Beyond University: Photovoice portraits of some Cambodian young women's education, identities, and rights

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Figure 1 from Sam Ang.
Some participants and others at post-election peace demonstration, Phnom Penh.

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ABSTRACT

‘Educate a Girl. Change the World.’ Faith in this universalising, simple creed permeates development discourse on education and empowerment. Yet these processes are complex, embedded in specific contexts, and dependent upon many factors outside of formal schooling. This research aims to cut through the vague mists of this discourse by exploring processes of education and empowerment for six young Cambodian women. A small minority of such women graduate from university, and their negotiations with personal, professional, and political life illustrate opportunities and constraints in claiming their education and rights.

This research drew from feminist epistemologies and used participatory photovoice methodology. Each participant selected 20 of her photographs which addressed aspects of education and empowerment important to her. Those photographs then guided our semi-structured interviews. This epistemology and methodology allowed women’s images and words to be strongly represented in the thesis and effectively elucidated the complexity and interconnectedness of learning and empowerment processes in the many spheres of these young women’s lives.

Through participants’ images and words, this study illustrates factors that supported and challenged the young women in claiming higher education, how that education influenced the many-layered personal and professional identities they formed, and how they engaged in efforts to build women’s networks and claim public political space. These findings indicate several factors deserving greater attention and research in development: the importance of siblings to educational attainment, the utility of interweaving traditional and alternate gendered identities, the value of women’s networks for transformational learning, and the challenges in claiming public political space when elite ownership of development is tacitly accepted. These findings demonstrate that many interwoven strands influence educational outcomes and processes of empowerment above and beyond formal schooling. These effects do not manifest in a linear fashion. When the education-women’s empowerment-development nexus is better understood and grounded in women’s rights, this enhances development outcomes for young women.

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Finally, to you, Reader. These pages only live when you meet them.

May my presentation of these women's images and stories
reveal some portion of their richness to you.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
C	Chamnong
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
WB	World Bank
EFA	Education for All
GAD	Gender and Development
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IMF	International Monetary Fund
M	Marin
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MOEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
SA	Sam Ang
SR	Serey Roth
SP	Sophearet
ST	Sreyton
UN	United Nations
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority
WID	Women in Development
VAW	Violence Against Women

Figure 2. Map of Cambodia, illustrating provinces and participants' home towns.
Base map source: United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations Cartographic Section

PARTICIPANTS' HOME TOWNS, PROVINCES

- 1) Chamnorng: Sala Kaev, Battambang
- 2) Marin: Memot, Kampong Cham
- 3) Sam Ang: Kaoh Thum, Kandal
- 4) Serey Roth: Chheu Teal Phluoh, Krati
- 5) Sophearet: Kampong Leav, Prey Veng
- 6) Sreyton: Krom Som Nor, Kandal

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCING CAMBODIA

The temples of Angkor Wat and the Khmer Rouge regime: these are what people invariably mention when say I have been to Cambodia. Cambodia's tourism industry centres around these aspects of its history and culture. Across disciplines, scholarship often follows, portraying Cambodia according to these "...two dominant, and antithetical, focal points of interest: the ancient glories of Angkorean splendour and the horrors of the modern Khmer Rouge regime" (Winter and Chau-Pech Ollier, 2006:5).

Though pride in cultural heritage and ongoing post-genocide reconstruction are essential to any attempt to understand Cambodia, they fail to consider how the landscapes of contemporary Cambodia have been and are transforming. Following Vietnamese-backed communism during the post-Khmer Rouge period, Cambodia rapidly transitioned to a free market economy in the 1990s and developed its urban manufacturing sector. From 1998 to 2007, Cambodia's economic growth was the sixth highest in the world (Lim, 2013). While 79 per cent of Cambodians still live outside urban areas, cities are expanding rapidly. The population in the capital, Phnom Penh, has doubled since 1998 (Dene-Hern, 2012). The United Nations Transitional Authority (UNTAC) of the early 1990s brokered a peace deal to end factional fighting and attempted to implant democracy in Cambodia, bringing with it inflows of foreign aid, foreign aid workers, and international aid institutions that continue to influence Cambodia today (Hughes, 2007). Education and the arts, nearly decimated during the Khmer Rouge regime, have resurged (McCormick, 2012; Ollier and Winter, 2006). The growth of tourism, the aid industry, foreign investment, and export markets have been globalising forces in Cambodia. Moreover, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) aim to integrate into a regional 'single market' by 2015 will add to the permeability of Cambodia's borders.

