rice, 9 varieties of medium rice, and 15 varieties of late rice. The one variety cultivated by everyone is Dom Neup (used for making cake), whereas all other varieties are grown for subsistence. In Pursat Ville District, where rain-fed lowland rice is predominant, almost 50 percent of the farmers grow the early variety of subsistence rice due to its short growing duration, good volume expansion, suitability for high fields, and drought tolerance (*ibid.*). Although the late-variety rice yields the highest production, its cultivation requires a long maturity in deep-standing water, and few farmers have these "pond fields." All rice cultivation begins with seeds sown in highly fertilized seed beds. After 40–45 days, the seedlings are bundled together in stacks and transplanted into the main field.

Rice is the staple food. Corn, sweet potato, cassava, beans, and backyard cultivation of fruits and vegetables supplement the diet. In addition, a significant amount of protein comes from foraging small animals such as frogs, shrimp, eels, turtles, birds, snakes, and crickets. Domestic animals represent the family savings, particularly draft animals. A wealthy family will have cows, water buffaloes, one or two pigs, and at least five chickens or ducks. Pigs and chickens are fed recycled agricultural bran or unhusked rice, kitchen waste, and whatever they can forage. Pigs are raised for up to nine months and then sold on the market. Chickens are eaten when they die naturally or when they become too numerous. Cows and buffaloes forage and are also fed hay, which the owner must buy. Draft animals are eaten only after they have died naturally. Cow's milk is not used.

In well-established villages, numerous palm and banana trees provide shady areas as well as food. Without NGO community development assistance, water sources in most villages consist of hand-dug family ponds, hand-dug wells, possibly one drilled well at the local temple site, and numerous cement jars to store rainwater.

Traditional Labour Patterns

Cambodian women traditionally engage in pig fattening, planting rice seedlings, weeding and planting gardens, harvesting rice, and all domestic chores including child and animal care. Many also operate small businesses selling cooked food [vegetables, fermented fish (pra hoc), meat, salted egg, noodles, fish sauce (tuk tray)], fresh

vegetables and fruit, general supplies (salt, herbal medicine, MSG, cigarettes), and dried coconut shells or rice husks along the main roads or in the market town. Some women also produce handicrafts such as weaving, basketry, or jars that are also sold in the market. Local vegetables that women can grow in gardens around their house include the sponge gourd, wax gourd, pumpkin, cucumber, taro, onions, long beans, chilli, basil, slec ngob (local leafy vegetable), as well as numerous spices.

Men are active in construction, ploughing, fencing, climbing sugar palm, coconut, and banana trees, hunting, fishing, cutting wood for sale, producing charcoal, and administering village and religious activities, including village militia and defense groups. Only a small number of men are engaged in small businesses as repairmen (bicycle, motorcycle), carpenters, blacksmiths (for ornaments and tools), tinsmiths (watering cans), motor taxi drivers, or barbers. Many men work for the government (as soldiers or attached to specific departments), but the pay is so low that most have additional jobs. Most farmers have secondary occupations as well, needed to supplement their food budgets that are at best classified as marginal (Shams 1994).

Children are generally engaged in looking after cows, water buffaloes, and smaller children, collecting firewood for household use, carrying water, and foraging for extra food (frogs, fishing, catching snakes).

Since 1979, however, many women, who are now heads of their households, engage in traditional male labour involving intensive agricultural activities. A few women have assumed managerial and administrative work at the province, district, and village levels, in addition to ongoing domestic and child care responsibilities. Among returnee men, gender responsibilities have also shifted. Several unemployed returnee men spoke of how they have had to assume domestic labour activities in their families because their wives often travel long distances to sell vegetables or other products at the markets, or are employed in other people's houses. As one returnee said: "When the men have no jobs, they are left at home to do everything."

Pursat History since 1975

During the Khmer Rouge regime (1975–79), the population of the provincial and district towns of Pursat was moved into rural villages to work on the newly-created collective farms. All the province's cattle and buffalo were herded together to be used for transportation purposes, and humans became the supply draft power (Shams 1994). The absence of disease control and proper care severely depleted the draft animal population, which today remains low in all villages. Throughout Pursat, large areas of forest were cleared for extensive rice cultivation. After 1979, however, most of these areas have lain dormant and regrown with scrub brush.

The families who returned to their land immediately following the Khmer Rouge withdrawal in 1979 were allowed to occupy their former lands, up to 1,500–2,000 square meters in size (*ibid.*). Individual agriculture was still not allowed, however, and people were forced to farm through solidarity groups known as Kram Samaki (*ibid.*). The involvement of the UN and some NGOs in early 1980 helped to transform the agricultural system from the rigid Khmer Rouge collective farming and labour brigades into a resource-sharing structure. Under Vietnamese Communist control, land

tenure belonged to the solidarity groups. Lands attributed to villages and districts, however, could be loaned to individual families or government employees (*ibid.*). Kram Samaki were obliged to sell part of their harvest to the government at a fixed price, less than market price or inflation. To some extent, the Kram Samaki system provided a form of security to vulnerable families and individuals, ensuring that they could participate in and receive at least their communal share of land production, as well as sharing in any draft power or agricultural equipment available to the group. The law on land tenure was changed in February 1989, granting hereditary tenure to individual families (*ibid.*).

Pursat Province, like all of Cambodia, is characterized by an inadequate physical and administrative infrastructure. The lack of trained personnel and their low management capacity results in an underdeveloped local capacity for self-reliance, sustainability, and reconstruction efforts. During the Khmer Rouge regime, most provincial roads, bridges, and water distribution systems were damaged, as were houses and agricultural equipment. In August 1994, all roads (including the main highway) remained seriously dilapidated and filled with potholes. In one section, between the town of Pursat and Kravanh District, it takes over one-half hour to cross two kilometres of road. Bridges are also run down and frequently have huge gaping holes in them, covered only with loose boards. Roads branching from the main highway #5 are mostly inaccessible during the rainy season except for oxcarts, four-wheel-drive vehicles, motorcycles, and bicycles. The small truck used during this study to transport the survey team into villages in Pursat Ville District frequently got stuck in deep, muddy ruts and the entire team (twelve, including myself) would have to get out the back and push. At bridges where there were foot-wide spaces between the road and the bridge. The intrepid driver would assess the situation for a few minutes and very slowly proceed.

Vulnerable Families

Female-headed households, families with a handicapped male head, and those with large numbers of children, especially among families who are recent arrivals, characterize the poorest families in Pursat. With little access to land and in the absence of an adult male's labour, these households remain disadvantaged. Even when given land, the expense of hiring labour and draft animals to prepare the fields, the lack of tools and the labour force to work the field, compounded by a general lack of water and access to irrigation, result in less rice production and chronic rice deficits throughout the year. Shams (1994, 27) notes that the average land holding for female-headed households is often less than half of other households (0.56 compared to 1.2 hectares). Female-headed households though tend to have a slightly smaller family size.

Since the 400-day food program ended in May 1994, large numbers of returnees could be classified as extremely vulnerable individuals (EVI). Other categories of EVI include female-headed households where the mother is illiterate, unskilled, and the children are under ten years old; elderly people, alone or with small children; unaccompanied minors; and those with handicaps (blind, disabled) or medical disabilities (epilepsy, heart problems, tuberculosis, asthma, mental illness).

The three districts in Pursat which have the highest numbers of female/widow-headed households, as well as high returnee and internally displaced populations, are Bakan, Kravanh, and Krakor. Area districts with the highest population density are Pursat Ville, Kandieng, Bakan, and Krakor. Most of the communes and villages in Pursat districts are situated along the main highway and railway line, and to a lesser extent along secondary roads connecting the districts, or rivers (*ibid.*).

Minority Groups

Several minority groups live in some areas of Pursat. A small number of Poa (less than 500 individuals) live in the forest and mountainous regions of Kravanh. Over 6,500 Muslim Cham live in the five districts, but with the majority in Krakor and Kandieng (Shams 1994). Some 6,000 Vietnamese, 500 Chinese, and 30 Laotians live in the floating villages in the Tonle Sap engaging in industrial fishing (*ibid.*).

Security Concerns

Apart from the occasional shelling of outlying government military posts, small skirmishes in contested Khmer Rouge territory, and a few bridges being blown up, the stability of Pursat province is relatively secure, especially when compared to the neighbouring provinces of Siem Reap and Battambang. Khmer Rouge territory is generally confined to the mountains and forested areas near the railway tracks, and provincial and local authorities retain control over much of the province. Khmer Rouge attacks are increasing, however, in the Krakor District, with intensified highway robberies, assaults, and killings of Vietnamese. General banditry is also becoming problematic, most likely due to an overall impoverishment of the province caused by the poor agricultural yield and inadequate water supply. Banditry impacts on returnees who have been given isolated land, far from established villages with no militia defense systems. Returnees are afraid of the isolation and lack of protection. As Ms. O'Mahoney, Executive Director of CONCERN, noted:

> In rural areas throughout Cambodia, many villages are constantly raided by bandits, some as frequently as once a month, as in Bantay Meanchy. These attacks are not by Khmer Rouge. Local people are forming their own quasi-militia to provide some sort of early warning system. If the Khmer Rouge can step into villages and offer protection, there is not much resistance from locals. In Western Pursat Province, for example, several areas are recognized as Khmer Rouge villages, but NGOs such as CONCERN can still send personnel in for community development, such as digging wells. The designation of a Khmer Rouge village is a loose term. Other than in the specific areas identified as Khmer Rouge, the term usually indicates that this is territory through which Khmer Rouge can move easily and which is under Khmer Rouge protection from bandits.

Ms. Carol Strickle, an official with CARE in Pursat, noted that the Bakan District in Pursat is having problems with forced conscription into the Cambodian military:

> People are paying large amounts in bribery to get away from having to go with the government troops. This is a good source of income to the government soldiers who usually don't get paid. The large presence of government soldiers mean that people are more afraid. CARE programs are affected. Men hide in the fields or run away, there is a lot of cash loss, people are not planting the rice and the men don't come to program training or gather in labour groups where they may be targeted by the government soldiers. This was especially problematic in July.

Literacy

According to NGO personnel working in Pursat province, the level of illiteracy among villagers continues to be high. Early figures indicate that over 65 percent of the illiterate population are women between the ages of 14 and 40 (Shams 1994, 31). As a result, women remain dependent upon more educated individuals, and their ability to participate as village leaders or in community development schemes, such as credit and rice banks, is impaired. Shams (1994) notes that World Bank studies indicate that four years of primary education increases farm productivity an average of ten percent or more, as does the provision of child care facilities. The government of Cambodia, however, has no resources to transfer to communes or villages to provide literacy skills, and most assistance comes from international organizations and NGOs. CONCERN, for example, has rehabilitated 20 percent of the primary schools in Pursat province alone, but this is geared towards children. American Refugee Committee (ARC) has developed literacy programs for women, but this is specifically for raising health awareness.

Health

The survey carried out by Main and Pennells (1994) in Pursat province identified several main health problems. These include the consumption of unclean drinking water leading to numerous diarrhoeal diseases, insufficient care of pregnant women and babies, malaria, TB, and extensive malnutrition among children under five (over 51 percent). Cambodia has one of the highest infant and maternal mortality rates in the world (Main and Pennells 1994). Endemic diarrhoea, malnutrition, and vector-borne diseases, such as malaria and dengue fever, are leading causes of childhood death, while untreated maternal hypertension, infection, malaria, haemorrhage, and malnutrition contribute to high maternal mortality (*ibid.*). The majority of women give birth at home with the assistance of untrained midwives, and do not receive pre- or post-natal care. David Ashton, director of Cambodian Mines Action Committee (CIMAC), estimates that 15 percent of the population in Pursat is disabled, primarily from land mines (personal communication). Health care for returnees is also minimal. According to Martin Fisher, former official in the International Red Cross and now executive director of WFP in Pursat:

> [t]hose with illness, for example TB, who were on treatment were repatriated with the "hope" that they would receive further treatment. But it was never

> clear where they would they go for treatment and how they would pay. This also happened with other medical cases. In certain cases the International Red Cross (IRC) was informed that EVIs were coming to specific areas and we could prepare something but otherwise the UNHCR would take no responsibility for people who needed a lot of medical care. Health care is insufficient throughout the entire country. IRC had extended discussions about UNHCR's lack of concern for returnee access to health care once they were back in the country. The only compromise was that UNHCR would pay for medical services while people were in the reception centre, but there was nothing after. (Personal communication 1994)

During the Khmer Rouge years (1975–79), all existing health structures were destroyed and 90 percent of the health workers died or fled the country (Main and Pennells 1994). In 1992, the estimated number of health care workers in Cambodia was 700 physicians, 1,300 medical assistants, and 4,000 trained nurses (*ibid.*). Currently, 5,000 students are registered at the Faculty of Medicine (4,500 of whom will become doctors, 200 dentists, and 200 pharmacists), and 2,000 students are in nursing, physiotherapy, and laboratory technician training. However much of this training is inappropriate for present-day needs (*ibid.*, 9). The recent adoption of Western medical training methods still follows the French medical system, first in place during the 1960s, and remains focused on curative health care rather than primary health and preventative care. Further, instruction and texts are in French, a language unfamiliar to many younger Cambodians. During the 1980s, medical training for Cambodians was obtained overseas, in Russian, German, or Vietnamese languages (*ibid.*). In addition, Western medical personnel pay little attention to traditional medicine, especially Khmer beliefs about disease and death. NGO health care models are frequently taken from "developing" Africa which are expected to fit "rehabilitating" Cambodia (*ibid.*, 10).

Expense of Medical Care

Medication and consultation with accredited medical staff is expensive and, in rural areas, the most common cause of debt is medical expense. Main and Pennells (1994, 10) note that any illness or treatment can be catastrophic to fragile family finances, especially when major assets such as a buffalo or pig must be sold to pay for treatment. In addition, less than 50 percent of rural people have access to local health care and must incur transportation expenses and loss of time in travelling. As a result, people first consult Kru Khmer (traditional healers) first during illness in preference to recognized government medical services, which are generally sought only as a last resort. Although folk medicine continues to play a vital role in Cambodian health care, its potential in preventative and promotional health care remains underutilized by doctors.

To treat respiratory illnesses and diarrhoea, two endemic ailments, the majority of parents seek remedies at local markets rather than from medical clinics or the district hospital. Children, however, accounted for 34 percent of all requests for medical attention at the Krakor district hospital in 1993 (*ibid.*). At present, only one-third of Krakor children are vaccinated against polio, tuberculosis, diphtheria, tetanus, and

pertussis, and over 40 percent of all children's deaths (0–15 years) in Pursat was the result of acute respiratory infection (*ibid.*).

Hospitals

District Hospitals in Pursat often do not have a physician or surgeon, and resident medical staff may consist only of senior nurses, midwives, and medical assistants (Main and Pennells 1994). Complicated medical emergencies must be transferred to the provincial hospital in Pursat town, but only during the day, due to security concerns at night (*ibid.*). Although hospitals ostensibly provide 24-hour health services, few nurses stay overnight and most are engaged in supplemental work outside. The combination of daily English classes and World Food Program supplies of rice and oil to hospital staff are incentives to keep them longer each day and to make them take more interest in their work (*ibid.*). Throughout Pursat province, hospitals and clinics provide medical services with inadequate and insufficient equipment and supplies. Pharmacies tend to be run by entrepreneurs rather than medical staff so that the cost of medication is high with no quality or handling and storage control (*ibid.*).

Water

According to Main and Pennells (1994), 93 percent of all water sources in Krakor district is contaminated, a figure which can be applied to the four other districts in Pursat. The majority of people in Pursat use either river water or rainwater as their primary source of drinking water. In Kandieng District, for example, less than 15 percent of the population have access to wells and/or village pond water, and 0.2 percent must rely on buying drinking water (Lloyd 1992). The provision of clean drinking water is a major component in all community development programs.

Throughout Pursat province, there is not only widespread lack of water for drinking but also for agricultural use. Water shortages are compounded by the lack of crop diversification and excessive reliance on rice. When weather difficulties occur, such as insufficient rainfall, there is a massive deficit in rice and a negative effect on the overall economic situation. As one NGO worker noted:

> If the rains don't come this year it will create a natural disaster, thus slowing long-term community development, and being replaced by a focus on rehabilitation with aid becoming seed distribution or food distribution. And that's going back to "relief." Long-term development can't work with starvation. (Personal communication, August 1994)

Lack of irrigation is one of the biggest problems in Pursat. Irrigation systems are a desirable long-term goal but the expense is beyond the scope of NGOs. UNDP is looking at the possibility of irrigation on a national scale as well as small-scale irrigation plans, such as submersible water pumps run on diesel fuel to connect villages with rivers. The ambivalent characteristics of village organization and difficulties in prioritizing needs, however, have postponed implementation of these projects. At present, there is no clear management structure to authorize decisions on how much to

borrow, to clarify benefits, to plan for spare parts and maintenance, or to develop an equitable program of who gets use of the irrigation first and for how much.

Village Organization

Most Cambodian villages are comprised of a concentration of houses around a marketplace or temple, along a road or highway, or alongside a body of water (river, irrigation channel, or lake), and surrounded by rice fields. Individual households or a cluster of houses can also be found scattered over more isolated areas that are still within village boundaries. For administrative purposes, villages or "Phums" (in Khmer) are organized into sub-districts (called communes in English and "Khums" in Khmer), which in turn are organized into districts within a particular province. Although van de Put (1993) feels that the village itself cannot be considered a "community," particular villages often have amenities and services that are shared within the commune. One village may have a fuel supply and several rice mills, another village may be the site of the commune market, or has a primary school (with one or two buildings, five rooms each), or local pagoda (Buddhist temple), or be the location for the commune headquarters. Within the village, smaller organizational units tend to function as core social and economic networks. These smaller units are called "Kroms," and comprise groups of eight to twelve houses (or relatively separate nuclear households), usually consisting of close family members (along matrilineal lines) and friends (van de Put 1993).

Villages Included in This Project's Survey

Three communes in Pursat Ville district were targeted for this report's survey. They are Phteas Prey commune, situated very close to the town of Pursat, with boundaries overlapping Pursat's main marketplace; Roleap commune, situated from two to five kilometres northwest from Pursat town along Highway #5, with the main road into the commune running parallel to Pursat River; and Prey Nhi commune, 18.5 kilometres west of Pursat town along Highway #5.

There are eight villages in Prey Nhy Commune. Mr. Mil Ben, Chief Commune Officer of Prey Nhy Commune, supplied the following numbers of returnee families (as of May 1994):

Village	Number of Returnee Families
Bak Rotesh (C Hq)	9
Doung Chrom	13
Pra Lay Tom	20
Speanthmar	3
Man Cher	9
Sala Komrou	14
Krang Tasen	5
Sras Srang	17

Approximately 30 returnee families were surveyed in the villages of Speanthmar, Sala Komrou, Krang Tasen, and Sras Srang.

In Roleap commune, there are twelve villages. Mr. Sor Sarim, first chief of Roleap Commune, supplied the following data:

Village	Number of Returnee Families
Prekthnot	5
Soriya Leu	11
Thnal Chopon	14
Steugn Touch	16
Cha Long Kat	8
Poan Dau	6
Tunal Bam Bek	6
Prey Omal	4
Toul Makak	11
Spean Thmar	13
Roleap	11

Mr. Sarim cautioned against the accuracy of these figures, stating that "the numbers are not stable and when people move they don't say anything. I think most go to Phnom Penh. Many houses are empty." Five villages were surveyed: Soriya Leu, Soriya Krom, Thnal Chopon, Toul Makak, and Spen Thmar, for a total of 28 questionnaires.

The following is a list of villages in Phtas Prey commune: Peal Bhek 1, Peal Beck 2, Kbal Hong, Dang Kea, Chamba Chek Cheung (Chamkachek), Chamba Chek Tboung (Chamkachek), Opra Sdav (Osdao), Thnot Tret, Kork, Ra.

Mr. Say Mang, Chief Officer of Phtas Prey Commune, stated that there are some 126 returnee families living in Phtas Prey, but cautioned that this number was according to the 1993 list. He was not sure how many were left because, after the 400-day support ended, some returnees went to another province. Over 30 questionnaires were collected from the villages of Peal Bhek 2, Kbal Hong, Chamba Chek (north and south), Osdao, and Thnot Tret.