One thing that has remained consistent is Cambodia's head of state. While Cambodia is in theory democratic, its Prime Minister, Hun Sen, has retained authoritarian control and manipulated elections from 1985 to today, leading many scholars to label the country a 'hybrid' democracy somewhere between liberal democracy and authoritarianism (Lilja,

2008).

As Cambodia's economy grows steadily and verges toward middle-income status, government land concessions to foreign investors, the resultant forced evictions of communities, and rapid deforestation are visible evidence of the corruption and inequality dominating economic 'development' (LICADHO, 2012). In Cambodia's booming garment industry, protests, mass fainting, and factory collapses reveal the strains on overworked and underpaid workers (ILO and IFC, 2013).

In 2013, garment workers, land rights activists, activist Buddhist monks, and supporters of the political opposition seized heightened election-year energy to publicly voice discontent at a size and scale previously unseen (Ou, 2014). Their discontent is a manifestation of the steadily increasing 'human rights crisis' in Cambodia, marked by forced evictions, the murder of rights activists, periodic constriction or outright suspension of freedom of assembly, wrongful imprisonment, and unchecked state violence against demonstrators or bystanders caught in the scrum (HRW, 2014).

In the midst of these transformations are the 'new generation' in Cambodia—young people with no memory of the Khmer Rouge era. Over half of Cambodia's 14 million people are under the age of 24 (UNDP, 2011). As access to education, technology, and 'global culture' increase, McKeon and Sochampawatd (2010:2,12) note an "ever growing generation gap between those who lived through the Khmer Rouge and those who were born after the regime fell," as well as a "tangible nervousness about the rising of this population mass."

Some of these generational differences are manifested in shifting and contested roles for women. While traditional codes for moral behaviour continue to shape notions of what the ideal woman should be—quiet, subservient, and tied to her home—some of the contradictions between those ideals and women's contemporary realities are under negotiation. While Cambodian women have long engaged in paid labour to support their families, young women are increasingly migrating away from their parents' homes before marriage, most to work in urban garment factories or as domestic workers abroad, and some for education (Derks, 2008). These migrations represent both

divergence from traditional codes, by living on their own, and the fulfilment of their duty by increasing their family's income.

Meanwhile, some entrenched notions of masculinity continue to define other aspects of women's roles. As women's education and participation in public life increase, politics remains a masculine realm (Lilja, 2008), and women's representation in government has stalled at 20 per cent (Crothers and Kaing, 2013). This is also partly because as women's time outside the home increases, maintaining the household firmly remains women's responsibility, and is perhaps the most entrenched gendered division in Cambodia (Brickell, 2011a). Most troublingly, attitudes regarding men's entitlement have made issues of rape and domestic violence difficult to combat (Brickell, 2014; Henderson, 2013).

Young women who do attend university in Cambodia are members of the first generation reared in a functioning formal education system rebuilt after the systematic destruction of the 'educated class' during the Khmer Rouge period. Aiming to turn the clock back to a pre-colonial 'Year Zero', the Khmer Rouge dismantled schools and emptied the capital city, relocating urbanites to provincial work farms (Geeves and Bredenberg, 2005:6). Teachers, doctors, and any others 'indoctrinated' by Western education faced imprisonment, torture or death. Families were purposefully separated; husbands and wives coerced into new marriages.

Thus, re-establishing an education system for Cambodia's burgeoning youth has been core to reconstruction efforts from the 1980s to today. From the Vietnamese and Soviet-supported initial rebuilding of education in the 1980s to the arrival of UNTAC funding to its designation as a United Nations (UN) Education for All (EFA) 'Fast Track Initiative' country in 2006, waves of aid have supported Cambodia's rapid expansion of education infrastructure and enrolment.