Two Village Profiles

Two of the villages included in this report's survey, Sala Kamrou and Sras Srong in Prey Nhi commune, have been profiled by UNDP/CARERE. The following provides an indication of village characteristics and changing demographics, based in part on these profiles.

Sras Srang Village

Before the elections, UNTAC listed 91 people in Sras Srang (49 adults of whom 26 were women). As of June 1994, Sras Srong had a population of 237 (44 households, of which 10 were female-headed, including widows and those with amputee husbands). Thirty-

two of the households are returnee families who were provided with house land of approximately one-half hectare. The village is situated 7.5 kilometers east of the commune headquarters off the main road #5, and 6.5 kilometers west of the Roleap Spean Thmar market. The roads are very bad and considered inaccessible to the more established part of the village.

There is no clear history of Sras Srang village, only that in 1979 it was referred to as Takoy village. At present, there are two dams in the village to conserve water during the dry season and to irrigate rice crops, so the village is considered better off than most surrounding ones. In addition, a natural stream runs through the village. The village also has 10 hand-dug wells (which go dry), one canal, and one pond in the pagoda used for community drinking water. Rice planting is by cultivated seed, which is transplanted in "Tung" (little bunches). Each hectare has between 40–50 Tungs. The average household is 5.5 persons, which means that 1,450 kilograms of rice are needed per family per year. Other crops planted include those in field gardens, vegetables around the house, and in orchards (mangoes, coconut, and palm trees). Market products are obtained from sugar palm production and firewood cutting in the nearby forest. There is a small school in the pagoda but most students go to the nearby Krang Tasen village school, which serves five villages in Prey Nhi commune. Eighty percent of the children in Sras Srang village go to school. Few of the returnee families have rice land, agricultural tools, or draft animals. Land is available for rice cultivation but it must first be cleared, and Mr. Ou Em, chief of Development of Prey Nhy commune, stated that the land is far away and is not considered good. The surrounding cultivated rice land is already owned and in use by local villagers.

Sras Srang village now consists of three different segments: an established central core, the new returnee houses at the beginning of the new road that extends approximately 1 kilometre, and the newer returnee houses along the extended road that goes into Keo Moni village in Kandieng District. Keo Moni is a new village for returnees, developed from a section of forest and scrubland. Mr. Ou Em, Chief of Development, Prey Nhy commune, noted that there is room for more families in Sras Srang if WFP helps to enlarge and prepare additional land for vegetable gardens, and clear the forest for rice fields.

Sala Komrou Village

Sala Kamrou village was founded in 1919 with five or six households. In June 1994, UNDP/CARERE estimated the population of Sala Komrou at 437 people (98 households with 39 being female-headed). Ten of the total number of households are returnee families. Returnees were provided with house land, approximately 30 metres wide and 100 metres long.

The village has several rice mills and two local markets. It is situated on road #5, 5.5 kilometers east of commune headquarters. Most people use hand-dug wells for drinking, washing, and growing vegetables. During the dry season, people need to collect water at the Pagoda in Sras Srang village or at Ta Brachao village. A primary school had been built in 1960, and in 1993 UNDP built a new one with five classrooms. The main occupation is rice farming, with secondary income derived from palm tree

products, wood cutting, rice mills, video movie showing, and raising animals. Eighty-three households have a total of 60 hectares of rice land, an average of less than one hectare per household. Only eight households have more than one hectare. Twenty-three households have their own draft animals, and 75 have none. Only eighteen households own oxcarts. Most of the rice land consists of sandy soil, which is less productive. In order to make it viable, intensive farming practices must be used through fertilization and mixed crop rotation. But most village farmers are not familiar with new cropping systems so the land does not produce enough to sustain the families. At present, one hectare will yield 700 kilograms of rice. The average household consists of 4.5 persons, and one person needs 260 kilograms of rice from the paddy (unmilled and called "paddy rice") in order to survive the year. UNDP estimates that one family of 4.5 persons needs a minimum of 1,200 kilograms per year, so that families remain about 500 kilograms short of what they can grow.

Both Sala Komrou and Sras Srang have received development aid. UNDP, CARE, and UNICEF provided a cow bank, credit schemes, irrigation systems, and wells. CCDP has plans to implement a credit system for cows and will provide agricultural support and an extension of gardening for families who can get together in groups of ten families each. According to Mr. Mil Ben, Chief Commune Officer, Prey Nhy Commune, most adult returnees are employed on road construction and WFP pays them with rice through the Food For Work program.

4

Returnees and Land—Access, Availability, and Use

Land Issue

The May to November 1993 World Food Program (WFP) country-wide survey of returnees showed that only 12.2 percent had access to land (Robinson 1994). By August 1994, this figure had improved only slightly (personal communication with NGOs, UNDP). Throughout Cambodia, the lack of land for returnees is a critical impediment to successful rural reintegration. In Pursat province, few returnee families have received land, as indicated in the following chart from the Pursat Province Women's Association, dated April 1994.

District	Commune	Village	Number of Families	Size of Land	Other
Kandieng	Sre Sdok	Tul Kou	31	40″ X 50″	
	Bantey Dey	Keo Moni	72	50″ X 40″	Garden 50″ X 40″
Bakan	Tiapeang Chormg	Bakan	65	25″ X 40″	
	Beng Bat Kandol	Svay Chium	31	25″ X 40″	
		Tram Sel	7		
	Chorng	Koh Svay	23		
	Talo	Talo	11	100″ X 100″	Farmland
	Beng Khmar	Roung	10	15 acres	
	Snam Preah	Sambour	86	20″ X 50″	
Kravanh	Prognil	Kampeng	43		
Pursat Ville	Prey Nhi	Sala Kamrou	35	50″ X 70″	
Krakor	AnlongThnot	Ampil Tret	23	20″ X 100″	
	Kbal Trach	Teal Kposh	11	20″ X 30″	
Total			450		

Only five of these villages were listed as selected areas for UNDP/CARERE programs in 1993 and 1994: Keo Moni, Sambour, Kam Peng, and Sala Kamrou. Mr. Say Mang, Chief Officer of Phtas Prey Commune, notes that only 50 percent of the people in this commune have access to the nearby rice land and none of these are returnees. Bernie O'Neill, Field Director of CONCERN in Pursat, commented that without access to land of their own, returnees easily fall into a "very poor" category. Laurie Pennells, CCDP District Nurse in Krakor Province, felt that returnee patients are significantly worse off than local people because they had no land.

The Cambodian land tenure system is still unregulated and is administered ad hoc by local and provincial officials. Returnees may be granted short-term tenancies to develop more fertile land, but they rarely hold secure title. Between 1975 and 1989, the system of land tenure in Cambodia was restructured several times. Before 1975, traditional land tenure was in the form of large freehold plots in which extended families could participate in extensive rice cultivation. During the Khmer Rouge regime, the control of all agricultural land and production was under the Khmer Rouge Communists. Throughout the country, families were divided, local populations were uprooted and sent to different locations, and urban populations were forced to participate as slave labour. After 1979, while millions of Cambodians were still finding their way back to areas of origin, the Vietnamese Communists restricted internal movements and imposed their own version of state-run co-operatives. Gradually, the state-run co-operatives moved towards semi-communal land tenure. By 1989, internal movements were not as restricted and families were allowed to farm very small-scale freehold plots (see earlier chapter on Pursat). The small size of the available fields greatly reduced or eliminated the need for agricultural labour beyond the immediate family. Throughout Cambodia, the lands and properties formerly owned by families are now frequently owned by others. Muanpong Juntopas, Community Development Officer, UNDP/CARERE, Pursat notes:

> Land titles were only given in 1989. Local people have only recently got title to their land and they don't want to give it up or have to share it. In any village the biggest population is the agriculturists. The majority land holding is one to one-and-a-half hectare. Also some of the land, such as in Kravanh District, is still heavily mined. In Pursat Province much of the land is in mountainous areas and there is a big security issue with the Khmer Rouge claiming this as their territory. Therefore, the majority of the population is crowded about the vicinity of towns, especially Pursat Town. This means that accessible land is limited and land holdings are small.

Many returnees in Pursat live in crowded villages, staying on the small housing plots already owned by family or friends. Most returnee families have been able to build temporary housing on these plots, but some are still living under the blue tarps provided by UNHCR, sharing space with animals under existing houses. Other returnees have built houses on the edges of villages or on the irrigation canals. They want housing land of their own but, in the overcrowded villages, good sites (i.e., not subject to flooding) that would allow the growing of field crops like vegetables are difficult to find. Within villages, most of the places where returnees live are on land already claimed by local families, so that their presence is regarded as temporary. In

general, there has been little division of land, especially of rice land being provided for returnees. The assumption is that returnees are participating in extended-family agricultural activities, yet even when this occurs, resources are so limited in the villages that land sharing means increased pressure on the family land. Ms. O'Mahoney, Executive Director of CONCERN, noted the burden returnees place on the local families they stay with:

> A lot of returnee families were reduced to poverty through the loss of their 400-day food ration at the end of December 1993. Significant numbers were asked to leave the homes of those whom they have shared accommodation with because with the loss of their food contribution, their presence became a burden. Returnees tended to stay with families or friends either sharing the home or living in a shack out back. Returnees were considered a source of extra labour within the household, rather than family members sharing in a percentage of the produce from the land.

Access to land remains problematic in all areas, but especially near Khmer Rouge territory where security and land mines make agricultural production difficult. The land that is available for returnees in Pursat is often marginal or very remote as Lam Vong, CCDP field worker in Pursat, explained:

> The land issue is a big problem. Some land is more available and cheap but this is always in high risk security areas or very isolated. The distance limits access to the new land. Both Kravanh and Pursat Ville have villages developed just for returnees, and they are very rural and very isolated.

Popit village in Anlong Thnot Commune, Krakor District, is a section of land given to returnees. Mr. Samrith Bo, Krakor District Authority, noted that although fifteen families are listed (down from last year), he is not certain who is using the land as returnee families move back and forth to the nearby village of Tonsay Kol village. He felt that returnees did not stay because the land was not good for rice production. One returnee woman in Tonsay Kol village, Anlong Thnot Commune, Krakor District, however, commented on her fear to access the land given to her:

> Our main problem in coming back to Cambodia is the lack of rice land and no land for a house to cultivate vegetables. We want to live on our own land but we are afraid to live in the areas available to us. We are afraid for the security and not having any other people live there. The land is so far away we are afraid to go to it. This is why we have come to the village to stay with relatives and friends. We have been able to build a small house on the same house plot but it is only for a short while and it is not our land. We want to go to our land but are afraid and it is easier to earn money here in the village for our families. But even here there are difficulties getting enough water. The only water here is what we can collect in the rain containers.

Another returnee woman from Tonsay Kol village, Anlong Thnot Commune, Krakor District, commented:

> No one here has land for a house. Three of the families were given land and the other three have their names on a list. Almost two years ago the government provided me with land for rice but it was not good land and there was no oxen or any help to clear the land. Also, one family only gets one part of

> a hectare. This land was given to those returnees who came then. Even after all this time we still have not been able to clear the land. If we could get support to clear the land we would want to farm it but not live there. We are afraid to stay at night because of the Khmer Rouge. The land is over half an hour walk away and for some it takes an hour. The main point is that it is not good land. Some families there can grow vegetables around the house but others can't because of not enough water in the dry season. Here in the village, the women can sell the food the whole year round.

Returnees end up on land already owned because they can not access the land to which they have title. Security issues are compounded by the difficulties in cultivating forested or fallow land. Available land for returnees is often covered with scrub and returnees are expected to clear, bund (digging small dikes to retain water), and plough before any planting can occur. Very few returnees have sufficient resources to prepare the land themselves. Mr. Mil Ben, Chief Commune Officer, Prey Nhy Commune, noted:

> Some families must plough with their hands if they want to plant fruit and vegetables. In Sras Srang village the returnee families are provided with the house land, 30 metres wide and 100 metres long. None of them have rice land, no tools, no plough animals or transportation.

Some land has never been cultivated, so that it must first be deep-ploughed and rotovatored by tractors before rice or vegetable seeds can be broadcast and harrowed in. Unless they are given assistance by NGOs, returnee families must pay back ploughing expenses through their own labour, through a percentage of their rice harvest, or with chickens and ducks. If returnees have no land of their own, they can rent cultivated land from someone else. Land is available from other villagers, such as older people who no longer have labour to do their own cultivation, or from government officials who have no time. The payback procedure, however, makes it difficult for returnees to profit from the rental. "Boah" is a Khmer word that explains the traditional way of payback for the loan of land or equipment. The traditional renting system of animals is called "Provas." Both Boah and Provas involve giving some of the rice harvest as a means of rent payment, or something of equal value such as exchanging labour for working someone's land. Boah especially places returnees at a disadvantage to local farmers because most returnees do not have any animals or extra labour for payback if their rice yield is insufficient, and therefore must pledge more of their yield from the next planting.

Access to De-mined Land

The land problem is exacerbated when good quality agricultural land is made available through de-mining, and returnees, locals, and internally displaced people (IDP), all of whom may have worked the land at different times, vie for access. At present, the acute scarcity of good agricultural land forces many Cambodians, returnees, IDPs, and locals to cultivate land that contains unexploded mines. Areas known to be mined are ignored by local people and although returnees are warned to stay away from these areas, they are usually the first to access them when they have been de-mined. The people who moved away from the areas when the fighting started ten years ago (although they were

never classified as IDPs) also move back when it appears safe. Mr. Dan Middlemas, an expatriate de-miner with HALO in Pursat, commented on the friction involved in securing de-mined land:

> Prohoac Kval in Kravanh District used to be a huge village in the 1960s with a hospital, school, pagoda, and market. All of it was burnt when the Khmer Rouge left. In 1979, truckloads of mines were planted by the Khmer Rouge so in one small area there would be hundreds. In February 1994 there were approximately 20 returnee families living under blue tents in the middle of the minefield or on the very edge of the village.
>
> In a government minefield the mined areas are relatively well defined and localized. In Khmer Rouge minefields, they can cover a square kilometre with up to 200 mines scattered through in a "nuisance mining" pattern. This is a military term meaning to cause problems to local people. The base knowledge on mines being in an area is according to the accident rate of animals and people. Every day cattle would be blown up, and cattle represent one year's worth of wealth. In Prohoac Kval village, twelve people had been killed and numerous injuries sustained. But the village is twelve hours from a hospital so the likelihood of survival was low, especially with children. This rate caused the mass abandonment of the village. This area has two mined areas. The first is the huge minefield in the village centre, now abandoned, which is 800 metres by 300 metres. The second is a huge dam—8 feet high, 30 feet across and 800 metres in length—which had 20 mines in it. This was also a "nuisance mining" area or an "area denial" field, meaning its purpose is to cause general fear.
>
> There is no guarantee that all the mines are out from this village because Khmer Rouge mines are plastic and deeply mined. They come to the surface in heavy rains and are detonated especially by cattle. When two more cattle got blown up, HALO declared it a "no-go" area in May 1994. Yet, between February and May 1994, 109 families had moved in, camped around the edge of the mined village centre. A lot of them had registered their names with the village chief and although they were from the surrounding villages, originally they were from the mined village previous to 1983. But a lot of them were also returnees. The area has excellent agricultural land and is attractive with mature trees. From May 1994 onwards, two or three families would arrive per day. Some were "hidden" IDPs (never classified) and previous residents, but most others were from the refugee camps.
>
> There is great pressure that if previous villagers don't return to stake their claim they are afraid "returnees" will come and claim the land. In July 1994, returnees and locals were fighting amongst themselves over the land. People got a plot of land inside the village and there were fights over where people were putting their stakes. Also in July a villager trod on a mine in a de-mined area. Most likely the mine was newly planted to get at the villager, a returnee, who was the husband of a woman involved in a land dispute with another local woman. It's common to settle land disputes with mines. My impression is that revenge seems very apparent among people here.

When HALO begins clearing mines (both government and Khmer Rouge mines) in a specific area, people assume that this land is available, even though the de-mining

process can take up to a year or more. During the de-mining process, when HALO declares a village a "no-go area" and does not allow anyone to move onto the mined land, returnees are found waiting on the outside perimeters. Many returnee families arrive by oxcart (usually a two-day trip) and build a hut to establish their claim to the land. Those who have residences elsewhere can then leave the hut and return to their previous area to wait for the land to become available.

Land Negotiations for Returnees

In Pursat province, very few returnees have received land from the government. Option C was regarded as a contractual issue so that, by accepting it, returnees were deemed to lose their right to demand land. Land was not considered as part of the package deal, and local governments did not feel obliged to provide it. In order to get land for the returnees, UNDP/CARERE has had to negotiate with provincial authorities. Negotiations are delicate because of the numbers of returnees and because there are many poor local families who also do not have land and would like some. Some local people are still unable to get back land which was in their family before 1975 because others have it now. In some areas, such as Keo Moni, a new village has been established for returnees, but in other villages UNDP pushes the boundaries of the village territory to expand the land for returnee families' access. Muanpong Juntopas, Community Development Officer, UNDP/CARERE, Pursat, commented on the kind of negotiations necessary to secure land:

> UNDP uses "baiting" practices for negotiation of land. For example, the floating rice land near Tonle Sap gets fresh water during its annual flooding and needs a particular rice. Many people now access land without the land title, especially returnees. When negotiations were held with the provinces, UNDP offered seed, tractors, fertilizers, etc. for 800 families, if the returnees got clear land title. These negotiations were through the Agricultural Department. In Bakan district as well, negotiations got deep-land rice for 150 returnee families. The "baiting" was to ensure that benefits were given to all the villagers, not just returnees. In the first year of the program it was very successful, so that in the second year UNDP could push further for land for returnees, including helping them with ploughing and planting. Land negotiation is a slow building-block process. The first year only 50 poor local families benefited and the village rice banks increased, which in turn increases the strength of the village. In the second year, the program can expand to more families.

In both new villages and in established ones where returnees have settled, assistance has been community-based, through the provision of road construction, land clearance for housing plots, seed banks, animal banks, credit unions, rice banks, handicraft co-operatives, community funds, co-operative cash crop and food production, training programs, and community ponds and wells. In addition, UNDP is training village head men to be community development workers. The kinds of development projects being implemented are designed to encourage locals and returnees to work together. If returnees can rent land from someone else, they can also be eligible for UNDP assistance.

Returnees and New Resettlement Villages

Through the assistance of the provincial government, UNDP, and several NGOs, a number of new villages have been created for returnees. The basis for their creation is to provide assistance for self-sufficiency and sustainability. UNDP/CARERE has funded, both separately and in conjunction with NGOs, several land preparation projects through QIP money. Ploughing, seeds, fertilizer, wells, livestock and rice banks, ponds, tree nurseries, credit schemes, and even access roads have been provided in an integrated approach to ensure sustainability in the newly-created villages.

Peter R. Swift, Field Director of Southeast Asia Development Project, noted that HECKS, a Swiss NGO, is building two villages in Kampong, Chhang Province, for approximately 150 families each, one for returnees and the other for demobilized soldiers. They are clearing land, providing housing, rice, tree seedlings, vegetable seeds, tools, and cooking utensils. CONCERN is implementing a similar project in Bakan District, Pursat Province, focusing on the poorest people in communities—those with physical disabilities (handicapped, blind, those suffering from mental illness), internally displaced, returnees, and widows with children. Ms. O'Mahoney, Executive Director of CONCERN, commented on how NGO intervention is essential to help returnees access land and make use of it:

> Siem Reap Province is where CONCERN is most involved with returnees. In Siem Reap CONCERN targeted these returnee families to assist them in settling on their own land. Provincial and local district authorities in Siem Reap softened their attitudes to returnees in September 1993 when FUNCINPEC became the government, with more tolerance shown to returnees and a willingness to negotiate land.
>
> It was not until April 1994 that 800 families, 90 percent of whom are returnees, were given housing land (30 by 40 metres) and one hectare of rice agricultural land per family. As in Pursat, there is no clear title to the land yet, although the one hectare amount is certified. Returnees' need for land was so great that people moved onto the housing plots before housing kits were available. This showed their commitment to resettle.
>
> Four main village sites of approximately 180 to 200 families per village were allocated, as well as one smaller village of about 45 families. Roughly 30 percent of the families are identified as female-headed households.
>
> When people moved onto the site housing kits were provided, but assistance in building the houses was given only to vulnerable families, those female-headed and handicapped. At the beginning of August 1994, the Department of Forestry gave 5,000 mixed tree seedlings to the returnee villages to plant. As yet, there are no fruit trees.
>
> Vulnerable families need little assistance in rice agriculture and are planting the three types of rice (paddy—transplanted rice, upland—scattered growing, floating—also scattered but with a different rice seed), as well as maintaining vegetable plots. Many returnees have pigs and chickens obtained through CONCERN credit schemes or through savings from daily labour. Credit was also made available to returnees to hire oxen or water buffaloes from local villagers to plough their land. In one village, where there were no oxen and water buffalo for hire, the Ministry of Agriculture allowed

> returnees to hire their tractors, also paid for on a credit scheme. Overall, the pay back is minimal, 100 kilograms of rice per family. CONCERN feels this amount reflects the scarcity of resources returnees have.

Yet despite this assistance, community development in new returnee villages is especially problematic for a variety of reasons. One problem is that some returnees want to live close to town. Mr. Say Mang, Chief Officer for Phtas Prey Commune, explained:

> The government had a plan for a new village just beyond Sras Srang in Prey Nhy Commune where returnees could get house land. But the returnee families here didn't want to go because it was too isolated. Most wanted to stay around the market. But those who stay around the market here cannot have land to build their own house. Some of them have relatives to stay with, others spent their money to build a house on somebody else's land.

Another problem evident in community development for new returnee villages is that returnees have lived in total dependency for over ten years and have had little chance to participate in decision making, especially concerning their own long-term development programs and activities. In addition, the average returnee adult has little, if any, agricultural skill and needs extensive training assistance in clearing and levelling land, ploughing, or cultivating. Further, most returnees do not own any draft animals and families lack the basic tools to farm. The average tools needed for a self-reliant agricultural family include a cooking stove, plough, hoe, spade, rake, shovel, machete, ax, sickle, bucket, watering can, pumps, rice huller (manual or peddle), and use of community rice mills. Unless the animals and tools are provided, returnees find it difficult to access the land given them.

Muanpong Juntopas, Community Development Officer, UNDP/CARERE, Pursat, noted certain difficulties after land had been secured for returnees:

> Because many families who got the land didn't do anything with it and some sold it for profit, the UNDP now makes the family a contract in which they must acknowledge to cultivate and actually cultivate in order to keep the land. UNDP now provides credit for draft animals, fertilizer, etc. to help them do this. In Bakan, returnees are now having meetings with district authorities to negotiate land. District authorities say land title will be not be given to them until the land has been cultivated for five years. This is to prevent returnees from getting the land and then selling it for a profit. Also, this is based on the past experience of returnees having a lack of interest to farm the land. They just give up quickly and sell it ... This also happened in Keo Moni. As a new village, there was no pagoda, no established midwives, no community health centres, no school within walking distance, no teacher (because no salary from the government). With all this, some returnees choose to remain in established villages near the town. The main issue for returnees seems to be access to services such as they were accustomed to in camp.

From a different perspective, Mr. Samrith Bo, Krakor District Authority, commented on why returnees did not stay in Popit village in Anlong Thnot Commune:

> Returnees did not stay because the land was not good for rice production. Many returnees didn't like the housing land the government provided

> because it was not near the road and there was no water. Also those with land didn't have cows or buffalo to do the ploughing. Now in the district another new village has been created for returnees. Also cows were provided and ploughing. UNDP, CONCERN, Red Cross all were involved. There is still no land for rice, only vegetables and other crops. Land for rice is available but it is too far to walk. During the rainy season [the returnees] stay on the rice land to work and live in make-do huts.

Profile of Two New Returnee Communities

1. Keo Moni Village in Bantey Dey Commune, Kandieng District, Pursat Province

Keo Moni village was developed through the UNDP in 1993. The village was to consist of mixed categories, 94 returnee families and 13 established families. Each family received housing land 50 by 100 metres. The development project consisted of land clearance, the construction of a land access road through "food for work," seed distribution, rice bank, agricultural input, an animal bank, digging wells and three public ponds (for water in the dry season), and the building of a school. In August 1994, the school had only a temporary roof and tables and chairs, but no walls. CARERE will eventually build a permanent school. Keo Moni village has its own militia group of six to seven people and the government provides weapons and clothes. The militia was established for protection against bandits. By August 1994, Keo Moni village was only about 70 percent filled. According to Kosal Mona, Field Worker for WFP in Pursat:

> Returnees want the housing land but they do not want to move away from the market area in Pursat town. Eventually, there will be a truck in the village to transport people and vegetables to the market every day. This will make a 100 percent capacity. Some returnees have already started gardens. Most families have just the one plot of land but there are some returnees with two parents in the family who work really hard and sell the vegetables and other things in the market, and work on the road construction and they have saved enough to buy another plot. Now they are clearing the land to plant rice.

Several of the returnee families have planted upland rice in the fields beside the school, and wetland rice is growing in the canals along the road. After the harvest, in addition to the "food for work" projects, people will do trade or go to the forest to cut bamboo to prepare for palm sugar collection. During the rainy season people fish in the local river, but during the dry season they must go to the Tonle Sap for fishing. Keo Moni villagers cannot sell their vegetables at the edge of the main road (highway #5) because it is private property. They are forced to go to nearby markets although, if transportation is available, people prefer to go the Pursat market because they get a better price (almost double) for their produce and they can socialize with other people and buy needed household items.

In August 1994, there were only about ten to fifteen days left in the Keo Moni road construction, and the WFP field worker was encouraging the returnees to focus on land clearing so they can plant vegetables and fruit trees. Palm trees, for example, take 25 years before they are productive. Mr. Mona, Field Worker for WFP in Pursat, described the continuing development of Keo Moni village:

> The land the government provided has too much bush. Therefore, "food for work" program has an emphasis on clearing the land. People get paid 350 kilos of rice per one hectare cleared. Last time it was only 250 kilos per hectare and it was too low so we had to raise. A strong man can do only 100 square metres per day and women about 60. The development of Keo Moni village has cost more than 100 tons of rice. Many of the Sras Sarong returnees have done much of the work and received the payment in rice. Now I am trying to think of more programs for people, to keep them working. The long-term emphasis is on road maintenance because a good road means cars and more business.

In Keo Moni village, many returnees expressed frustration that they cannot access the rice land in the areas immediately surrounding their village. The Chief of Keo Moni village, a returnee who has lived in the new settlement for over a year, commented on various areas that are still needed for self-sufficiency:

> The first problem is no land for planting rice. Last year we had no crops but had support from UNDP and CRS. Some seed from UNHCR was given and has been planted. We have only land for the garden, no land for rice. Only some produce can be sold in the market. At this point all the energy is going to build the roads so we have no time to do market business. After the end of the road program we don't know. People in general are happy to have this land. Most of the ideas to set up the project come from the WFP and the CRC, but the request comes from the people. UNDP and UNICEF have provided wells. Ponds are also dug by UNDP, then they are filled with rainwater for drinking. We have one Kru Khmer in the village and people go to him. But some cases need to go the hospital in Pursat via a motorbike with cart. Two ARC trained returnee midwives also live in the village and they assist women. They also are part of the ARC program in Pursat.
>
> The village is open for more growth, like newly-married couples who, if they work hard, can get more land. A small part of the road construction people can save up to 150 kilograms of rice (about 20 days work). They can exchange the rice for other food such as fish and meat. UNDP provides credit money for people to buy pigs and chickens and they will receive rice as payment. But last year the crops for rice were not good at all. The reimbursement to UNDP was very low, only two tons of rice was available instead of the expected twelve tons. One hundred kilograms of paddy rice equals 60–65 kilograms of milled rice. The extra 40 percent in husks and such goes to the mill owner as payment and then he sells it for fish food and pig food. What people need most here is a variety of seeds for vegetables and fruit. We also need clothes and materials for the schools such as books. At the beginning UNHCR gave vegetable seed but it is not enough, especially if the bush land is cleared and we plant more. People must hand plough their vegetable plots. Those with money or through a harvest exchange can rent the buffalo. One family prepared a house to make the chicken business because UNDP said they would supply the chickens, but they have not come yet. Also, UNDP money that they lend is at a high payback so people have no incentive to borrow because they don't make the profit.

2. Sre Ampil Village, Kien Svay District, Kandal Province

Before repatriation, Sre Ampil was a small village consisting of some 110 families. During 1992, at the request of over 100 families in Site 2, UNDP began negotiations with the Kien Svay District Authority to find land for housing and for farming (Church World Service 1993). Sre Ampil village was selected because several of the returnees had old contacts and family connections in the area, although others subsequently resettled in Sre Ampil through friendship networks based in Site 2. Returnees were provided with food rations (from the UNHCR and World Food Program), given a small plot of land (40 by 10 metres per family), and promised 100 hectares (250 acres) for rice farming. To date, returnees still have not received this agricultural land, although in July 1994 the Ministry of Agriculture stated that it would be supplied. In a 1993 survey by CWS, 97 returnee families and 110 local families were identified in Sre Ampil village. Unlike local families in Ampil village, returnees still have no rights to their land and no clear title. Since the May 1993 survey, thirty-seven families (most of whom are returnees) have left Sre Ampil village. The reasons given for leaving were to find work in Phnom Penh and to live with relatives elsewhere. Returnees in Sre Ampil village stated that since the food aid ended at the end of December 1993, several families sold their plots for profit and left to make a business in Phnom Penh.

Much of Sre Ampil village has been newly developed for returnee families through extensive reintegration assistance from the Church World Service (CWS), an American NGO. CWS staff were first introduced to returnees in Sre Ampil village at the beginning of 1993. At this time CWS, in coordination with district authorities, was identifying poor villages in Kien Svay District for participation in community development projects (*ibid.*). In response to a request from both the returnees and the district authorities for resettlement assistance, in March 1993, CWS agreed to reintegration support geared towards self-reliance of the returnees and a larger program for future sustainable development of the entire village. Since May 1993, CWS has focused primarily on Sre Ampil village, although two smaller projects were designed for the nearby villages of Propael Kae (digging a well) and Kandal Leu (Vegetable Seed Project).

The implementation of community development projects in Sre Ampil was hampered by preparations for the May 1993 election. In addition to limitation on travel, numerous district and local officials (all of whom were CPP) were unwilling to make decisions before election results (*ibid.*). The uncertainty continued after the election, with government departments and officials unclear of their positions within a provisional government. It is not clear, however, why the land for returnees was not provided since the necessary approval at the district level was obtained at the end of 1993. When the 100 hectares of land are made available to returnees, CWS will assist in clearing and preparing it for cultivation. In addition, CWS will provide a cow bank scheme. Cattle are used by local villagers for labour such as pulling carts and ploughing, and are often loaned out to poorer families.

To date, the bulk of CWS aid has provided direct support for returnees. Seeds (vegetables), fruit trees for harvest (banana and papaya), agricultural tools, and animals (pigs, chickens, ducks) were made available on a credit basis through revolving

funds. Several family and community ponds were dug and seeded with catfish on a credit scheme that allows repayment after the first fish harvest in September 1994. CWS provides a pump which villagers rent to drain and refill the ponds every two weeks or so. Although all families have difficulty meeting the rental fees, CWS feels payment fosters accountability for responsibility to take care of pump repairs. A handicraft centre, including five weaving looms, was constructed to provide the newly-formed returnee women's association with income generation and crafts training. The returnee women allowed poor local women to join their association and participate in weaving and craft production.

In conjunction with CWS planning, the International Labour Organization, with UNHCR funding, began extensive road construction in Sre Ampil. Ten kilometres of existing road through Sre Ampil were repaired and extended to the returnee housing site. In addition, construction of a new internal road has also been started (*ibid.*). Road labour is provided by the returnees (male and female, all ages), who receive rice payment in exchange for work.

The Norwegian Save the Children Fund, Redd Barna, participated in rehabilitating the local school at the Buddhist Wat. Further aid was provided by Redd Barna and CWS in the construction of a school office, three additional classrooms and two latrines, and in giving school furniture, teaching materials, and school supplies for the students (notebooks, pencils, and rulers) (*ibid.*). In a project implemented by the Ministry of Health and UNICEF, and funded through the UNHCR, four wells with hand pumps were dug at the returnee site. Additional technical assistance was provided from the Groupe de Reserche et d'Echanges Technologique (GRET) to encourage returnees to build for themselves two more sources of safe drinking water. Although CWS supplied gravel and sand, returnees have not shown interest in finishing these wells (providing a cover and a pump), thus postponing the addition of two more wells for the school and the pagoda.

The Swiss Interchurch Aid group (HEKS) selected three Sre Ampil villagers (two returnees and one local) to attend a training course on sustainable agriculture. Upon return, eight families formed a "sustainable agriculture group" and received further funding to create a mushroom farm, a tree nursery, and a vegetable base that would provide seedlings to the other villagers (*ibid.*). Excess produce is to be taken to the Phnom Penh markets with funds going back to the group to enable the purchase of cows and chickens. At present, twelve families are in the sustainable agriculture group, four of whom are the primary tenders of a huge fish farm.

During my visit to Sre Ampil, the CWS program staff encountered two other workers from a different NGO, collecting payment for a credit scheme. CWS had not been informed that another agency was involved in giving loans and staff expressed disappointment that this courtesy had not been given. The rule between NGOs is that if one NGO works in an area, the other NGO can assist only after consultation and discussion. Control of ongoing aid programs in a specific project area is clearly defined. Both CWS and the other agency provide similar credit systems—200,000 riel (US$40) per family since January 1994, with a one percent interest payment for a payback of 20,000 riel (US$4) per month. CWS concern is not only for the infringement of what they perceive to be their "territory," but that returnees will "shop around" for as much credit

as possible, getting deeper into debt. The CWS program co-ordinator speculated that the outside agency was contacted directly by the returnees themselves (most likely because of previous association in the Thai camps). He cited other instances where poor returnee families borrow credit from a second NGO to make payments to the first, compounding until either the family sells their plot to repay or chooses to get a bad reputation by not repaying at all. Non-repayment of credit to a NGO, however, does not carry the stigma of being in debt to other Khmer.

According to the returnees, their biggest concern is food. A returnee village leader stated:

> In Site 2 it was very crowded but there was no worry about food. Here we have liberty to go everywhere and to live in a good atmosphere. But, there is a problem in the lack of food. We have not yet got the rice land for cultivation. If we get this land there will be no problem. Here there is a lot of vegetables and a lot of fish which we have all the time and can trade for rice. Still, if this runs low we are in trouble. It takes a lot of time to get the fish. Sixty percent of all the families here live on the edge.

Without land, most returnees get rice in exchange for their road labour. During the month of July 1994, 38 pounds of rice was provided as payment by the World Food Program (WFP). When this payment is postponed (for example when WFP food trucks are diverted to other areas to deal with emergencies, such as the recent flooding in Konpong Speu), returnees stop work on the road and go to the ponds and rivers for fish and to the forest for materials to sell at local markets. The first day after a food payment was not forthcoming, 100 returnees showed up for road work, the second day, less than 20.

Only 40 percent of village families are considered to be in a secure position because they work with the government as soldiers, police, or in health care (as nurses). None of these families, however, are returnees. Among the returnees there are teachers, who do not have jobs because the government will not recognize their certification from the refugee camps. There are also several youth who received senior matriculation levels from the camps, but can find no suitable application for their education. Returnee parents expressed their worry that these children have no work to do. Instead of learning agricultural skills, the youth spend their days fishing, going for fuel, and finding food to feed the pond fish.

The Women's Handicraft Centre is a combination of basket weaving (specifically for holding Loggin fruit), weaving cloth materials to make into kramas (scarves) and sampots (skirts), crochet and embroidery. To date, the women have experienced problems in marketing their goods and have not made any profit. Leaders of the women's association are in the process of visiting other craft centres (locally as well as in Phnom Penh) for ideas and marketing strategies. If they can secure credit for raw materials, the women plan to expand their production to weaving blankets and sewing mosquito netting.

According to the CWS Program Co-ordinator, the fish ponds will provide returnees with an excellent profit. The returnees, however, are not as confident, as is evident in the words of one returnee man:

> Fish in the ponds are late in growing and the water has to be changed every two weeks. To do this we have to rent the pump which is very expensive. This

> means that there is no profit from the pond. Also some of the fish die and a lot of money is spent on food. Also medicine for the fish is expensive.

Local Area Development and New Returnee Villages

The development of new villages often results in considerable advantages for the surrounding areas. If local labourers participated in QIP road construction, this could result in increased income for purchasing, saving, or to repay debt. In the construction of an access road, the presence of labourers is also good for local economies in the selling of baskets for soil carrying, selling fruits, sugar palm, bread, cakes, and other goods (CONCERN 1994, 48). Road construction to new villages also increases access throughout the area, resulting in greater school or temple attendance, as well as opening up more areas for cultivation or grazing. Along Sre Ampil road, for example, herds of cattle are walked up and down the road daily. Rural roads are generally passable only by walking, bicycle, or oxcart but, after reconstruction, motorbikes and motor vehicles can be used. This use impacts on long-term expectations concerning better health services. In the case of emergencies, for example, Sre Ampil villagers can now arrange for taxi transportation to a nearby Christian hospital. Increased access to roads also provides a greater opportunity for villagers to sell farm animals, fish, and vegetables to one another, causing sales of local produce to increase and prices generally to drop. Conversely, villagers get easier access to other food items, fuel, alcohol, cigarettes, clothing, and videos.

Numerous families, including many returnees, also move along the new access roads to Keo Moni and Sre Ampil villages. Their presence, however, does not mean that they can participate in the development programs. During the process of developing Keo Moni in early 1994, for example, almost 30 returnee families built houses along the beginning of the access road that cuts through Sras Srang village. These returnees were not included in Keo Moni community development programs, although they did engage in Food for Work during road construction. One returnee man, now living in Trnot Tret village in Phtas Prey Commune, did not understand the basis upon which development assistance was given to some returnees and not others:

> I first lived in Sras Srang village in the Prey Nhy commune and the NGOs never helped the returnees with getting the land and building the house. I asked for help but they did not give me any. All the NGOs did was surveys and then never did anything. I am disappointed and angry. The NGOs only work to help the rich returnees and not the poor returnees. UNDP and WFP work for the government and do not help the poor people. The rich returnees are those who have the land and the house. We could not get help because we had nothing to pay back, not clothes or household utensils.

The UNDP position is that there were no development plans for Sras Srang at the beginning of the Keo Moni project. Now, however, a community worker has been in place since Sras Sarong started growing in 1994, and plans are being projected to implement development in this village as well (Muanpong Juntopas, Community Development Officer, UNDP/CARERE, Pursat). By August 1994, however, there were no QIPs and the budget for projects had not been approved.

5

Reintegration—Continuance and Impediments

The Assumption of Reintegration

> Back in November 1993, WFP did a survey of those who were getting their last rations, some 7,000 returnee families throughout the country. Since May 1994, the 400-day food has absolutely ended for returnees and as a group they are no longer targeted for assistance. Instead, areas are targeted and some of these may have returnees in concentration, but there is no special assistance provided for them, nothing different from other poor villages who get development aid. Returnees are not "vulnerable" because they are "returnees." Vulnerable is a different classification. After the 400 days, returnees become a "normal" Cambodian villager. (Kenro Osidari, WFP, Phnom Penh)

By August 1994, returnees were no longer being targeted for reintegration assistance. The discontinuation was based on the assumption that returnees have integrated into social and economic networks, as Bernie O'Neill, Field Director for CONCERN in Pursat, explained:

> In Pursat, most returnees came to this province based on the assumption that family would be here or because they were originally from here. Most returnees that CONCERN has experience with in Bakan District have integrated into their families. Integration occurs because everyone lives as a cohesive family unit. In the villages there are no visible signs of distinction. Returnees tend to build smaller houses on the same plot as the families they stay with or they live in the same house.