Yet this rapid expansion has brought concerns over the quality of education being delivered, as well as the lack of consensus on what quality might actually look like (Marshall et al., 2009; McCormick, 2012). Further, the heavy emphasis on primary and lower secondary levels, encouraged by the concomitant focus of the MDGs, has left little

attention to higher education. This is despite growing demand for higher education as increasing numbers of young people survive through the lower system.

1.2 RATIONALE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The vast majority of women in Cambodia never attend university. In 2011, just 18 per cent of men and 11 per cent of women of tertiary age were enrolled in university (UNESCO, 2011). Those enrolled often cannot complete their studies due to financial constraints and/or pressure from their families to abandon their studies for marriage or full-time employment. The small minority of young women who do graduate are most often the first generation in their families with university degrees. Leaving their homes and often delaying marriage in favour of higher education, these young women do not follow the typical pattern of what a Cambodian girl is expected to do. Yet these women do not, perhaps cannot, wholly abandon their duty to their families or societal gendered expectations. In order to succeed in university and beyond, young women craft gender identities that interweave and balance a variety of roles and demands (Brickell, 2011b).

Global development, as articulated and measured by international bodies like the UN, relies on women like these as agents of change. Global development as a project looks to educating women as the 'silver bullet' that will transform families, communities, nations; indeed the entire world 'community' (UNDP, 2013). However, research on gender, education, and development strongly indicates that while education's positive effects may be dramatic, it cannot guarantee employment, equity in classrooms, or the transformation of gender roles in homes (Aikman and Unterhalter, 2005; Fennell and Arnot, 2008).

In this thesis, my aim is not to dismiss the merits of ambitious targets, the potentially dramatic benefits of higher education, or women's ability to create change. Rather, I argue that this narrative of 'education for empowerment' must look beyond imaginary neutral classrooms into contextualized specifics. Education for empowerment assumes that classrooms are special neutral spaces where the power hierarchies that define the rest of society no longer apply. Yet school systems are embedded in the same social hierarchies that exist outside them; indeed, one of schooling's functions is to reproduce rules and norms (Stromquist, 2006). A host of factors outside the classroom affect gender equality in learning, and applying learning to positive development outcomes

depends on a vast web of interconnecting economic and social factors (Beech, 2009; Colclough, 2012; Hughes and Hutchison, 2012; McGrath, 2012; Tarabini and Jacovkis, 2012; Tikly and Barrett, 2011; Walker, 2012). Moreover, 'good results' may look very different for different women, and universal targets in education and gender equality should be reconfigured to reflect this diversity and complexity (Unterhalter, 2012).

How, exactly, have some young Cambodian women overcome financial, geographic, and cultural barriers to higher education? And after obtaining a degree, how exactly are they making use of their education in their lives? I started asking these questions during my first visit to Cambodia in 2009. The seeds of this research formed from witnessing young Cambodian women I knew work through these issues for themselves.

In the years that followed, many of these young women got involved in newly-formed volunteer groups focusing on women's issues and human rights. A subculture of youth gender activism, largely focused on addressing violence against women (VAW), grew through these groups, often using social media like facebook as a platform for 'speaking out'. How were young women gaining entry into these realms? How was their formal learning involved, and what else beyond that was occurring?

Digging into academic study and discourses about education and empowerment added depth and scope to my curiosities. Students' voices are still largely absent in educational literature and policymaking, despite recent movements to correct this (Schweisfurth, 2011). When it came to the group that interested me, even less evidence was available. Scholarship on educational development focuses strongly on primary and lower secondary levels, those most supported by development intervention, while:

there has been scant research attention paid to the motivations, subjectivities, educational trajectories and experiences of people from socially disadvantaged groups trying to enter and achieve in higher education systems in low-income countries (Morley et. al., 2009:57).

Yet it is these students who can illuminate 'what works' in surviving through lower levels and matriculating to tertiary studies, as well as their educational aims and needs, and thus, how tertiary education might contribute to development. Further, it is adult women who may be best able to reflect on their lives and assess their own 'empowerment' (Stromquist, 2006).

In light of these processes and the gaps in knowledge about them, this research seeks to explore the following questions:

1. Who and what have supported young women in their pursuit of higher education? How have they successfully negotiated any challenges?
2. In what *specific* ways is higher education ‘empowering’ for certain young women? What are the limitations or difficulties?
 - In their personal and professional lives?
 - In their political activism for women’s human rights?
 - What support networks exist, or could exist, to better support young women towards their individual and collective goals?

Through exploring these questions, this research seeks to:

1. Illustrate interconnected factors that impact educational success;
2. Explore the complexities and tensions within personal, professional, and political empowerment processes; and
3. Generate knowledge that can take development studies ‘beyond access’ towards rights-based, nuanced understandings of the education-women’s empowerment-development nexus.¹

In addition to exploring these questions, the research design also seeks to embrace young women’s valuable insights and aims through participatory photovoice methodology. This thesis asserts that this methodology can collaboratively explore and illustrate the complexities of the research questions, and the chapters that follow discuss the opportunities and limitations entailed in our use of this methodology. This thesis asserts that participants’ photographs and words illustrate present manifestations of development as well as the development goals that participants aim to achieve.

¹ The term ‘beyond access’ was coined by Aikman and Unterhalter (2005), and use of their term aims to link this thesis to that body of work. In addition, Chege and Arnot (2012) have written on the gender-education-poverty nexus, which has informed my thinking but is not quite equivalent to the nexus I describe here.

This research takes a particular interest in a small and unusual group. It investigates the impact of higher education on the lives of young women from rural backgrounds who migrate to Phnom Penh for their education and remain there after graduation, actively seeking to promote gender equality in Cambodia. They may be seen as ‘poster women’ for all international development claims to achieve in empowerment through education. By honing in on their experiences, this research can appreciatively inquire into what has assisted them in their success, illuminate the concerns of an under-researched group, and better specify how processes of education and empowerment really work for certain young women.

By inviting young women to submit and discuss their own photographs, the research opened itself to participants’ views on the research questions and “embraces an analysis of the respondents’ accounts” (Lilja, 2008:20), highlighting how these young women represented themselves to me in their processes of becoming. By focusing on a small number of participants, this research aims to produce detailed accounts of educational development processes in participants’ lives, demonstrating that “[g]lobal spaces...overlap with these very small, everyday local spaces” (Fennell and Arnot, 2008:9).

1.3 EPISTEMOLOGY AND POSITIONALITY

“Art consists of limitation; the most beautiful part of every picture is the frame.”

– G.K. Chesterton

Like a photograph, research data is embedded in one particular place and time. Interviews with twenty young women, or a hundred, would still fall short of encapsulating the lives of a generation of women graduates. I chose to embrace the limitations of what I could accomplish in one thesis year, how much I *could* know, both in practical and epistemological terms. Practically speaking, research with a small cohort creates space in the field and in the thesis for depth and detail; for lengthy direct quotations and variances in participants’ experiences. Privileging small-scale details also aligns with feminist and poststructural epistemologies that inform my philosophy towards research.

In large part, I was motivated to write a 'fuller' story due to the complex, living young women who continue to inspire me. In 2009, I lived for two months as a volunteer resident and tutor with 36 Cambodian young women attending university. This brief yet formative experience led to ongoing friendships and learning. I aimed to take my emotional bonds and knowledge from ongoing informal study deeper and further through academic research. Additionally, I reasoned that my academic research would benefit from grounded experience, re-engaging with a place that has held my memories, passions, and attention for the last three years.

To return to the practical, I asked what outcomes from this research might really be feasible. Cambodia's Ministries are political environments where rivers of sound policy recommendations flow past without ever sticking.² My own modest work could focus elsewhere.