In the villages observed during this study's survey, it was found that while returnees do tend to build smaller houses on the same plot as the families they stay with, distinctions are still quite obvious because of the construction materials returnees got for housing and the blue UNHCR plastic sheets. Garvan O'Keeffe, Field Programmer with CARE in Pursat, also commented on the "visibility" of returnee housing:

> In the villages up to ten percent have come back from the border. You can tell by their houses. Returnees got a housing kit which included certain types of

> building timber, plastic roofs, and distinct water buckets. Even when they have moved into relatives' houses you can see the same kit. Over time this will decrease.

In new returnee communities, developed through UNDP or NGO assistance, these distinctions are not evident.

Based on the assumption of returnee integration, local governments, international agencies, and NGOs eliminated the classification of "returnee." Reintegration support, originally targeted for returnee families, expanded to include all Cambodians, especially those in most need, however that is to be defined or determined. Martin Fisher, Director of WFP in Pursat, noted:

> It's better to treat everyone the same. Therefore, the emphasis of WFP is not for repatriated people in certain villages but in "poor" villages ... The emphasis is now on village leaders who identify those individuals who are disabled from working. The emphasis is on allocating small jobs to all in need. In addition, there are supervisors who monitor the decision-making apparatus to make sure EVIs get the food support.

UNDP/CARERE and NGOs now focus on generalized zonal assistance programs designed to improve the overall standard of living in an area via community development. In practice, however, general community development provides an uncertain opportunity for returnees. Linda Hartke, Executive Director of CWS, for example, expressed concern that NGO support programs that follow a "cookie cutter" development model may hinder returnee reintegration:

> The ideas for joint ventures and of sharing resources and working together come from other areas in the world. In Cambodia, people tend not to put a lot of effort into these programs because of the negative connotation associated with "sharing." During the 1980's, a Communist hierarchical development scheme was enforced through collectivization of land. Today, people are motivated only if they, individually, are going to get something out of it. People will dig a pond only if it will be their pond, not to help another family.

From the perspective of most NGOs, however, community development through sharing resources and working together encourages the integration of returnees with local people. O'Mahoney, Executive Director of CONCERN, commented:

> At present, CONCERN is trying to get away from the label returnee but to keep aware of the long-term reintegration, or the lack of it ... In Pursat, returnees were not identified as specific recipients of aid as programs were geared towards those most in need. Both local people and returnees were hired to clear scrub land for returnees' rice planting to avoid resentment or jealousy. CONCERN's emphasis in Pursat remains on participatory village appraisal, which obliges both returnees and locals to come together and discuss things. This strategy, along with the village-based credit system, forces people to work with one another and, ideally, to eventually develop a sense of trust. CONCERN, for example, stipulated that in order for returnees to access housing kits, they had to help build homes for the vulnerable (widows and disabled). Unless assistance for others is somehow coerced from people, it will not occur. The only aid specifically targeted to returnees

> was to help them access the rice bank and cow bank credit schemes. These credit schemes were devised from a Bangladesh credit and savings program.

One of the difficulties with community development, though, is that a sense of trust and willingness to help one another has still not developed between locals and returnees. Without the presence of NGOs, locals do not support returnees. NGOs, for example, must implement agricultural skills training sessions for returnees because locals do not share their knowledge, and villages are carefully monitored to ensure that locals do not appropriate what has been given to returnees: As O'Mahoney noted:

> Returnees remain insecure because their land holdings are still viewed as temporary. There is concern that if a good rice crop occurs this year, locals may attempt to push returnees from the productive land. To ensure this doesn't happen, CONCERN is maintaining a presence in the area for the next two years.

Impediments to Reintegration

One year has not been enough time for local people to overcome their initial feelings of suspicion and disinterest towards returnees. Much of the suspicion and distrust occurred because many returnees chose to settle in places they had never lived in before. Dr. Nguon Sakhon of the CRC commented:

> Integration problems occur if people don't return to their area of origin and then expect help from the locals. It is much better to return where the families are, especially the woman's family. A big problem is that many couples returned to the husband's family connections because this was the area located for them. If the husband can get work this is okay, but if the husband depends on his relatives it doesn't work. There has been a lot of secondary movement to the wife's family, especially after the 400 days ended. There is a lot of movement now, sometimes five or six moves per family and it is difficult for us to keep track of them. For the single mother with children, they only move once or twice because it is too difficult for them.

Lam Vong, Field Worker for CCDP, felt that one of the biggest problems between returnees and locals is that locals have a sense of long-term residency and do not feel that returnees have a commitment to stay. The uncertainty caused by continuous returnee movement is reflected in comments by Garvan O'Keeffe, Field Programmer with CARE in Pursat:

> There has been a lot of secondary migration. Resettlement works out much better when returnees go back to villages where they have relatives. Most returnees in Bakan have gone to live with families, a brother or parent. They tend to build houses on the same property and some share access to land. In general, returnees are still a burden to their families. There is much over-crowding and overloading of resources, but they are accepted. Returnees have not had a chance to claim areas and will slowly get absorbed over time. But now returnees have no food support and they are desperate for land so there has been continuous movement. Villages in Bakan tend to have a maximum of 100 to 120 families, so everyone tends to know another and the returnees as well. Locals track the coming and going of returnees.

The initial apprehension towards returnee newcomers was compounded by the fact that many of the returnees were openly suspected of supporting the different factions of the refugee camps. Rogge (1994, 40) clearly identified the impact that political party differences would have on the returnees:

> An extreme example of such conflicts in social and cultural reintegration is that currently being faced by the impending repatriation to Cambodia. All three political fronts in exile have imbued their population with radically different values: the Khmer Rouge continue to uphold their extreme principles of utopian agrarian Communism, the Sihanoukists (FUNCINPEC) foster a traditional Khmer society dominated by a near-feudal royalty, and the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) proffer a Western-style laissez-faire society and democracy. Repatriation will send all three factions into a Cambodian society that has also evolved significantly during the past decade of Vietnamese control and which bears little or no resemblance to the Cambodia of the 1960s or to any of the societal visions held by the exiles.

During the 1993 election, which coincided with the beginning of the repatriation process, returnees were an easily identified target. Several incidents of intimidation and abuse were reported, involving attempts by local political factions and police (who were predominately members of the Vietnamese-backed Cambodian Peoples Party, CPP) to influence returnee voting. Returnees were routinely questioned about their camp of origin to determine their political affiliations, i.e., whether they were Khmer Rouge, FUNCINPEC, or KPNLF. Even after the major political change following the May elections, political conflict did not end and the CPP contending party retained substantial political power in provincial, district, commune and village administration. In established villages, returnees tend to be excluded from village affairs. Bernie O'Neill, Director of CONCERN in Pursat, commented on the dearth of returnees in local leadership:

> Village leaders are appointed by commune heads who are appointed by district heads who are appointed by provincial heads. Cambodia is rare in not having village leaders elected from within. This is where political divisions come in, also the question of competence and interest. Most requests for development come directly from people in the village to the NGO. After the request, the NGO (depending on what people want) may drop into the village for a lookabout, check to see if another NGO is involved, then if they can respond to the request, the NGO will talk to the village leader, then the commune leader, and the district authority. In all of the villages CONCERN works with, they have never come across a returnee in a position of leadership, either among the men or women's groups. There are three possibilities for their invisibility in village affairs: returnees have not stayed so their lack of presence is not an issue; returnees feel so powerless they are hidden in the background and are afraid to speak; or returnees have integrated successfully and don't identify themselves as such because they don't want to remind people.

From a different perspective, Garvan O'Keeffe, Field Programmer with CARE in Pursat, noted that returnees tend not be to be in administration of village affairs because

administration has been previously established and because returnees have no land and therefore no voice of authority.

By August 1994, the provincial and local levels of government were still CPP-dominated and did not seem overly concerned with or sympathetic to returnees. Local people were also said to reflect this attitude. Several returnees stated that, even after one year, extended kin still refuse to acknowledge family ties, primarily out of fear that association with returnees may affect their positions with local CPP political networks. The returnees say it will take time for their relatives to "know them," meaning that relatives will need to be assured that the returnees will not cause trouble with different political values. One returnee man stated:

> No one really talks free to returnees, for example asking them what their beliefs are. So many local people just guess and don't know the true person. Slowly this is changing and it really is up to the returnee to show that he/she is not one political party or another. Even still, local people do not believe and try to trick returnees into saying something bad. There is still the separation today that here is the CPP and there is the returnee. We can talk to one another, say hello, but not have really free conversation. Yet when people understand me now, then they like me.

Another returnee man said:

> In general, it is hard for returnees to make friends. Even in families it has taken all of two years before other relatives relate with returnees and make friends with them. When returnees first came back many of their relatives didn't like to make it known that they have relatives who are returnees, in case it causes problems with their own jobs. Relatives were afraid they would come under suspicion for having contact with "enemies" from the border camps. All these past fears are very hard to erase.

Due to limited resources, resettlement and reintegration have not been a priority with the CPP local governments, and officials do not seem to have the interest nor the capacity to identify or provide appropriate assistance to returnees. Again, this attitude was reflected by local villagers. It is possible that the reintegration process has been impeded by local jealousies and resentment about the good aid package that returnees got and the education they received in the camps. According to the first survey at Sre Ampil village in Kien Svay District, Kandal province, for example, returnees were much better off than the local people in terms of health, skills/training, money they received, and the 400-day rice ration (CWS 1994). In the first year following repatriation, returnees in the newly-developed village of Sre Ampil faced distrust and jealousy from local villagers. A leader of the Women's Handicraft Association recalled:

> When people first arrived, local people hated them but now there are close relations. When they first arrived, locals thought returnees were Khmer Rouge and locals were afraid to go to the returnee village. Now locals know the kind of people here ... Some of the old people when they went to the Wat, no one would speak to them. They caused one woman problems until they found out she came from an area supervised by Son San ... Local people felt jealous for the development aid that the returnees were given. When returnees

> first got the food for work program, they were called "thieves in the forest." At the beginning, when the women went to the forest for firewood, they were chased out. But this stopped when the food program stopped.

This attitude can in part be explained by the extensive loss that local people throughout Cambodia have undergone. During the long years of international isolation, local people have lived within a severely damaged infrastructure with little or no assistance. Most villages continue to suffer an acute scarcity of all resources including draft animals, tools, seeds, and household appliances. The extensive poverty in villages could explain why returnees received such minimal levels of assistance from their neighbours and the lack of meaningful response from within the village community. Several returnees noted that since their 400-day food aid ended, local people appear less hostile. Now that returnees have no special attention, local people may be more receptive and supportive of returnee needs and involvement in zonal assistance strategies. Returnees could also play an important role in local development programs by sharing their communication skills to effectively request and access available assistance. Unlike returnees, most local village people do not have a high degree of receptiveness to available assistance from international organizations and interested NGOs, nor the effectiveness of the returnee's ability to articulate needs. Samrith Bo, Krakor District Authority, expressed confidence in the long-term reintegration of returnees:

> When the returnee came to settle there was trouble but they now have no conflict with the local villagers ... Many organizations, NGOs, come into the district to help returnees. This has been good for the district because they are now doing help for us. I expect that when the returnee children grow up they will marry with the local people. Now there is no longer a label for returnees as being different. Now that the aid has stopped there is less and less tension between people and less distinction. It was not jealousy, but just that for all those months returnees had rice. NGOs are now focusing on everyone—on women, on those who need some help, there is no distinction.

In comparison, however, a returnee man, who works for a Pursat-based NGO, gave the following detailed account of the ongoing lack of reintegration among returnees:

> There are many problems with returnees. Where they live is often very dangerous for them. They have knowledge about things but are afraid to say anything. My feeling is that there are still differences between poor local people and returnees. The biggest thing is that poor people have more land, for housing and for rice. Most returnees have nothing and lack any sort of property—cow, buffalo and all the farming materials. Even though poor local people have problems, their houses have knives, they have ploughs and animals, and they have authority. Local people are the village police, but not the returnees. Returnees cannot sleep easy at night. They worry all night. Returnees feel local police do not give them protection. Also, local people have guns and no returnees have guns. They can't even get them because they are still under scrutiny and not quite trusted. Local people question why returnees want a gun.

Also returnees are still having to behave like they are the guest in the house. They cannot speak back even when people are impolite or rude. Returnees cannot say anything. Also, even though the returnee has a house, they cannot stay. They are scared, they have no protection, or other families around the returnee house are complaining or try to press on the returnee family. The returnee family feels under pressure all the time and the situation is bad, so they cannot stay and they move to another place. Returnees have little support. Returnees are made to feel like a guest in their relative's house, they are expected to leave. This creates a lot of tension. Also, if the spouse of a returnee (especially the husband) comes from another province, local people don't trust him/her.

Also, when the returnee family has no food, other local families are not concerned. Local families are also hesitant to include returnees in the credit work schemes. I work in administration for the credit work scheme of my NGO and I know that the credit group in the villages is always with the local families. You have to have five families in the credit scheme and the five never include the returnee family. My feeling is that in the long term, as long as the returnee can work for the other families in the fields and if they do a side business, they will make it day by day.

But, if sickness occurs, many things happen. If the sick returnee goes to the hospital, there is no family network to take care of them in the hospital. There is the problem of money, taxi money to pay for their transportation to the hospital, money for food to feed the patient, money for treatment, money for medicine. Returnees have not been able to develop the community networks for support, nor have the extended family connections to help the whole situation of being sick, for example making sure money is paid for the fuel for the generator to do the operation. Local people have all this. Local people help each other and know who are the good medical people and make sure their family gets good treatment. With returnee people there is no one to look out for them. If returnees don't go to the hospital what can they do? The Kru Khmer charge returnees more money because they don't know them and there are no friendship links to bring the charge down. Returnees are afraid to say anything in case the medical person gives them the wrong injection.

Reintegration among Returnees in Newly-Established Villages

For returnees in newly developed communities, the support and presence of other returnee families has been critical in developing a sense of reintegration. According to several of the returnee women in Sre Ampil village, for example, not many of the returnees have relatives nearby. The returnee women stated that this area was chosen through negotiations between the leader of the returnees and the government, and it was made clear to them that if they did not come here there was no place else to go. Many returnees in Sre Ampil have relatives in Svey Rieng, Phnom Penh, and Kampong Cham, but felt they were not given a choice in locating there. Most returnees, however, developed close friendships with one another in the camps, and they say it is these friendship networks which formed the resettlement unit and now keep Sre Ampil

people together. Friendship linkages have replaced the family-based "kroms" (traditionally comprised of groups of eight to twelve nuclear households who share matrilineal kinship). The non kin Kroms remain the basis upon which social life and shared economic activity revolves, and returnee women say that they expect their children to marry one another. Eight families in Sre Ampil village "sustainable development group," for example, are considered to be a "Krom," with four other families affiliated, but relegated to fish pond maintenance. Core members of the returnee women's cooperative are also part of two Krom groupings, and those on the outside have difficulty participating. Returnees in newly-developed communities are also more positive about their long-term reintegration with local neighbours. The returnee leader of Keo Moni village, Kandieng District in Pursat, noted:

> We are also building a pagoda with assistance from the Buddhist Development Association in Pursat, but the number of monks is not yet decided. On Tnay Sil days people go to the pagodas near by, about seven kilometers on bicycle or motorbike. Relationships between returnees and locals are quite good. They respect each other. My deputy is a local person. All of us come together to celebrate New Year's. People from other villages come here to visit and also to pick up vegetables and chickens for the market. Also people come from villages as far away as fifteen kilometers to work in the "food for work" program. Most returnees here have relatives in Pursat, but not nearby. In the village, friendship relations take the place of the relatives.

In Sre Ampil village as well, relations with local villagers have slowly improved, especially after the new roads were constructed. For returnees, the road provides easier access to local markets and nearby pagodas. Local people have built housing and businesses (such as duck farms) on either side of the road, right up to the returnee settlement. The road is increasingly used by locals in the surrounding villages to bring their cattle to new grazing fields, and to access flooded areas for future harvests. The cessation of the food aid has also coincided with improved community relations between Sre Ampil returnees and locals. During the New Year's celebrations of 1994, for example, Sre Ampil village was opened to locals from several areas. Following religious celebrations in the morning at the Wat nearest Sre Ampil, a New Year's party was held all day, all night and into the next day. As a result, friendships were made.

In other Cambodian villages, however, there are still few signs of reintegration between locals and returnees, as Anne O'Mahoney, Executive Director of CONCERN, noted:

> Locals do not share their militia teams, needed to defend land holdings from Khmer Rouge incursions and general banditry. Returnees thus have no protection. In addition, returnee sites are on their own, apart from locals. While returnees go into local villages, visits by locals are not returned. Returnee children do not have access to local schools. Local schools cannot cope with the large number of returnee children and although there are numerous teachers within the returnee population, they cannot get on the government payroll. Returnees go to the local pagodas but, to date, monks have not gone to the returnee villages.

Returnees as Internally Displaced

According to Anne O'Mahoney, Field Director of CONCERN, up to 90 percent of the large number of internally displaced people over the last two years have been returnees. She cited several reasons to account for the high proportion of returnee IDPs:

> 1. Returnees were given access to land situated on the outskirts of local villages. This was calculated so that the returnee presence would act as a human shield between local people and the Khmer Rouge or bandits. When attacks occur, returnees are first hit and local people forewarned. Refugees become displaced and lose what they have, but local people absent themselves and their animals for a few days until the Khmer Rouge or bandit presence is gone.
>
> 2. There is a question concerning the degree of commitment on the part of returnees to rural life. Returnees are not used to the difficulties of village life and the lack of services (medical, education, support) that were available to them in the refugee camps.
>
> 3. When displacement occurs, the first people to go back are usually the non-returnees who have a greater familiarity with the area and have long-term support networks. In most cases, returnees do not have access to these important networks. They cannot be provided, only developed.

Dr. Nguon Sakhon of the CRC noted that, as the reintegration focus of CRC disappeared, funds were channelled into emergency relief and programs for the internally displaced. Increasing occurrence of droughts and floods and internal security have replaced attention on returnees. In Pursat, although there are no IDP sites, such as in Battambang and in Bantheay Meanchey, internal displacement occurs regularly. By August 1994, there was extensive mixing of internally displaced persons with returnees. From the local village perspective, Linda Hartke, Executive Director of CWS, noted that among village people the categorization of "returnee" is not a clear concept. The label "returnee" is often confused with IDPs, or anyone who has been forced from their land for whatever reason and has come back. In Khmer, there is no word for returnee. "Chun Pien Kluan" indicates someone who has left the country, which in English would be translated to "refugee," and "Chun Pien Sut" means someone who has left the area, which in English is translated as "internally displaced." As the numbers of IDPs continue to increase throughout Cambodia, the label "returnee" is used less frequently.

Issues and Problems in Rural Economic Reintegration

Rogge (1994, 34) notes that economic reintegration and rehabilitation are key issues in any repatriation, and some degree of assistance is usually needed to facilitate the process:

> For repatriating refugees, this process of economic adjustment and reintegration is contingent upon a number of variables: length of time in exile, level of self-sufficiency or dependency while in exile, skills or knowledge acquired

> while in exile, income-generating opportunities or means of production available in home areas, individual or zonal reintegration assistance provided, degree of voluntariness in returning, and individual commitment and/or tenacity to re-establishment.

Given the extremely high degree of dependency in Cambodian refugee camps (indicating that returnees will experience difficulty readjusting to support themselves), combined with severely restricted access to agricultural production or income-generating opportunities, low skills, and a devastated economy, the economic reintegration of returnees is problematic. Very few returnees have achieved any degree of self-sufficiency. Those who do are either employed by NGOs or in their own business. Even those small numbers of returnees provided with access to garden land, tools, and seed can only engage in small-scale vegetable production, not the self-sufficiency of rice cultivation. According to Mr. Say Mang, Chief Officer of Phtas Prey Commune, Pursat Province:

> [o]nly 50 percent of the people in this commune have access to the nearby rice land. None of these are returnees. Those with no rice land are usually employed with the government as soldiers or they run businesses in town. Also, many are workers for labour jobs or work as porters on the train. Returnees have also been able to get some of these jobs after their support ended. Some returnees have found jobs with the NGOs because of their language skills, and some have their own business selling vegetables or [running] repair shops.