Feminist epistemologies place marginalised voices and processes of knowledge construction at the core of research, often focusing on the micro level to dig deeply into concepts (Arnot, 2006). In examining the intersections between education, gender, and development, Fennell and Arnot (2008:7) assert that:

Voice research urges policy makers to move from the study of (statistical) gender gaps in education, beyond access questions (although not neglecting these) to a study of the social construction of gender inequality and gender dynamics at local levels. Knowledge about the specific sets of gender relations found in these local levels (the micro-politics of gender, rather than macroeconomic theory) generates the intellectual basis for new understandings of gender, education and development.

It is posited that in speaking, women become authors rather than receivers of knowledge. However, anti-colonial and poststructural theories rightly interrogate what and which voices get privileged in research (Arnot, 2006). Poststructuralist feminist educators, such as Patti Lather, assert the inevitable plurality and inequality of voices (as cited in *ibid.*)—the participants in this research were bold enough to share their stories, and I cannot absolve myself of my inherent power in designing and authoring this work.

² For example, despite copious evidence that increasing teachers' salaries to a living wage would dramatically increase educational quality, bills to establish a minimum living wage for public servants are routinely rejected (Phann, 2014).

My position as an educated, white, North American woman inevitably affected the dynamics of power between myself and research participants. Moreover, ‘voices’ presented in this thesis are not purely transmitted. When participants spoke to me in English, that voice differed from how they spoke in their first language. Their Khmer voices have been filtered through translation. And perhaps most importantly, the inherently selective process of transcription, quotation, and analysis strongly determine the thesis frame (Bucholtz, 2000).

Photovoice methodologies and extensive direct quoting throughout the text aimed to lessen the extent of this filtering. This research invited young women to participate in building the frame by taking photographs, showing “how they wish themselves and their own roles to be visually represented, perceived and understood” (Parker, 2008, as cited in Margolis and Pauwels, 2011:15). Ultimately, my epistemology aims to honour the fact that young Cambodian women “are not the victims of...discourse, but are a part of it” (Davids and van Driel, 2001:169).

1.4 INTRODUCING PARTICIPANTS

With the aim of honouring participants’ part in this thesis, it is important to introduce them here, and to maintain some link to their presence throughout. Figure 1.2 pinpoints participants’ hometowns and outlines Cambodia’s provinces to indicate the location of photographs from other regions.

Box 1 below introduces participants through brief biographical sketches, indicates when our interviews took place, and may serve as a reference guide for the reader in order to better differentiate between each woman in the following chapters. Every participant chose to present her real name in this thesis. Because their experiences are grouped thematically, participants’ names appear in bold throughout the text to differentiate between them.

Participants’ photographs appear on the thesis cover and at the start of each chapter in order to link each chapter to their perspectives. Photographs also appear throughout the analysis as key pieces of data.

During the research timeframe, **Sophearet** worked in gender training and advocacy at a Cambodian NGO. The other five participants worked for another Cambodian NGO that

conducts workshops and training on topics like gender issues and ASEAN integration. These five were also members of volunteer groups to promote young women's rights.

BOX 1 PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Chamnong ("C")

Chamnong is 27. She comes from Sala Kaev, Battambang province; further from Phnom Penh than the other participants' hometowns. She is the middle sister in a family of seven daughters. She studied sociology at university and worked part-time as a researcher before moving to full-time NGO work. She married in 2012, and in 2013 gave birth to a son named JustPeace, a portmanteau of 'justice' and 'peace'. Our interview took place on September 12, 2013.

Marin ("M")

Marin is 23. She is from Memot, Kampong Cham, but her family moved to Phnom Penh when she was 10. She is the second youngest of five, with three brothers and one sister. She studied finance and banking at university on weekends while working full-time. She was engaged at the time of the research, and married on March 1, 2014. Our interview took place over September 10 and October 30, 2013.

Sam Ang ("SA")

Sam Ang is 24. She comes from Khaoh Thum, Kandal province. She has one older sister and one younger brother. She studied communications at university and lives with her sister. Our interview took place over September 12 and October 31, 2013.