A number of returnees who do not have land are working in small businesses like radio repair, video repair, motorcycle repair, and transportation. Like local people, returnees are often engaged in several activities, such as day labour, processing palm sugar, or firewood selling to help bring in money to buy rice. The majority of returnees want steady employment, but its scarcity means that they remain dependent on Food for Work schemes. In addition to the WFP food security, returnees are learning several local coping mechanisms to live with poverty, such as catching fish or going to the forest for raw sandalwood, which sells well in the markets (even though it increases exposure to malaria). A new employment innovation in Pursat is catching local grasshoppers. Cambodian grasshoppers are uncommonly large and are considered a delicacy in Thailand. One is worth 450 riel from the middleman, so that catching only a few a day will generate one US dollar, enough to buy rice for a family.

Apart from the small numbers of returnees who have well-paid positions with NGOs, most educated returnees cannot access teaching or health care jobs similar to those they held or were trained for in the camps. Among CPP provincial, district, and commune administrators, there has been a marked antipathy towards employing highly-skilled returnees, especially those who received training in the refugee camps. There is a general bureaucratic intransigence on the part of all levels of governments to accredit the qualifications of returnees and, as a result, professional returnees (teachers, nurses, administrators) cannot find work in Pursat.

One returnee man in his late thirties spoke of his formal medical training in Cambodia before 1975 and his medical certification in Site 2. For four years he was the TB co-ordinator in the border camps for a NGO. UNBRO then recruited him to co-

ordinate their more extensive TB program for two years. He repatriated to Pursat in 1992, where he has since worked with CARE International as the Community Division Program Officer. Still, his qualifications as a health care professional are not recognized by the Ministry of Health. Another professional returnee, a woman, used to be Chief of Obstetrics in Site 2 with ARC. At present, she heads the midwifery and maternal health care program for CARE in Pursat, and is Chairperson of the Cambodian Midwives Organization, a unique position because 90 percent of all members are government workers. Yet, even though she is their elected leader, the government will not recognize her qualifications and allow her to practice as a midwife. Brian Heidel, Executive Director of ARC, commented on the difficulties professional returnees have in accessing employment:

> The differences between returnees and locals are subtle. There is no outright discrimination except in returnee access to government employee positions, administrative, health care, teaching, etc. Except at the high Ministerial level, where certain individuals from Site B have found positions in the FUNCINPEC government in Phnom Penh, returnees are not welcome in district and provincial level administration, in government hospitals and clinics, in public administration, in schools.
>
> One reason why returnees are not welcome is that numerous government workers at the district and provincial levels have received inadequate or unstandardized training for the positions they now occupy. While this was a necessary strategy in rebuilding the shattered infrastructure as quickly as possible, those in current positions do not want to lose their jobs or have their deficiencies made visible by working with returnees who are better qualified for running and implementing innovative health care or educational policies. Local party staff and political leaders are threatened by the returnees who are coming in with new knowledge. This discrimination against returnees results in a great waste of human resources and skills, a waste of eight years of knowledge and technical experience in the camps.

In a 1992 Discussion Paper by the Ministry of Health, Planning and Statistics Office, called "Cambodia: A Standard District Health System," incumbent District Health Officers responsible for curative and preventative health care at the district hospital and throughout the province, are identified as lacking the management skills and expertise to meet the people's needs. The Paper also identified the lack of standards in training and recommended that a standard test be given to all health care workers. On April 19, 1993 in a Concept Paper on "Development of Integrated Training Centres for Health Personnel at Provincial Level," the World Health Organization (WHO) clearly stated that the need to utilize the skills and resources of returnees and have their qualifications recognized was a priority. To date, however, nothing has been implemented and WHO's position is that it is up to the Ministry of Health (a member of FUNCINPEC) to instigate the process. Leaders of the CPP coalition party (the previous Vietnamese-backed government), however, continue to advocate on behalf of district and local bureaucrats who remain in place despite the change in the top echelon of political power, and a recognition of their shortcomings. Both professional returnees and the NGOs who are working in health care find this situation frustrating. Professional returnee men who are unable to find employment have had to rely heavily on

their wives, friends, and family for support since repatriation. Many of these men are forced to engage in labour-intensive road construction for food payment, or stay at home assuming many of the domestic duties while their wives attempt to make cash through small-scale marketing. Their continuing financial woes are stressful, as is the considerable disappointment and embarrassment many of the returnee men feel in not acquiring work that reflects their training and education.

At present, professional returnees can only find employment in UN or NGO agencies. A returnee man working for a NGO commented:

> Except for the top leaders of the country, and most of them returned from Western countries, returnees cannot work for the government. The CPP government is in control in all the provinces. They, the CPP, feel that the returnees are enemies and they have no confidence in them. Returnees want to work with them and apply for many kinds of jobs with them, but never get a job. Returnees only have authority when they work with NGOs. If returnees don't have the capacity or the skill, they don't get a job. When UNTAC came, many returnees went with them and NGOs worked hard to recruit their own workers. After UNTAC left many returnees were unemployed and NGOs had no place for them. They tend to wander around to try to get a job. Like me, Pursat is not my homeland. I applied for a job in Phnom Penh, and Pursat was available, so me and my family came here. I came before repatriation to get a job. This was very dangerous. Many accidents occurred going through the forest with mines and soldiers. We had no personnel card and we were illegal in the country. But if I waited in the camp I might not have gotten a job. So it was better I came early. I had worked with UNICEF, UNBRO, and CARE on the border so I could get something because I already worked with the people.

To some extent, the disproportionate number of UN and NGO Khmer staff from the border has resulted in the creation of an elitist system. Carol Strickland, Program Co-ordinator at CARE in Pursat noted, for example, that 50 percent of CARE project staff were returnees. Anne O'Mahoney, Executive Director of CONCERN, stated that the vast majority of the over 400 CONCERN staff are returnees, because they have the necessary skills and because many are familiar to CONCERN, which has worked with Khmer in the refugee camps since 1979. Brian Heidel, Executive Director of ARC, also notes that most ARC Khmer staff are returnees, including program staff and a Khmer administrator. Some NGOs in Phnom Penh, however, are deliberately not employing returnees, even when they are better qualified, to avoid creating resentment among local people. Linda Hartke, Executive Director of CWS, noted that the selection of returnees for staff positions was also diminishing:

> In general, returnees are not favoured in job hiring and tend not to be more skilled than local people. Two years ago, 1992, their English language skills gave them an edge for employment in UNTAC and the election procedures, but this is no longer the case as locals quickly caught up, and now are as frequently employed as translators. NGOs such as CWS, which have a big emphasis on agricultural training and programs, have few returnees on staff because they tend to lack minimal skills training in agriculture. The CWS is more interested in community development skills among those whom they

hire, and returnees tend not to have training in this area as the camps were more "service-" rather than community-oriented.

Vulnerable Returnees

Throughout Cambodia, there are few employment opportunities, especially in rural areas. The returnee problem in finding work is a reflection of the country's poverty, not the returnee status. One returnee woman now living in Tonsay Kol village, Anlong Thnot Commune, Krakor District in Pursat, commented on her circumstances:

> When we lived in the camps it was easier. In the camps we were supported by many organizations, but here there is no support. When in the camps, our living conditions were good. Here there is no money for medical services or medicine when someone gets sick. No NGOs have come to help us since we came to Pursat. Six of us women [all returnees] sell food at roadside, to the people on the bus, the children help with the housework. Two of the women are widows. One has to support her two children all by herself. She has no relatives here. Next year there will be no change in our lives. The life for the children is very hard and they will have to work so hard. But we are glad to be back in Cambodia, glad to have returned home. We like to stay in this area and want to make this village our home. The local people here make us feel welcome. We would be happy if we get the good land. The men in the family can clear the land for vegetable growing. I would like another ration card because this would guarantee my family would get rice.

Female heads of households and other vulnerable groups such as the physically handicapped, ill, or the psychologically traumatized, have the greatest difficulty in accessing employment and are totally dependent upon WFP food aid. Their lives are precarious, especially since the loss of the 400-day food aid and the extensive NGO support system. Returnee women do not receive special consideration from NGOs. CWS, for example, moved away from the criteria of returnee reintegration to focus on the poorest and most disadvantaged people within a community development context, many of whom are in female-headed households. The CWS approach is moving more to a credit system and repayment for commodities such as rice and fertilizer, and assistance is geared towards the community rather than individuals. In an attempt to help one returnee woman who is expecting her seventh child in September, but whose husband recently abandoned her for a younger woman in Phnom Penh, CWS could only encourage the woman to continue her participation in the Sre Ampil handicraft association and make sure the woman's daughter participates in the road labour for rice payments. Often, returnee women are not in a position to help one another. Although Sre Ampil is considered the "Phun," or village, there is little sense of "community" to include all returnee or local families. As one woman explained:

> Some of the single mothers joined the handicraft weaving but this was a problem because they had no rice to eat and they don't know how to do the weaving. Also, there is no one to look after their children so they can go weave ... No one in the village helps them and CWS gives only general aid. These women try very hard to manage, especially when the children get sick. It is

> difficult for non-krom members to help these women because everybody here struggles and there is little to spare, no time or extra money.

NGO zonal-targeted assistance, geared towards community development and income-generation schemes, requires that returnee women would have to be part of a group of at least five women to qualify for assistance. Unless returnee women have resettled with close kin or have developed friendship networks, they are not likely to find other women willing to share in development projects.

During the survey in Pursat Ville villages, several returnee women who are heads of household stated that they had no extended family or friendship networks, that they were isolated, abandoned by everyone, dependent upon themselves, and solely responsible for their children. Under these circumstances, the women and their children are easily subject to labour exploitation, and emotional and physical abuse. In their striving for some sense of economic self-sufficiency (outside of a traditional system in which a woman's position is inseparable from that of her husband's), female heads of households, attempt to survive through day labour (domestic or working in the rice fields for others), through informal sector activities such as marketing crafts, firewood, or vegetables, running food stalls, or through engagement in illicit activities such as brewing alcohol or prostitution.

In the new settlements, some female heads of households have received plots of garden land but, without help (tools, draft animals, labour), they have difficulty preparing the ground for vegetable or fruit cultivation. Returnee women also tend to have little knowledge or skills involving non-rice agricultural cultivation, such as fruit trees and vegetables. Women are not likely to retain their land if they cannot work it, or if their production is low. The WFP recognizes that many women are vulnerable, especially with their lack of relevant skills, and field agents attempt to devise work schemes in which single-parent women can participate (baby-sitting other children, cooking for the road labourers) in order to receive food payment. Yet, even when women do participate in the WFP road construction, they get paid less rice, because they get less done per day and because their job to carry the dirt is not worth as much as the digging, done primarily by men. In Sre Ampil village, returnee women identified the poorest families as being those headed by women, and those with numerous children (more than three). One returnee woman, a widow with two children, felt she was much better off with no husband because she would not increase her family size and thus reduce her opportunities for employment and savings.

Thorn (1991) identified differences in attitude between returnees and local women that may have impact on long-term reintegration. Thorn (1991) noted that, in the refugee camps, the collective memory of women was that of pre-1975, i.e., "to be a good wife and mother" and to work in traditional female occupations such as sewing and weaving. There has been a "reluctance among the camp women to learn practical skills" or to gain experience in running small businesses (Thorn 1991, 56). Further, in the camps, NGOs emphasized problem solving and service delivery, giving little preparation to women to face the realities of living independently in Cambodia. In comparison, the Women's Association of Cambodia (WAC) encouraged local women to advance as much as possible and identified several qualities that were considered essential to the contemporary role of a Cambodian woman: to be able to work hard and achieve good

results; to be literate and educated both technically and culturally; to practice co-operation and solidarity with each other; and to raise children and provide for their welfare. The emphasis for local women was on self-help and sharing through programs such as revolving credit schemes (*ibid.*, 55).

The Khmer Women's Association, active in the Khmer border camps to provide skills training, adult literacy, child care support, and numerous social and health services, has not reorganized in Cambodia to implement support service or skills training among returnees. In Pursat, previous leaders of the Khmer Women's Association tend to be working for NGOs as midwives or translators. The skills and resources that returnee women acquired in the camps are not accepted or utilized by local and provincial authorities, including the Women's Association of Cambodia.

Typology of Returnees

Based on the information in this report, five types of returnees can be distinguished.

1. Returnee Elites

Included in this group are all those who work for NGOs and receive very high wages compared to all other Cambodians. Translators or field workers make an average wage of US$120 a month, and even the lowest paid NGO workers such as cooks or drivers still make about US$80 a month. Many of the good returnee staff at NGOs came back earlier from the camps in January or February 1992 to access the first available jobs. They left their families behind in the camps. Returnee elites are also comprised of those who worked for UNTAC as translators. UNTAC paid double and triple the rate (US$300–400 a month), and many qualified returnees who were employed are still living off the funds and have been able to buy a house and good land, or start a business. People in this category often have VCRs in their homes and a motorcycle.

Also included in this group are those returnees who receive financial assistance from overseas relatives. In Sre Ampil village, there are two large-scale enterprises (mushroom farming and chicken raising), operated by returnees, both started through overseas financial support. The chicken farmer has over 500 chickens and is said to be getting rich.

2. Returnees with Land

Returnees who have been given a good plot of housing land have the opportunity to grow fruits and vegetables and to participate in marketing, and can grow small-scale rice crops. The following agricultural crops can be locally grown in home gardens: oranges, custard apple, jack fruit, papaya, cocoa, banana, sugar palm, citronella, red pepper, pulasan, onion, cucumber, pumpkin, string bean, mung bean, sesame, smelling grass, carambola, mint, aegle marmelos, eggplant, ginger, edible arum, sugarcane, gourds, pineapple, as well as edible aquatic plants.

Returnees with land who participated in UNDP/CARERE or NGO community development assistance, such as receiving wells, seeds, training, credit, or land clearing

in the new communities, exhibit greater potential for self-sufficiency than those with no external assistance. The difference between returnees' gardens in Keo Moni and Sras Srang villages for example, is often a reflection of which village gets community development aid. According to the Chief of Keo Moni village:

> People who came here to this village have a much better life than other returnees because we have houses and land for gardens. The differences in houses and gardens in Keo Moni depend on how hard the people work. Some families with two parents are lazy and never do work on their house or make a garden.

After one year, clear disparities of wealth are visible among returnee homes in new settlements. In Sre Ampil village, for example, some family dwellings have noticeably deteriorated, with gaping holes in the thatch siding, while other dwellings have new wooden walls, verandahs, a bicycle, or numerous animals underneath the house (pigs, chickens, ducks) indicating wealth. One returnee woman explained:

> Throughout the year some families are getting richer and some poorer. Those who have money can make more money and those with the husband and wife together can try harder and get more profit. The one who has a job or a motorbike can get money. Others can't do this. Those with only one parent in the family have the hardest time.

In general, returnee homes still lack small animals (ducks, chickens, piglets), draft animals (cows, buffaloes), farm materials (plough, cultivator, oxcart, ploughshare), as well as construction materials (wire, timber, zinc sheets), all of which are seen in local homes. Returnees with land can still participate in "food for work" schemes and supplement their incomes through fishing, firewood, and general selling in the market.

3. Employed and Semi-Employed Returnees

Returnees in this group are working in their own businesses, such as repair shops, or are the inter-phone operators who serve the NGOs' expatriate staff and the Cambodians who have family overseas. They make enough money for self-sufficiency, but it is not reliable. Many of the returnees who now operate a small business came back from the camps with money saved from a small business or trade in the camps or from payment working for NGOs. Generally, these returnees live in Pursat town, or in nearby villages, and have a bicycle or motorcycle. Several handicapped returnees are in a business developed through assistance from the UNHCR.

4. Landless and Unemployed Returnees

These returnees have no family in the villages, no jobs, are staying only temporarily in a village, and have difficulty in reintegrating. They tend to move frequently in their search for land, job opportunities, or family members. There are few material resources in their homes such as furniture (tables, cabinets, or chairs) or kitchen supplies. Many move to Phnom Penh to find work or become soldiers. These returnees are often envious of locals who have housing land, draft animals, and agricultural livelihoods.

Also included in this group are those returnees who have access to land by virtue of living with their families or having built a house on their plot, and who engage in a combination of labour jobs such as "food for work," working for others in their fields, or gathering firewood. Now that returnees can no longer be guaranteed basic food needs, however, their presence often becomes a burden to relatives or others with whom they have found accommodation.

5. Extremely Vulnerable Returnees

This group would include the disabled, the ill, women without husbands who receive no NGO assistance and have no land or relatives to help them, or families with numerous children. They tend to live on the boundaries of villages in poor housing with few material possessions. The dilapidated house with holes in the thatch and missing walls is a good indicator of their poverty. Their homes are empty of water jugs, kitchen utensils (pots, frying pans), furniture, and bedroom items (blankets, mosquito nets). If they are not receiving WFP rice, these families must supplement their diet with foraging in nearby forests for wild yams or wild cereal crops. Several of the women stated that they and their children are servants for other people in the village. Poor health was frequently mentioned, as well as the lack of money for health care resulting in the death of family members. Those who can afford to move from the villages often gravitate to Phnom Penh.

Garvan O'Keeffe, Field Programmer of CARE, characterized this group of returnees thus:

> There is a "left over" population of returnees: those who didn't get jobs, have no family to get absorbed into, and who have no land. These left-over people are still in the final stage of repatriation.

Part Two

Survey Results

Sample and Procedure

The results presented in this section are drawn from a survey conducted in Pursat town over a period of four days in August 1994. The sample selection process began by identifying 11 sub-district communes where large numbers of returnees were known to have settled. From this, three villages were chosen on the basis of access and interviewer safety. In total, 96 individuals were included in the study.

District heads, as well as commune and village chiefs were first consulted about the study and later notified of the day surveyors would be in the village. Interviews were given in Khmer and all information was recorded in that language. To minimize errors, interviewers worked from a structured questionnaire written in Khmer (to ensure accuracy the instrument had been previously translated from English to Khmer and then back translated). Information on the completed forms were then transcribed into English.

A team of 10 interviewers were hired from a group who had previous data collection experience with other NGO agencies. Interviewer training took place in one day, during which time the questionnaire was carefully reviewed and questions about its implementation were answered. Dr. R. Dion was responsible for constructing the database, analysis and the presentation of results in this section.

Fieldwork Consideration

Some of the field problems revolved around difficulties in finding respondents. In Prey Nhi, and especially in Roleap, several returnee houses were abandoned. Neighbours did not know why the families left and did not know where they had gone. The common response was "they just moved one day and didn't say." In Roleap, many of the returnee houses were located on a narrow strip of land between the river and the road, while local houses were on the other side of the road. In Phteas Prey there were no empty returnee houses although many were closed. Neighbours stated that many people had gone to work in the rice fields for the day, while others had gone to sell vegetables in the market and would not return till the late afternoon. This made interviewing difficult since interviewer safety required that they return home before dark. During many of the interviews, returnees were unable to say what they felt because local villagers would stand nearby and listen to what was being said. Several of the survey team stated that during interviews the returnee women would begin crying about how they have no food.

Overall, the survey implementation was limited by a number of difficulties. Harsh research conditions which included imposed curfews, restricted travel, lawlessness, villager suspicion and the constant threat of Khmer Rouge attacks made large scale data gathering impossible. Thus, the results presented in this report are intended only as an indicator of the circumstances facing those repatriated back to Cambodia from the Thai Refugee Camps.

Demographic Profile

Background characteristics of the 96 repatriated Cambodians are presented first. Data (Table 1, below) show that two-thirds (66%) of those surveyed are female. In terms of age, results reveal that the majority (50%) are 31 to 40 years old, with 31 percent above 40 years and 15 percent under 30 years of age. Most of the respondents reside in Prey Nhi (32%), although substantial percentages can also be found in Phteas Prey (30%), and Roleap (26%). Those surveyed living in other places represent 12 percent of the sample.