Serey Roth ("SR")

Serey Roth, the youngest participant, is 21. She comes from Chheu Teal Phluoh, Kratie province. She has two younger brothers. She studied economics for development at university. At the time of the research, she had been volunteering at her NGO for two years and was beginning full-time employment. Our interview took place over October 9 and 30, 2013.

Sophearet ("SP")

Sophearet is 25. She comes from Kampong Leav, Prey Veng province. She has five brothers; four older and one younger. She studied economics and business at university. During the research she worked for a local NGO on gender advocacy and coordinated gender discussion groups for young women. Our interview took place on August 24, 2013.

Sreyton ("ST")

Sreyton is 27. She is from Krom Som Nor, Kandal province. She is the sixth child of eight, with five older brothers and sisters, one younger sister and one younger brother. She studied law at university and hopes to continue her legal studies someday. Our interview took place on September 14, 2013.

1.5 THESIS STRUCTURE

Following the Introduction, the thesis sets the research's foundations with a Theoretical Framework of key concepts, description of Contexts in Cambodia, and the Methodology (Chapters Two, Three, and Four). Next, the analysis chapters delve into participants' experiences and link these, where appropriate, to other literature. The organization of these chapters considers the temporal, spatial, and thematic aspects of participants' stories. Chapter Five addresses the 'start', the "Getting There" to higher education—participants' girlhoods and family backgrounds, who/what challenged and helped them, and the feelings associated with their educational migrations. Thus, Chapter Five addresses the first research question. Next, Chapter Six considers how participants engaged in Forming Networks and Identities, delving into how education was used and presented in creating adult selves that are 'good' altruistic women, accomplished graduates, urban professionals, and sometimes, wives and mothers. Chapter Seven then explores how these educated and engaged selves go about Claiming Rights in precarious political spaces. Thus, Chapters Six and Seven address the second research question. This organization indicates a progression from girlhood to adulthood, and from parents' homes to their own interiors to the wider public sphere. Yet concepts separated into these three chapters inform and interact with each other, just as the procedural, personal, and political aspects of becoming are intertwined and iterative. Chapter Eight, the Conclusion, summarises the research's findings, reflecting on how they answer thesis questions, relate to other literature, and point towards areas of education and development where better attention and further research would enhance outcomes.

Throughout the thesis, Khmer words and quotes translated from Khmer are in italics.

CHAPTER TWO - CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 3, from Sreyton. Primary school at her home village, Kandal province.

This chapter establishes the theoretical basis for key concepts explored in the thesis. The first section reviews global trends and shifts in educational development, paying particular attention to the theories that have underpinned efforts to achieve gender equality through education. The second and third sections delineate the meaning of ‘identity’ and ‘gender’, terms often used in educational development but often amorphously understood. The fourth section examines a range of definitions for another quite slippery term—empowerment. It discusses what may constitute educational empowerment as well as empowerment’s individual and collective dimensions. The final section explores notions of rights and democratic spaces that are essential for political empowerment.

2.1 TRENDS AND SHIFTS IN GLOBAL FRAMEWORKS FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY

In September 2012, United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon launched 'Education First', a special global initiative pushing for investment in a 'global education movement'. Ban (2012:n.p.) asserts that "[e]ducation is a major driving force for human development. It opens doors to the job market, combats inequality, improves maternal health, reduces child mortality, fosters solidarity, and promotes environmental stewardship." This builds upon the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of universal primary education by 2015, a core component of the UN's campaign to 'end poverty' (UN, n.d.).

Since the 1960s, conceptualisations of education shifted away from an expense for the welfare of people to an investment in economic growth and progress (Colclough, 2012). Economists framed education as investment in 'Human Capital' (HC), which is understood as both a theory and model asserting that "education is economically productive" (*ibid.*: 141). This has since been expanded to range of hypotheses on other positive impacts education makes in human well-being, as is evident in Ban's statement above. However, these hypotheses often critically ignore the importance of "barriers and facilitating factors in the external environment" that profoundly affect education's impact (Colclough, 2012: 137).