Data on household composition shows that 81 percent of returnees interviewed have 4 or more people living together and only 16 percent report 3 or less individuals in one dwelling. Most of those surveyed (74%) state that they are the head of the household, with a large percentage of this sample being female. This, coupled with the finding that 79 percent are also married or re-married, raises interesting questions about the extent of family role changes since repatriation. Although almost all respondents have children, slightly more than half (55%) report having 4 or more children, while 40 percent indicate that they have 3 or fewer children. Only 5.2 percent of those surveyed report having no children. To investigate family role changes after repatriation, household chores were crossed by sex of respondent.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

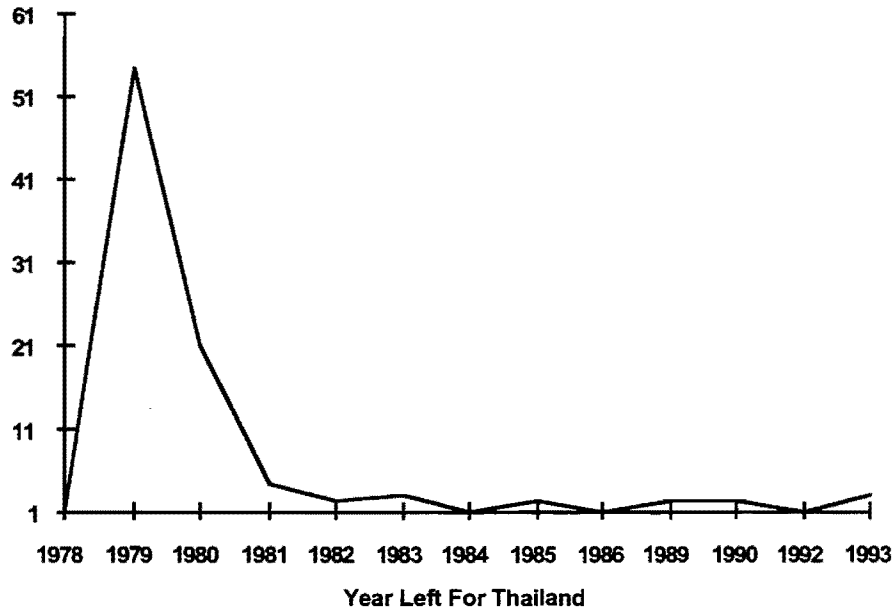
Profiles	%	Profiles	%
Sex		*No. of Household Members*	
Male	34.4	1–3	15.6
Female	65.6	4-6	45.8
Total	100.0	7–9	32.3
n	96	10 or more	3.1
Age		Not stated	3.1
00–20 years	1.0	Total	100.0
21–30 years	13.5	n	96
31–40 years	50.0	*Status in Households*	
41–50 years	22.9	Head-of-household	74.0
51 or older	8.3	Other	25.0
Not stated	4.2	Not stated	1.0
Total	100.0	Total	100.0
n	0	n	96
Commune/Town		*Marital Status*	
Roleap	26.0	Single (never married)	0.0
Prey Nhi	32.3	Married	76.0
Phteas Prey	30.2	Widowed	13.5
Other	11.5	Divorced	4.2
Total	100.0	Remarried	3.1
n	96	Separated	2.1
		Not stated	1.0
		Total	100.0
		n	96
		Number of Children	
		1–3	39.6
		4–6	49.0
		7 or more	6.2
		No children	5.2
		Total	100.0
		n	96

Table 2: Types of Chores by Sex of Respondent

Types of Chores	Male % Responses	Female % Responses
Cooking	45.5	95.2
Cleaning	48.5	95.2
Childcare	51.5	84.1
Washing clothes	45.5	90.5
Shopping	36.4	85.7
Carrying water	66.7	68.3
Gardening	60.6	36.5
Finding extra food	36.4	20.6
Collecting firewood	54.5	46.0
Caring for persons outside home	12.1	3.2
Other unspecified	3.0	0
None	6.1	1.6
Not stated	9.1	3.2
	100.0	100.0
	33	63

Responses indicate that females continue to cook (95%), clean (95%), take care of the children (84%), wash clothes (91%) and shop (86%). Chores most often cited by men are carrying water (67%), gardening (61%) and collecting firewood (55%). Interestingly, men indicated caring for persons outside the home more often than women (12% males, 3% females).

Figure 1: Year of Departure



Data for Figure 1 show that departures began in 1978 and continued yearly to 1993, with the exception of 1987, 1988, 1991. The bulk of movement occurred between 1979 and 1981 when 75 percent of those surveyed left for Thailand. These numbers are reflective of the exodus that occurred in the larger population in the wake of the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia and the disintegration of Khmer Rouge control.

Table 3: Travel Companions in Flight from and Return to Cambodia

Companions to Thailand and back to Cambodia	To Thailand % Responses	To Cambodia % Responses
Parents	25.0	21.9
Children	35.4	81.2
Spouse	33.3	72.9
Relatives	16.7	14.6
Solo	18.8	13.5
Friends	19.8	8.3
Siblings	32.3	21.9
Others	2.1	5.2
Other returnees	—	1.0
None	2.1	—
Total	100.0	100.0
n	96	96

Table 3 shows results for the types of people who accompanied respondents on their journey to Thailand and back to Cambodia. Children and other family members (e.g. parents, spouse, siblings) constituted the majority of those travelling with respondents when leaving and returning to Cambodia. It is interesting to note the relatively large deviation in percentages for the trip to and from Thailand. For instance, 35 percent of respondents left with children, while 81 percent returned with children. Thirty-three per cent left with spouses and 72 percent returned with married partners. Solo travellers comprised 19 percent on the journey to Thailand, while slightly less (14%) returned alone. Although it is difficult to attribute an exact interpretation to these fluctuations, it does suggest family reunification, or the creating of new families in the Thai camps. This second explanation is further supported by the increased percentage of those returning with spouses and the slight decreased percentage of those travelling alone.

Table 4: Reasons Rated as Important or Very Important for Leaving Cambodia

Reasons for Leaving Cambodia	% Responses
Seeking food	70.8
Escape from Khmer Rouge	26.0
Opportunity for a new life	50.0
Fear of Vietnamese	32.3
Nothing left in Cambodia	43.8
Accompanied others who left	46.9
Looking for family	24.0
Other	14.6
Not stated	1.0
Total	100.0
n	96

Despite years of subjugation and forced labour by the Khmer Rouge, only a minority of respondents refer to the fact that they left to escape Khmer Rouge control. While seemingly paradoxical, this is understandable since the invasion of Vietnamese forces would have diminished the existing threat of further Khmer Rouge enslavement. However, it did not eliminate other dangers such as life under Vietnamese communism or starvation caused by a failure to plant and harvest rice as people searched for family members and remained unsettled. As the data reveal, respondents frequently report leaving to search for food (71%). A significant percentage of responses suggest that respondents were motivated to leave for personal reasons, indicating the need to start a "new life" (50%) or to accompany others (47%) and the feeling that there was "nothing left in Cambodia" (44%). Many were also concerned about their liberators, stating that they left because they feared the Vietnamese (32%).

Table 5: Province of Origin, before 1975 and Province Returned To

	Province of Origin %	Province before 1975 %	Province Returned to %
Battambang	10.4	16.7	10.4
Kompong Chann	3.1	—	—
Kompong Chhnang	4.2	1.0	—
Kompong Speu	3.1	1.0	1.0
Kompong Thom	1.0	1.0	—
Kandal	8.3	5.2	4.2
Phnom Penh	2.1	6.2	3.1
Prey Veng	2.1	1.0	—
Pursat	50.0	45.8	74.0
Svay Rieng	1.0	1.0	—
Takeo	6.3	4.2	—
Kampot	2.1	—	1.0
Banteay Meanchey	1.0	—	2.1
Other	4.2	4.2	—
Not stated	1.0	12.5	4.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
n	96	96	96

Table 5 shows respondents' province of origin, before 1975 and the province they returned to after the Thailand camps. Most of those sampled lived in Pursat before 1975, (50%), or Battambang (10%). The majority of respondents returned to the same two areas, Pursat province (74%) and Battambang province (10%). The remaining 16 percent returned to the other provinces such as Kompong Speu (1%), Kandal (4.2%), Kampot (1.0%), Banteay Meanchey (2.1%).

Life in Thai Camps

To obtain information about respondents' lives in the Thai refugee camps, questions were asked about the specific camp where they stayed longest, the time spent there, type of training received and their desire to remain in the camps.

Table 6: Thai Refugee Camp Respondent Stayed in Longest

Camp Stayed in Longest	%
Khao I Dang	5.2
Sok Sann	2.1
Huay Chan	13.5
Green Hill	1.0
Site 2	61.5
Site 8	1.0
Say Bie	1.0
Chun Borey	1.0
Tampy	1.0
Rith Sen	1.0
Norng Chang	1.0
Dang Rek	2.1
Site B	5.2
Not stated	3.1
Total	100.0
n	96

Data in Table 6 show the Thai refugee camps where respondents spent most of their time. Of the locations named, the majority (75%) stayed in two places; Site 2 (62%) and Huay Chan (13%). Approximately 5 percent were located in Khao I Dang, 2 percent at Sok Sann, 1 percent at Green Hill and 1 percent at Site 8. The remainder (13%) were dispersed in other sites along the Thai boarder, such as Say Bie, Chun Borey, Rith Sen, Norng Chang, Dang Rek and Site B.

Table 7: Years Respondent Lived in Thai Refugee Camp

Years in Thai Camp	%
11 years or less	24.0
12 years	10.4
13 years	47.9
14 years	16.7
15 years	1.0
Total	100.0
n	96

Three-quarters of the respondents in the sample (75%) spent between 12 to 14 years in Thai refugee camps. Considerably fewer (24%) lived in Thai camps for less than 11 years and only 1 percent of the sample did so for more than fourteen years.

Table 8: Types of Training Received in Thai Camps

Types of Training	% Responses
Mechanics	5.2
Healthcare	14.6
Educational	18.8
Typing	7.3
Agricultural	4.2
Tailor/sewing	2.1
Administration/management	1.0
Hairdresser	1.0
Handicraft	2.1
Construction	1.0
Other	10.4
No training	49.0
Not stated type of training	2.1
Total	100.0
n	96

Table 8 illustrates the types of training respondents received while in the Thai camps. The most striking finding is that 49 percent of the sample did not obtain any training. Nineteen per cent trained as educators, 15 percent as healthcare workers, 10 percent in other occupations and 5 percent as mechanics. The high percentage of individuals receiving no training is consistent with the fact that many Cambodian refugees were in camps where no training was provided.

Repatriation

Repatriation from Thai camps back to Cambodia involved several steps. One of the first UNHCR initiatives was to distribute information by flyers and videos about the repatriation process. This section investigates the most important sources of information. As well, it reports the dates, destinations and reasons respondents provided for repatriating.

Table 9: Source of Most Information on Repatriation

Source of Most Repatriation Information	%
Relatives	1.0
UNHCR	95.8
NGO's	3.1
Total	100.0
n	96

By far, the source of most repatriation information was the United Nations High Commission On Refugees (96%). Relatives and Non-Government Organizations provided information to only 4.1 percent of respondents.

Table 10: Year Returned to Cambodia

Year	%
1990	1.0
1991	3.1
1992	45.8
1993	36.5
Not stated	13.5
Total	100.0
n	96

As the figures in Table 10 indicate, some movement back to Cambodia occurred in 1990 and 1991 (4.1%), but the largest influx of returnees occurred between 1992 and 1993 (82%). Since the food/aid package began on return, 46 percent of Cambodians who repatriated in 1992 would have finished their UNHCR package before 1994. It is likely that the 4.1 percent of respondents who returned prior to 1992 were more entrepreneurial and saw opportunities for future employment with NGOs. This is the case with the single individual who returned prior to 1991 and is currently working for an NGO.

Table 11: Reason for Selected Destination

Reasons	% Responses
Homeland/birthplace	26.0
Live with/near family/relatives	45.8
Hope to get land/house	10.4
Hope to get job	4.2
Brought by friend	3.1
Close to market/trade centre	3.1
Involuntary/referred by agency	8.3
Other	5.2
Not stated	3.1
Total	100.0
n	96

The reasons for repatriation are predominantly, although not exclusively, positive. By far the most popular reason given by those sampled was to reunite with family (46%), or to return to their homeland (26%). Some returned for economic opportunity (jobs 4%, closer to market/trade centre 3%), while others report being involuntarily referred by an agency (8%).

Table 12: Person(s) Stayed with on Return to Cambodia

Person(s) Stayed with	%
Family	79.2
Friends	11.5
Alone	9.4
Other	6.2
Total	100.0
n	96

Table 12 illustrates that the majority of those sampled report having stayed with family upon their return to Cambodia (79%). Far fewer stayed with friends (12%), alone (9%) or in other arrangements (6%).

Table 13: Length of Stay at First Location after Repatriation

Length of Stay	%
Less than 1 year	43.8
1 to less than 2 years	28.1
2 or more years	24.0
Not stated	4.2
Total	100.0
n	96

A large percentage of returnees (72%) stayed at their first resettlement location for less than two years, while 24 percent settled for longer. The high number of those moving within a two year period suggests resettlement difficulties such as lack of land or employment, non-acceptance by locals, and unsuccessful attempts to reintegrate with family. These will be explored at greater length in later sections.

Table 14: Number of Times Moved after Repatriation

Times Moved	%
None	29.2
One	49.0
Two	14.6
Three	4.2
Four	1.0
Not stated	2.1
Total	100.0
n	96

Table 14 displays the number of times respondents moved after returning to Cambodia. It is interesting to note that approximately 69 percent of those sampled indicate moving once or more. Only 29 percent of the respondents remain in the place where they first returned to in Cambodia. Such high internal migration suggests that many returnees feel unwelcome by villagers or have difficulty accessing land or employment. In an attempt to determine the reason for the high secondary movement after their return, respondents were asked to indicate their reasons for moving. Table 15 reports the outcome of this question.

Table 15: Reasons for Moving after Return to Cambodia

Reasons for Moving After Return	% Responses
No land available	56.3
Financial difficulties	55.2
No employment	51.0
No housing	59.4
Security reasons	20.8
To be near family	20.8
Other	6.3
None of the above	11.5
Did not move	29.2
Not stated	2.1
Total	100.0
n	96

Respondent's reasons for moving after they returned to Cambodia revolve mainly around basic needs such as land, income, employment and housing. On these issues, respondents seem about evenly split between problems in acquiring land (56%), financial difficulties (55%), employment problems (51%) and a lack of housing (59%). Despite the constant threat of Khmer Rouge guerrilla raids, fewer responses (21%) suggest that security was the reason for a move after returning.

Table 16: Reasons for Wanting to Remain in Thai Refugee Camps

Reasons	% Responses
Hope for better life for kids	36.5
Good support in the camps	43.8
Fear of returning to Cambodia	17.7
Security	28.1
Jobs available in camps	1.0
Training available in camps	2.1
Better living conditions (food/jobs)	7.3
Had no land	3.1
Miscellaneous other	1.0
No relatives left in Cambodia	2.1
No land/house in Cambodia	7.3
No job/earnings in Cambodia	4.2
No security/peace due to war	6.3
Poor living conditions for self/children	6.3
Miscellaneous no desire to return	4.2
Nothing to depend on	2.1
Did not want to stay in Thai Camp	54.2
Total	100.0
n	96

When asked why they had wanted to remain in the Thai refugee camps, the reply most often given is that the camps provided "good support" (44%). Those surveyed also mention that life in Thai camps offered hope for their children (37%). At the same time, a sizable percentage of responses suggest personal safety was a factor in wanting to remain in the camps, (18% didn't feel safe returning to Cambodia, while 28 percent believe that the Thai camps offer security). A number of mentions also related to a general despair with life in Cambodia such as the absence of land, homes, relatives, jobs, and poor living conditions.

Life in Cambodia

To gain a sense of how well returnees are adjusting to life in Cambodia, respondents were asked to rate their standard of living, to indicate whether they had debts to repay, as well as to state their employment status, occupation, income and the hardships (e.g. unemployment) experienced.

Table 17: Standard of Living and Indebtedness

Standard of Living	%	Debts	%
Above average	1.0	Yes	27.1
Average	39.6	No	66.7
Below average	51.0	Not stated	6.2
Bad	5.2		
Very bad	2.1		
Not stated	1.0		
Total	100.0	Total	100.0
n	96	n	96

Figures in Table 17 indicate that 58 percent of the respondents feel that their present standard of living is below average, bad or very bad, while 40 percent state that it is average. Only one person assesses his/her living standard as above average.

Although the standard of living is generally perceived to be below average, bad or very bad, the reasons for this do not hinge entirely on having debts since the majority (67%) report owing nothing. In an attempt to further investigate the basis of dissatisfaction with living standards, several tables were constructed showing a typology of respondents, employment status, occupation and income level (Tables 18–21).

Table 18: Respondent Types by Rating of Living Standards

Rating	Elites	Land Access	Semi-Employed	Vulnerable	Others
Average or Above	78.0	46.7	39.2	29.4	35.3
Below average	22.0	46.7	55.0	59.0	53.0
Bad or very bad	—	6.7	3.0	11.8	11.7
Not stated	—	—	3.0	—	—
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
n	9	15	33	17	22

To gain an understanding of those who may be most and least satisfied with their current living conditions, a typology of respondents was created. Elites comprise all those whose income exceeds 100,000 riels per month. The land access category is made up of respondents who, through their immediate family, can utilize land for gardens or rice production. It should be pointed out that immediate family includes grandparents.

Thus, many returnee families who access land do so through family connections. Although it is possible to be an elite and a land owner, there was only one person in this sample with both of these designations. In contrast, there was more overlap between semi-employed members and vulnerable respondents (widowed, divorced or disabled individuals). Nevertheless, results in Table 19 show a clear linear trend across groups.

As one might expect, most elites (78%) rate their living standard as being average or above average. While the same is true for those with access to land, there are slightly fewer of them (47%). Only 39 percent of those semi-employed and 29 percent of vulnerables rate their living conditions as average or above. Somewhat unexpected is the fact that 22 percent of elites rate their current condition as below average, despite having the highest monthly income.

Table 19: Employment Status

Status	%
Employed full-time	38.5
Part-time/Semi-employed	32.3
Homemaker	25.0
Unemployed	4.2
Total	100.0
n	96

Of those surveyed, 39 percent report being employed full time and 32 percent state that they work on a part-time basis. Those identifying themselves as homemakers constitute 25 percent of the sample, while only 4 percent consider themselves to be unemployed. These results are interesting in light of the high unemployment throughout Cambodia. A crosstabulation of employment status by occupation (not shown) indicates that those considering themselves employed full and part-time are predominantly farmers and sellers in the market. Both of these activities can be considered self-employment occupations. In terms of respondent types, all elites and those with access to land report being employed full or part-time, while semi-employed and vulnerables indicate greater percentages in the part-time, homemaker or unemployed categories (table not shown).

Table 20: Occupation before 1975, in Thai Camps & Currently

Occupation	Before 1975 %	In Thai Camps %	At Present %
Farmer (rice/vegetable)	42.7	1.0	14.6
Healthcare worker	—	10.4	4.2
Wood cutter/collecting	—	2.1	4.2
Small selling in market	12.5	24.0	11.5
Handicraft vendor	—	1.0	—
Construction	—	2.1	4.2
Child care (only)	—	—	—
Homemaker (only)	—	3.1	25.0
Tailor	—	1.0	1.0
Childcare & homemaker	—	2.1	1.0
Mechanic	—	1.0	—
Farming & wood collect.	—	—	2.1
Teacher	1.0	11.5	2.1
Labourer	1.0	—	5.2
Small repairs (radio)	—	—	2.1
Military	2.1	5.2	—
Student	17.7	4.2	—
Sanitation worker	—	3.1	—
Translator	—	1.0	—
Hairdresser	—	1.0	—
Taxi operator	—	3.1	—
Work with KWA	—	—	—
Elderly—no occupation	—	1.0	—
Child—no occupation	6.2	1.0	—
No occupation	7.3	8.3	4.2
Other	5.2	2.1	4.2
Not stated	4.2	6.2	14.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
n	96	96	96

Data in Table 20 compare occupations prior to 1975, while in Thai refugee camps and since repatriation back to Cambodia. The most dramatic shifts in occupational roles are seen in farming. Forty-three per cent of those interviewed engaged in farming before 1975 and only 15% report being currently occupied by that activity.

Occupations with the smallest changes from before 1975 and at present are selling in the market and teaching. Occupations most popular in the Thai camps were marketing, teaching and healthcare. Note that some provided skilled labour in the camps, such as

translators and hairdressers. Many of these occupational activities could not be continued after repatriation. Moreover, those who were students or military personnel before 1975 have been forced to find other work or no employment at all.

It is also important to note that a large percentage of respondents, who did not have an occupation before 1975, now report being homemakers. This is likely due to the number of young mothers who, over the thirteen year period of life in the Thai camps, started families of their own.

Table 21: Monthly Household Income (in Riels)

Monthly Income	%	Adequacy of Income	%
30,000–less	47.9	Yes	7.3
30,001–100,000	19.8	No	88.5
100,001–500,000	7.3	Not stated	4.2
500,001–750,000	3.1		
No income	6.2		
Not stated	15.6		
Total	100.0	Total	100.0
n	96	n	96

The most striking feature in Table 21 is that the majority of respondents (48%) earn 30,000 riels or less in a month (about $12.00, U.S. a month, or $144.00 per year). The next highest earners (20%) report making between $12.00 and $40.00 (U.S.) a month. Only a small percentage of respondents earn between $40.01 and $200.00 (U.S.) per month, or more. Not surprisingly, most (89%) believe that their current income is inadequate, while only 7 percent feel their income is reasonable. Although not shown in tabular form, results were also crossed by the respondent types. Elites report the highest income, making over 100,000 riel per month. A few of those with access to land and semi-employed state that they earn between 30,001 and 100,000 riel per month, but most are making less. All vulnerables report a monthly income of 30,000 riel or less with 12 percent of those stating that they have no income at all.

Table 22: Respondent Types by Adequacy of Income

Income Adequacy	Elites	Land Access	Semi-Employed	Vulnerable	Others
Yes	33.3	—	15.2	—	—
No	66.7	100.0	84.8	88.2	94.1
Not stated	—	—	—	11.8	5.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
n	9	15	33	17	26

Table 22 shows respondent types broken out by adequacy of income. Consistent with the overall distribution of responses (Table 21), all respondent types feel that their income is inadequate. However, it is surprising to find that the majority of elites (67%)

believe their current earnings are insufficient, especially since they live in relative luxury compared to the rest of the Cambodian population. This remains puzzling as further investigation reveals that elites suffer no more disadvantages in terms of health, caring for sick, disabled or elderly individuals than those who have access to land, semi-employed persons or vulnerables.

Table 23: Reasons for Income Inadequacy

Reasons	% Responses
Expenses exceed income	30.2
Impossible to support family	12.5
Children sick frequently	7.3
Income not steady	3.1
No land for cultivation	1.0
No job/income	13.5
Needed to buy food	10.4
Needed to buy clothes	2.1
Needed to pay for housing	1.0
Too little	19.8
Need to support many children	3.1
Miscellaneous other	14.6
Not stated	12.5
Total	100.0
n	96

The most predominant response given by respondents for their income inadequacies is that "expenses exceed income" (30%). Many others simply state that their income is "too little" (20%) or that they have "no job/income" (14%). Beyond strictly pecuniary replies, prevalent responses are "impossible to support their family" (13%) or "buy food" (10%). Others indicate that their children's frequent illness, the need to buy clothes and the lack of land are further reasons for their income troubles.

Table 24: Reasons for Being Unemployed

Reasons	% Responses
Qualifications not recognized	28.1
Lack of appropriate skills	31.3
Do not want to work	13.5
Financial/transport difficulties	38.5
Lack of language skills	30.2
No demand for skills	14.6
Illness	2.1
Discrimination	4.2
Disability	8.3
Other reasons	9.4
Not stated	30.2
Total	100.0
n	96

There is little consensus about the reasons for being unemployed. A large percentage of the responses revolve around the issue of skills, either a lack of ("language" 30%, "appropriate skill" 31%), or no demand for (15%) the abilities they possess. Roughly 10 percent feel that illness or disability is the reason for their unemployment. Many others (28%) believe that their qualifications are not being recognized, or that job market discrimination prevents them from gainful employment (4%).

Many of those interviewed (39%) indicate that financial/transport difficulties disadvantage them in that start-up money for small businesses is unavailable, or transporting their goods to the market is a problem. For those who live far from the markets, the cost of a taxi or bicycle is prohibitive. Interestingly, 14 percent of respondents state that they do not want to work. Given that a large segment of the sample is engaged in homemaking, not wanting to work may refer more to an unwillingness to work outside of the home given domestic responsibilities such as child rearing, or an inability due to physical disability.

Table 25: Problems Experienced after Returning to Cambodia

Problems	% Responses
Money	99.0
Housing	92.7
Finding employment	69.8
Health	50.0
Access to schools	36.5
Finding medical services	58.3
Difficulty finding family	15.6
Other difficulties	14.6
Total	100.0
n	96

Most of the problems respondents experienced after returning to Cambodia revolve around a lack of infrastructure needed to provide basic necessities. For example, many responses focus on money (99%), housing (93%), employment (70%) and health or medical care hardships (50% and 58% respectively). Access to schools and difficulties finding families, while important, appear to be less pressing.

Table 26: Comparison of Life in Cambodia versus Life in Thai Camps

Cambodia versus Thai Camp	%
Better	35.4
Same	16.7
Worse	45.8
No comment	1.0
Not stated	1.0
Total	100.0
n	96

Results in Table 26 indicate respondent's overall sense of dissatisfaction with life in Cambodia. When asked to compare their current circumstances with their previous living arrangements, 46 percent said that life in Cambodia is worse than life in the Thai refugee camps. Roughly 17 percent believe that life in Cambodia is comparable to their previous situation. Thirty-five per cent of the respondents state that they consider life in Cambodia to be better than their Thai camp-life.

Assistance after Repatriation

Assistance was provided to returnees from the UNHCR in the form of several aid packages described in section one. Respondents were asked to give their opinion on the assistance they received on return, their current situation and future aid preferences.

Table 27: Aid Received on Return, Currently, and Aid Desired

Types of Aid	On Return % Responses	Received Now % Responses	Desired % Responses
Departure information	90.6	—	—
Travel arrangement	77.1	—	—
Post-arrival information	69.8	—	—
Food/rice	95.8	14.6	90.6
Tools	83.3	—	64.6
Housing	41.7	7.3	87.5
Advice	51.0	—	—
Employment	33.3	—	—
Education/training	41.7	5.2	76.0
Money/cash	80.2	12.5	92.7
Clothes	52.1	—	—
Equipment	42.7	—	—
Healthcare	—	3.1	75.0
Land	—	—	89.6
Safety/Security	—	—	75.0
Plant seed	—	10.4	—
Job skills	—	—	65.6
Agricultural tools	—	—	78.1
Other	1.0	2.1	20.8
No aid received now	—	57.3	—
Not stated	—	9.4	2.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
n	96	96	96

While all received some form of aid on returning, the types varied greatly across respondents. Departure information (91%), food/rice (96%), tools (83%) and money (80%) are some of the most frequent responses. Mentioned less often are housing (42%), advice (51%), employment (33%), education (42%) and equipment (43%).

Slightly more than half (57%) of the sample currently receive no aid. A few receive food/rice (15%), money (13%) or plant seed (10%). The types of assistance desired were also quite varied, but six categories predominate. The two most popular types are money (93%) and food/rice (91%). The next most important items desired by respondents are land (90%), housing (91%) and agricultural tools (78%).

Table 28: Most Important form and Adequacy of Aid Received

Most Important Aid Received	%	Adequacy	%
Pre-departure information	2.1	Yes	6.3
Rice/food	50.0	No	63.5
Tools	3.1	Not stated	30.2
Housing	2.1		
Advice	2.1		
Employment	5.2		
Money	13.5		
Clothes	1.0		
Not stated	20.8		
Total	100.0	Total	100.0
n	96	n	96

Table 28 shows the types of aid considered most important by respondents. Most of those interviewed (50%) feel rice/food to be the most vital, while only 14 percent per cent report that money is important. The remaining types of aid such as tools, housing, advice, equipment and employment are of significance to fewer individuals sampled. The finding that assistance with housing, tools and equipment are not more popular items is understandable in light of the inability to access land promised in the UNHCR packages. As a result, most respondents (64%) state that current assistance is inadequate.

Table 29: Financial or Other Aid Received from Family or Relatives Overseas

Aid Received	Family Overseas %
Yes	17.7
No	82.3
Total	100.0
n	96

In addition to assistance provided by agencies such as the UNHCR, families living in Canada, France or the United States could also lend financial help to their relatives in Cambodia. However, this source of support seems limited. As indicated in Table 28, very few returnees sampled receive overseas aid from family or relatives (18%). Of those who obtained external family support, only 7 percent received financial assistance. Over a six month period, these individuals report receiving an average of $74.00 U.S.

Social Reintegration

In order to determine the degree of difficulty returnees face in social reintegration, those surveyed were questioned on their perceptions and attitudes about acceptance. For example, respondents were asked about the presence of family, relatives or friends in the area, whether villagers received them warmly or expressed resentment towards them and whether UNHCR aid helped in reintegration.

Table 30: Relatives or Family from Thai Camps Live Nearby

Relatives or Family Nearby	%
Yes	67.7
No	32.3
Total	100.0
n	96

Slightly over two-thirds of the sample (68%) indicate that they have family or relatives living close to them, while roughly 32 percent state that they do not have any relatives living near them.

Table 31: Types of Relatives in the Area Prior to Arrival

Types of Relatives	% Responses
Father	4.2
Mother	12.5
Brother(s)	11.5
Sister(s)	13.5
Mother-in-law	3.1
Father-in-law	2.1
Aunt(s)	7.3
Uncle(s)	5.2
Cousin(s)	11.5
Grandparent(s)	3.1
Other family	33.3
No answer	12.5
No family nearby	32.3
Total	100.0
n	96

Table 31 shows the types of relations respondents had in the area before their arrival. The majority of respondents (32%) report that no relatives were present before their arrival. Of those who did have relations living in the area prior to arriving, immediate family such as mother, siblings and other family are most often cited.

Table 32: Number of Family Members Living near Respondent

Number of Family Members Nearby	%
None	32.3
One	13.5
Two	11.5
Three	11.5
Four or more	17.7
Not stated	13.5
Total	100.0
n	96

Approximately 54 percent of those sampled state that they have one or more family members living near them. Eighteen per cent indicate that they have four or more family members living close to them. However, 32 percent report no relatives nearby. For these individuals, existing family support networks are unavailable as a means for social integration into the community. Instead, these respondents are saddled with the more difficult task of creating networks which include overcoming villager suspicions and hostilities.

Table 33: Friends nearby Prior to Arrival and Continued Friendship after Repatriation

Friends Nearby	%	Continued Friendship	%
Yes	32.3	Yes	58.3
No	67.7	No	24.0
Not stated	—	Not stated	17.7
Total	100.0	Total	100.0
n	96	n	96

Figures in Table 33 show that far more respondents report having no friends prior to their arrival (68%), than those who did (32%). Of those who did have friends before arriving, the majority (58%) have maintained that companionship. However, a substantial percentage (24%) have not continued their friendships on return. Unfortunately, the reason for not maintaining the pre-existing friendships is unknown. Perhaps the demands of daily living, the desire to start over or the high migration are contributing factors.

Table 34: Perception of Locals' Attitudes towards Returnees

Attitude	%
Favourable	65.6
Not favourable	15.6
No opinion	16.7
Not stated	2.1
Total	100.0
n	96

Most of those surveyed believe that attitudes towards returnees are favourable (66%), but approximately 16 percent feel that villagers do not like returnees. However, a high percentage (17%) of respondents report "no opinion" on this issue. Although it is difficult to interpret this response, it could indicate a cultural or politically motivated reluctance to divulge their true feelings on the matter.

Table 35: Percentage Who Perceived a Warm Reception on Return and Percent Age Who Experienced Resentment Regarding UNHCR Support

Warm Reception	%	Resentment	%
Yes	64.6	Yes	26.0
No	17.7	No	72.9
No idea/opinion	15.6		
Not stated	2.1	Not stated	1.0
Total	100.0	Total	100.0
n	96	n	96

Almost two-thirds (65%) of those sampled believe that returnees were given a warm reception. Eighteen per cent thought that returnees were not warmly received and about 16 percent had no opinion on this matter. Moreover, over one-quarter (26%) of the returnees interviewed report encountering outward resentment for UNHCR support, but the majority (73%) have not had such experiences. To gain a better understanding of the way in which aid packages helped or hindered resettlement, respondents were questioned on the role assistance played in their effort to reintegrate into family and community. Table 36 displays these results.

Table 36: Whether Aid Helped in Resettlement and to Move Closer to Family

Helped Resettlement	%	Closer to Family	%
Yes	70.8	Yes	80.2
No	27.1	No	19.8
Not stated	2.1		
Total	100.0	Total	100.0
n	96	n	96

The majority of those surveyed (71%) state that aid has helped them in the resettlement process. Furthermore, 80 percent of respondents feel that the assistance received has enabled them to move closer to their family and friends. Only 27 percent and 20 percent in each category maintain that the assistance has not helped.

Table 37: Frequency of Being Accused of Abandoning Cambodia, Unwillingness to Share Land and Villager Resentment over Jobs

	Returnees Accused of Abandoning Cambodia %	Villagers Unwilling to Share Land with Returness %	Villagers Resentment Returnees over Jobs %
Frequently	9.4	28.1	13.5
Sometimes	37.5	13.5	33.3
Never	50.0	56.2	51.0
Not stated	3.1	2.1	2.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
n	96	96	96

Results indicate differences between respondents experiencing some form of discrimination (accusations, local unwillingness to share, resentment) and those not encountering any of these hostilities. For instance, 50 percent of those surveyed claim to have "never" been accused of abandoning Cambodia. Fifty-six per cent state they have not encountered an unwillingness to share land and 51 percent indicate that they have not experienced local resentment over opportunities for employment.

However, almost an equal percentage (47%) of respondents indicate that they are sometimes or frequently accused of abandoning Cambodia. Moreover, a substantial percentage of those surveyed (42%) state that they sometimes or frequently encounter unwillingness to share land and 47 percent report that they experience resentment over jobs sometimes or frequently. Given the lack of infrastructure, the scarcity of mine-free land, the extreme poverty and the constant threat to personal safety, it is not surprising that integration of returnees into the existing village life is difficult.

Table 38: Memberships in Any Support Groups

Membership Groups	% Responses
Administrative unit	34.4
Rice co-operative	9.4
Security guard group	9.4
Men's group	4.2
Women's group	4.2
Youth group	4.2
Buddhist group	19.8
Elder group	7.3
NGO development group	12.5
Human rights group	10.4
Political group	7.3
Other	1.0
None	33.3
Not stated	4.2
Total	100.0
n	96

The most popular organizations cited by respondents are those affiliated with some sort of village administrative unit (34%), a Buddhist group (20%) or an NGO development group (13%). Membership in other associations such as rice, security, gender, youth, elderly, political or human rights are all about 10 percent or less. It should also be mentioned that a large segment of those sampled state that they are not currently members of any group (33%). Although it is difficult to determine, this high degree of non-membership may result in isolation and alienation amongst returnees.

Table 39: Items Shared with Non-Family Members

Items Shared	% Responses
Food	27.1
Land	7.3
Labour	13.5
Tools	14.6
Information	16.7
Medicine	11.5
Goods	14.6
Other	5.2
Never share	58.3
Total	100.0
n	96

Despite the fact that information is the easiest commodity to give, it is not the most frequently shared, as only 17 percent of respondents report sharing this item with non-family members. Food is the most often shared item (27%), followed by tools (15%), goods (15%), and labour (14%). Land and medicine, perhaps the two most scarce commodities, are shared the least outside the family. The lack of available resources, combined with personal and family needs, is demonstrated by the fact that 58 percent of respondents state that they never share items with non-family members.

Table 40: Reasons for Feeling Accepted and for Feeling Unwelcome

Accepted	% Responses	Unwelcome	% Responses
Being recognized as a villager	10.4	Locals resentful or jealous of aid	15.6
Being greeted by locals	7.3	Poor communication with locals	4.2
Being with relatives	11.5	Unfriendly/rude neighbourhood	9.4
Given land/house/aid	5.2	No land/house	9.4
Good relations/communications with locals	16.7	No employment	4.2
Returnees feel accepted	7.3	Lack of government support	1.0
When locals share with returnees	2.1	Locals incite conflict	1.0
Very happy	5.2	Feeling unsafe/insecure	6.2
By not making conflict	1.0	Accused of abandoning Cambodia	2.1
Being back in homeland	2.1	Lack of money	2.1
When visited by locals	3.1	Locals don't share	4.2
If returnees share with locals	3.1	Locals are unhappy with returnees	2.1
		Locals don't want returnees	
Other	8.3	in activities	2.1
Don't know	2.1	Other	7.3
Not stated	19.8	Don't know	2.1
		Not stated	39.6
Total	100.0	Total	100.0
n	96	n	96

When asked what makes returnees feel welcome, respondents report that being recognized as a villager (10%), being with relatives (12%), and having good relationships and communications with locals (17%) are most important. In contrast, the reasons respondents gave for feeling unwelcome are somewhat more varied, with only one response being commonly held. Sixteen per cent of those interviewed indicate that

resentment or jealousy over returnees getting aid has created feelings of being unwelcome.

Table 41: Feelings of Whether Returnees Are Accepted

Acceptance	%
Most of the time	40.6
Sometimes	40.6
Never	14.6
Not stated	4.2
Total	100.0
n	96

Despite being confronted by accusations of abandoning Cambodia, unwillingness to share land and resentment, 81 percent of the respondents believe that returnees are accepted "sometimes" or "most of the time." Only 15 percent of those surveyed felt that returnees were "never" accepted.

Returnees' Health after Repatriation

Cambodians who fled to the Thai refugee camps carried with them the mental and physical scars of their adversities under the Khmer Rouge. Although most refugee camps offered a haven from the Khmer Rouge, mental and physical abuses were not easily healed. This section investigates the mental and physical health status of returnees interviewed, their assessment of access to medical health services and their feelings about the future.

Table 42: Responsibility for People with Special Needs

Special Needs	%
Sick people	18.8
Elderly	24.0
Orphaned Children	12.5
Physically handicapped	12.5
Mentally disturbed	1.0
No one with special needs	54.2
Not stated	2.1
Total	100.0
n	96

Of those surveyed, the most frequent responsibility is caring for an elderly person (24%), followed by someone who is ill (19%), orphaned children (13%) and the handicapped (13%). However, slightly more than half the sample (54%) indicate that they are not responsible for anyone with special needs.

Table 43: Respondent's Rating of Own Health and Children's Health

Rating	Respondent's Health %	Child's Health %
Excellent	1.0	—
Above average	12.5	15.6
Average	59.4	70.8
Poor	27.1	8.3
No children		5.2
Total	100.0	100.0
n	96	96
Compared to Others the Same Age		
Better	14.6	
Similar	34.4	
Worse	49.0	
Not stated	2.1	
Total	100.0	
n	96	

It is interesting to note that only 1 percent of respondents rate their health as excellent and no one selected this response for their children. The majority of respondents (72%) report their health to be average or above average, while 86 percent feel that their children's health is average or above average. A considerable percentage (27%) state that their health is poor.

When asked to rate their health relative to others the same age, however, most respondents (49%) feel that their health is "worse". About 34 percent believe their health is similar to others and only 15 percent believe their health to be better than others of the same age.

Table 44: Times in Last Six Months that Healthcare Was Needed

	Times Respondent Needed Healthcare in Last 6 Months %	Time Respondent's Child Needed Healthcare in Last 6 Months %
None	65.6	61.5
One	11.5	4.2
Two	7.3	11.5
Three	4.2	4.2
Four	—	6.2
Five	2.1	—
Six or more	6.2	3.1
Have no children	—	5.2
Not stated	3.1	4.2
Total	100.0	100.0
n	96	96

Figures in Table 44 show that most of the respondents and their children (66% adults, 62% children) did not require healthcare in the last 6 months. Twelve per cent of adults report needing medical attention once in the last 6 months, while an equal percentage of children required care twice in the same time span. More importantly, 23 percent of children required healthcare three or more times compared to only 16 percent of adults. The higher percentage of children requiring attention more than once in 6 month period reflects their heightened susceptibility to diseases under the current circumstances. Their need for healthcare is likely a result of the poor sanitation, lack of uncontaminated water and inadequate diet.

Table 45: Healthcare Person Seen Most

Healthcare Person	%
Family	36.5
Krou Khmer	10.4
Buddhist monk	6.2
Community health centre	29.2
Visiting doctor/nurse	5.2
Not stated	12.5
Total	100.0
n	96

Most of the respondents indicate that their healthcare needs are attended to by a family member (37%) or a community health centre (29%). Approximately 17 percent

seek a "traditional healer" such as a Krou Khmer or Monk, while only 5 percent see a medical professional.

Table 46: Whether Health Problems Interfere with Daily Activities

Health Problem Interference	%
Very much	26.0
Somewhat	50.0
Not at all	22.9
Not stated	1.0
Total	100.0
n	96

Slightly more than three-quarters of those surveyed (76%) indicate that health problems interfere with their daily activities "somewhat" or "very much". Twenty-three per cent report experiencing no health impediments in their daily activities. These results suggest a disturbing situation when considered in light of the 66 percent who reported not accessing healthcare in the last 6 months (Table 44). It may be that many are depriving themselves of needed medial attention, perhaps because of cost or scarcity. Without proper attention, family life and economic well-being undoubtedly suffers.

Table 47: Ailments Diagnosed by a Doctor During Lifetime

Ailments	% Responses
Malaria	18.8
Heart disease	10.4
Anaemia	6.2
High blood pressure	4.2
Tuberculosis	4.2
Diabetes	1.0
None of the above	59.4
Not stated	3.1
Total	100.0
n	96

Malaria is the single most common ailment respondents report being diagnosed by a doctor. Fifty-nine per cent of the respondents state having never been diagnosed by a doctor for any of the ailments specified, although this does not necessarily mean they do not have ailments such as malaria.

Table 48: Health Problems Experienced in the Last Year

Health Problems	Often %	Sometimes %	Rarely %	Never %	Total n
Depression	63.5	19.8	2.1	14.6	96
Frequent headaches	24.0	53.1	5.2	17.7	96
General weakness	25.0	32.3	17.7	25.0	96
Dizziness	15.6	45.8	13.5	25.0	96
Head pain	19.8	52.1	5.2	22.9	96
Stomach aches	12.5	14.6	10.4	62.5	96
Poor appetite	30.2	31.2	13.5	25.0	96
Poor sleeping	17.7	38.5	17.7	26.0	96
Cold hands or feet	2.1	22.9	16.7	58.3	96
Poor concentrating	26.0	30.2	14.6	29.2	96
Forgetfulness	14.6	38.5	14.6	32.3	96
Weak heart	14.6	24.0	7.3	54.2	96
Other	3.1	4.2	7.3	85.4	96

Although the frequency of all health problems is relatively high, there are some that indicate serious health risk. One which is very high and potentially very serious is depression. Sixty-four per cent of those interviewed admit suffering "often" from depression. Frequent headaches (24%), poor appetite (30%) and cold hands or feet (26%) are also common problems that respondents mention occurring "often". In light of earlier results (Tables 44 and 46), this indicates that those surveyed are not receiving medical treatment even though they require it. To see who suffers from these ailments, Table 49 was constructed. It displays respondent's gender and the associated health problems.

Table 49: Health Problems Experienced in the Last Year by Sex

	Depression		Frequent Headaches		Poor Appetite	
Frequency	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %
Frequently	51.5	69.8	36.4	17.5	24.2	33.3
Sometimes	12.1	23.8	36.4	61.9	30.3	31.7
Rarely	3.0	1.6	9.1	3.2	15.2	12.7
Never	33.3	4.8	18.2	17.5	30.3	22.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
n	96	96	96	96	96	96

Data in Table 49 show that both male and female depression rates are extremely high, but especially so for females. Sixty-four percent of men and 94 percent of women indicating "sometimes" or "frequently" experiencing depression. In terms of headaches, men report having headaches more "frequently" (36%) than women (18%).

However, when the categories "frequently" and "sometimes" are taken together, 79 percent of women and 73 percent of men report having this health problem. Women also indicate that they experience poor appetite more often than men, but when the other categories are considered there appears to be little difference (e.g. "sometimes" is 30 percent for males, 32 percent for females). Overall, the data suggest that female respondents are at greater mental health risk than their male counterparts.

Table 50: Adequacy of Healthcare Services

Health Services	Adequate %	Inadequate %	No Access %	Not Stated %	Total n
Medical clinic	37.5	31.2	27.1	4.2	96
Hospital	25.0	26.0	30.2	18.8	96
Community health centre	21.9	24.0	28.1	26.0	96
Visiting doctor/nurse	12.5	20.8	42.7	24.0	96
Krou Khmer	21.9	16.7	42.7	18.8	96
Monk	20.8	17.7	41.7	19.8	96

Overall, very few of those sampled feel that the healthcare services specified are adequate. The most acceptable appears to be the clinic, but this choice is only indicated by 38 percent of respondents. On average, 58 percent of respondents believe that all the services are either inadequate or lacking entirely. Furthermore, those surveyed maintain that traditional healers such as Krou Khmer (59%) and Monks (59%) are not accessible. This may be due, in part, to financial constraints.

Table 51: Feelings about Own Future and Children's Future

	Respondent Feelings about Their Future %	Respondent Feelings about Child's Future %
Hopeful	16.7	18.8
Uncertain	59.4	53.1
Fearful	22.9	13.5
Not stated	1.0	14.6
Total	100.0	100.0
n	96	96

Only a small percentage of respondents feel hopeful about their future and their children's future (17% and 19% respectively). The majority of those responding are "uncertain" or "fearful" about the future for themselves and their children (82% and 67% respectively). The reasons for these uncertain feelings are provided in Tables 51 and 52.

Table 52: Negative and Positive Reasons for Respondent's Future

Reasons	% Responses
Negative Reasons	
Nothing to depend on	4.2
Alone, no one to depend on	7.3
Lack everything	1.0
Lack land for cultivation/house	11.5
Lack money	21.9
Lack job	12.5
No money to start a business	5.2
In poor health/disabled	17.7
No money for medicine	1.0
Too many children to support	1.0
Poor living conditions	4.2
No government support	1.0
Worried about future employment	3.1
Other negative mentions	10.4
Positive Reasons	
In good health	1.0
Possible to support family	4.2
Peace from war	2.1
Hope to get support in the future	2.1
Better life under new government	3.1
Other positive mentions	8.3
Cannot predict future	4.2
Not stated	6.2
Total	100.0
n	96

A glance at Table 52 shows that negative reasons offered by respondents about their future out-number positive ones. In terms of negative answers, the most common revolve around basic living conditions such as lack of money (22%), job (13%), land (12%), and poor health/disability (18%). The finding that so many do not foresee a positive future indicates that reintegration at this point has not been as successful as anticipated.

Those offering positive replies concerning their future outlook are fewer and their responses are more equally distributed. The most frequently mentioned positive opinion is the possibility of family support (4.2%). Others such as good health, peace from war and better government are also mentioned, but less than four percent of the time.

Table 53: Negative and Positive Reasons for Their Child's Future

Reasons	% Responses
Negative Reasons	
Cannot send children to school	12.5
Cannot support children in future	18.8
No money for medicine when child is sick	1.0
Cannot support children at present	11.5
No money	10.4
Hopeless future	4.2
Too many children to support	1.0
Other negative mentions	9.4
Positive Reasons	
Can send children to school	9.4
Expect better future for children	7.3
Children will be well educated	4.2
Will be peace/no war	2.1
Will be government support	2.1
Will have good jobs	1.0
Other positive mentions	2.1
Other neutral mentions	2.1
Children still too young	4.2
Have no children	5.2
Don't know	6.2
Not stated	8.3
Total	100.0
n	96

As with respondents' feelings about their own future, those surveyed feel equally negative about their children's future. The most often cited responses once again include basic needs such their children's schooling (13%), supporting their children now (12%) and in the future (19%), and not having enough money (10%).

Positive answers regarding their children's future include being able to send their children to school (9%) and their children being well educated (4%), expecting a better future (7%) and a Cambodia free of war (2%). Although perceptions about their children's future are not strongly associated with commune or number of children in school, they are related to income level. Those in the highest income levels (more than 100,000 riel per month) also have the most positive views, while those in the lowest income categories report the most negative outlook (table not shown). Despite the positive responses given by respondents about their children's future, the frequency of negative replies still out-number more optimistic views.

Summary of Part One and Two

Many NGOs remain critical of the speed with which the UNHCR resettled returnees. In hindsight, it is clear that little consideration was given to an adequate assessment of needs, priorities, resource availability and impacts on both returnees and areas of resettlement. UNHCR did not adequately assess the social, cultural and psychological reintegration difficulties of returnees, nor the social tensions and conflicts associated with their return. Previous examples of repatriated African refugees (Allen and Moronic 1994) led to an assumption that Cambodian refugees would be welcomed back, especially when they returned among kinsfolk. This presumption proved inaccurate given the subsequent instances of hostile receptions (causing secondary migration), the lack of assistance from neighbors and kin, and the simmering tensions concerning land and resources between returnees and locals. The land allocation, for example, should have been a part of UNHCR planning, and not left to the returnees and the NGOs to deal with.

Reintegration depended critically on returnees' developing their own informal networks and independent strategies to live within endemic rural poverty. Local and provincial governments gave little support concerning returnee resettlement and reintegration. The assumption was that returnees would rejoin family members who would provide assistance. Survey results showed that only two-thirds of returnees had family or relatives living close to them and about one-third did not rejoin family (Table 30). Local people, however, continue to face innumerable economic constraints, even for those with access to agricultural rice land. Rice agriculture remains risky due to conditions of flood or drought and insecure profits, and the small plot size provides less than a nuclear family's basic needs for self-sufficiency. The added burden of returnees meant that other sources of income (small market businesses, gathering forest products, crafts) became a critical component for economic survival and continued familial support, especially after the 400 day food aid ended. The harsh economic realities of reintegration often necessitated returnees engaging in secondary migration in search of less depressed rural areas or more advantaged family. In fact, survey results show that 69 percent of respondents moved one or more times since their return to Cambodia (Table 14). For many returnees, success in resettlement is based not so much on their own ability, but on the living conditions of their kin. Returnees remained disadvantaged if they received little kin support or if they had been unable to relocate families.

In November 1993, the WFP classified 38.7 percent of total returnees as vulnerable, i.e., households headed by women, the elderly or handicapped, and 84 percent fell into the categories 'marginal,' 'needy,' or 'at risk.' At the time of the returnees highest vulnerability, the ending of the 400 day food support (which started in December 1993), UNHCR had scaled down their involvement. It became obvious shortly after December

1993, that the food support package had provided basic subsistence and the basis upon which returnees negotiated a place to stay, not the means through which they could develop other options for reintegration. Option C had merely postponed the necessity for land. Contrary to UNHCR expectations that returnees would be "re-established" by the absolute end of the 400 day food rations in May 1994, most returnees remain in precarious circumstances.

By August 1994, the numbers of returnees 'at risk' had increased dramatically, reflecting the scarce opportunities for economic activities. For many returnees, the return to home villages or to areas where relatives and friends live has not been successful, resulting in a perilous landless existence that necessitates frequent moves or squatting at the edges of villages.

Without access to land, returnees have difficulty becoming self sufficient and tend to subsist on unpredictable low-waged seasonal labour and the Food For Work development programmes. Survey results show that 52 percent of the respondents were either semi-employed or vulnerable, while only 16 percent had access to land and 10 percent had incomes above 100,000 Riels per month (Table 18). The overall assessment from this report is that the lack of land is a critical impediment for successful rural reintegration.

According to NGO information, the majority of returnees have not reintegrated into existing communities, nor have they developed support networks beyond friendships with other returnee families. In many villages, especially in the Western provinces, water is scare, food supply limited and schools, sanitation and health care marginal, all of which are exacerbated by armed conflict, increasing banditry, and forced conscription into the Cambodian army. Despite these drawbacks, 81 percent of the survey respondents still felt returnees were accepted "sometimes" or "most of the time" (Table 41).

Anderson's (1992) report, listed numerous areas of work that returnees wanted to go into when they returned: medical services, teachers, artisans, blacksmiths, barbers, fishermen, rubber plantation workers, miners, and factory workers. It is clear, however, that local economies have not rehabilitated enough to accommodate returnee jobseekers. Professional returnees face ongoing discrimination in accessing employment, particularly with local and regional government offices such as health, social services and education. Survey findings show that 47 percent of respondents reported experiencing resentment "sometimes" or "frequently" in employment opportunities (Table 37). Returnee educational qualifications and vocational certificates gained in exile have not yet been recognized by the Cambodian government, and despite years of working experience, their skills are not welcomed, reflecting underlying political implications of who has the greater right to access jobs and who hires. As a consequence, survey data show that many of the respondents employed as healthcare workers and teachers in the Thai camps have not continued in these professions after repatriation (Table 20).

Interviews with returnees gave an overwhelming impression of continuing poverty and economic adversity. Chronic unemployment means most returnees are surviving on a day-to-day basis depending on what they can forage in the forest or what labour they can find. Starvation seems to be checked only by the Food For Work opportunities available through WFP and day-by-day survival strategies. Numerous families appear

to be lacking basic needs. Many stated that their children are unable to attend school because of the barrier of school fees. Even those returnees living in new settlements have minimal production from vegetable agriculture and if they can, try to develop a diversified range of income sources. For most returnees, developing non-agricultural economic opportunities are limited and they must compete for employment with local and internally displaced populations. Bleak economic conditions colour individual perceptions of the future. When survey respondents were questioned about their children's future, an overwhelming number of responses were negative.

Since the end of the food support, land negotiations for returnees have intensified. Through the assistance of NGOs, WFP, and the Cambodian Red Cross, some groups of returnees have negotiated with local, district and provincial authorities for housing plots with eventual access to agricultural land. The outcomes of negotiations vary from district to district, depending on the extent of commitment from the specific NGOs, government personnel, the amount of internally displaced and local vulnerable populations, the number of mines and the overall security situation in the area. In Bantheay Meanchey, Kompong Thom and Battambang provinces, for example, thousands of returnees have become long term internally displaced (IDPs), dependant on World Food Program (WFP) rations in temporary sites. In contrast to local people who continue to access their farming land, returnees tend to want to stay in the IDP sites to avoid any further risk of land mines or Khmer Rouge intimidation. To a large extent, land allocation negotiation depends as much on the number of families already located in the commune (sub-district) or local village as on the numbers who will need to be moved to the area from IDP sites. With the increasing numbers of internally displaced and rural poor (most often caused by crop failure due to drought or flood), however, returnees are being perceived less and less as a unique group with special needs.

In Pursat province, housing land has been made available to approximately 10 percent of returnees, although clear title and ownership remains uncertain. In the survey, 16 percent of survey respondents had access to land (Table 18).

In some areas of land allocation, extensive assistance was provided for community development and returnees have tended to remain oriented towards the provision of additional resources and external help to solve ongoing problems.

Several NGOs who have been active in implementing resettlement and reintegration schemes are critical of the returnee attitude, especially in their unwillingness to "take responsibility for themselves" by employing creative problem solving, and in their tendency to "shop around" for assistance. Future NGO, as well as government attention is to focus on broad categories of vulnerability or areas in need, rather than specific identities such as returnee. The criteria for vulnerable families refers to female headed household with no male children over 16, households with a handicapped or disabled person, and households in which there are numerous children under 16 years old, especially those without land or support from relatives. Although a slightly different definition was used here, the results of this survey show that roughly 18 percent of the sample fall into the category of vulnerable (Table 18).

It is stillimpossible to assess the success or socio-economic ramifications of the new settlements from the short-term perspective of this study. Rebuilding an economic and social infrastructure through which self-sufficiency farming can be established, com-

munities formed, local markets accessed and integration into local or regional politics will take several years. Although returnees may well have the capacity to reintegrate, the length of time needed to establish themselves will make an agricultural survival difficult. Differences in levels of self-sufficiency achieved within the new settlements can already be observed. Survey results show differences in levels of income, health and life satisfaction. The type and extent of livestock, gardens, outbuildings, and general housing upkeep are clear indications of those returnees who are achieving and those who do not. The noticeable differences reflect household composition (such as a two parent or extended family) as well as the personal ability and tenacity of individuals. Much of the behaviour or attitudes on the part of returnees can be explained by the excessive dependency Cambodians experienced in the refugee camps. In both UNHCR and border camps, the decision, care and maintenance of Cambodian were regulated on a day-to-day basis by political leaders, government officials and aid agencies. No attempt was made to encourage Cambodians to become self-supporting or even to introduce minimal measures of self-reliance, since Thai refugee policy opposed such strategies. As Rogge (1994, 35) notes:

> Repatriating such refugees, and having them become economically viable in their home areas, is, therefore, a problem of more than simply providing them with land and/or other means of production. Getting people to break out of a welfare syndrome acquired during many years in refugee settlements and to make decisions for themselves is a major task confronting any repatriation exercise; in some cases it may be impossible. It is clear that the longer the time in exile in a state of acute dependency, the greater will be the difficulty in achieving economic reintegration on return.

Rogge (1994) suggests that the time lag (which may be of several seasons' duration) between the production of any meaningful output and/or profit from the land may be too long for some returnees to withstand, causing a disillusionment that may drive returnees to urban areas out a sheer desperation to survive (*ibid.*, 36). Returnees may also lack essential experience or skills with agricultural practices as well as the tenacity and endurance to withstand drought and other natural calamities. Rogge (1994) notes that if these skills are not learned from childhood, they may be difficult to instill into young adults, especially if much of their adolescence and early adulthood has been spent in refugee camps (*ibid.*, 38). Again, this may cause many to opt out of rural areas. The majority of Cambodian returnees who resettled in rural areas lack essential agricultural skills. In addition, returnees face constant threats to their security resulting from widespread corruption, nepotism and increasing instances of violence and lawlessness. The combination of poor skills and continual security threats make it hard for returnees to cope with the demands of agriculture or rural living conditions. Considering the numbers of returnees who have disappeared since the end of the 400 day food aid, it is reasonable to assume that many have migrated to Phnom Penh, despite the fact that they also lack the skills required to achieve steady employment there. Alternatively, those who migrate from area to area seeking family or a conducive community, may also eventually reach the urban areas out of desperation. In urban areas, returnees would most likely join the ranks of the disadvantaged and vulnerable in permanent social and economic dislocation. The levels of poverty found in Phnom

Penh are more visible than rural poverty as squatters are found in every abandoned and debilitated building, and alongside the numerous garbage dumps and quarries throughout the city. Desperately poor and destitute people with no shelter at all, cook, eat, and sleep on city streets. As they sit begging in the streets, pulling cyclos or labouring in construction jobs, Cambodia's urban poor look malnourished and weary, lines etched deeply in their faces. Carol Strickle, CARE Co-ordinator in Pursat, commented on distinctive features of the Cambodian people:

> Everyone talks about the loss of family, of their children killed, their parents who were killed, and so on. Its still very much a part of their life in the present. Everyone seems to have a lot of physical complaints and there is a general lack of trust for anyone.
>
> Within the last six months many of the high hopes people had have faded. Great but false expectations were thought to come with the elections, but of course this has not happened. There is general disillusionment throughout the country, extensive corruption, political instability, recent military fighting. People say it is just like before 1975. The Khmer Rouge advances on Battambang caused a mass exodus of NGOs, increased IDPs and a rise in banditry all over. Everyone is worried for themselves, for their country.

Given the continuing degradation in Cambodia, the 'fading hopes' of returnees is widely shared and it is perhaps this sense of despondence and lack of future promise that makes returnees most indistinguishable from other Cambodians.

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