The World Bank (WB), the world's largest external funder of education, continues to promote the HC model of educational development, despite numerous critiques (Beech, 2009; Colclough, 2012; Hughes and Hutchison, 2012; McGrath, 2012; Tarabini and Jacovkis, 2012; Tikly and Barrett, 2011; Walker, 2012). These critiques mark the HC model's inability to account for multiple contextual factors that determine educational outcomes—from culture and politics to whether education is held narrowly or widely in a given society (*ibid.*). The variety of contextual factors sit at odds with universalising frameworks employed by global institutions like the WB (Beech, 2009; Courtney, 2008; Tarabini & Jacovkis, 2012).

Meanwhile, the need for comparison at a global scale encourages educational development programmes to quantify inputs—focusing on access and enrolment figures—rather than explore outcomes (Chapman and Quijada, 2009; Courtney, 2008).

Additionally, educational development policy largely focuses on primary levels because they produce higher rates of return on investment (Morley, et. al., 2009). Even as discourses shift in response to calls for better quality and better attention to higher levels, figures such as completion rates and student-teacher ratios are used as proxies for quality (Courtney, 2008; McCormick, 2012). While the WB defines quality as “...as the measurement of how far student achievement meets the defined minimum standards,” it has “remained focused on trying to improve the traditional input, such as the quality of instructional materials” (Courtney, 2008:548).

Yet mounting evidence shows that focus on access overshadows learning. The latest EFA Global Monitoring Report finds “250 million children who are unable to read, write, or do basic mathematics, *130 million of whom are in school*” (UNESCO, 2014:5, emphasis added). In addition, while educational development has focused on access to primary education, adult illiteracy, especially amongst women, remains “stubbornly high”—two thirds of illiterate adults are women, and this proportion has persisted since 1990 (*ibid.*:4).

As the era of the MDGs winds down to 2015, when new goals will be set, calls are increasing for post-2015 goals to be grounded in human rights (Kabeer, 2013). A rights model for quality education would not be based upon perceived instrumental benefits, such as increased GDP, which are complex and slippery to attribute, but in all people’s right to obtain learning—learning that has intrinsic value, and which may be used to pursue a range of benefits (*ibid.*).

Lehtomaki, et. al. (2014:37, emphasis original) assert that students themselves, “the, so-called, ‘target groups’ of the EFA and MDGs... are the factors needed in the *re-definition* of global, national and local educational development targets for EFA beyond 2015.” They also call for increased use of methodologies such as photovoice to draw out these new definitions (*ibid.*).

2.2 GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

From WID to GAD and Beyond

One of the core assumptions in the access-driven model of educational development is that girls' participation in schooling will lead to wider gender equality in society. While the terms 'equity' and 'equality' are often used interchangeably, equity may be understood as "institutional and social processes," such as equal resources, while equality manifests "in terms of respect for human rights" and in "securing the conditions for all people, men and women, to live a full life" (Aikman and Unterhalter, 2005:3). Schools are perceived as convenient spaces for gender equality goals because they are perceived as outside the arenas of public politics and private homes, where challenging gender norms could create conflict. However, this perception ignores one of schooling's functions—to reproduce societal norms (Stromquist, 2002).

Yet the MDGs focus on universal access to primary schooling as a means to facilitate gender equality. One issue with this is the narrow focus it encourages, leaving less attention to the low matriculation of girls to secondary or tertiary schooling in many parts of the world—globally, gender gaps in education are highest at the secondary and tertiary levels (UNESCO, 2011).

Moreover, there is little evidence that gender parity ensures equality (Chisamya, et. al., 2012). Schools are situated within cultures, and school environments may simply reinforce gender norms. Schooling may have no effect on young women's expected roles as wives and mothers, teachers may maintain gender hierarchies and biases about girls' academic ability, and traveling to and attending school can even put girls at risk of sexual violence (*ibid.*, Stromquist, 2006).

The access focus reflects the Women in Development (WID) approach to equality that led educational development throughout the 1990s and continues today (Unterhalter, 2005). For WID, equality is defined simplistically in terms of access to resources, leaving structures of social division unchallenged (*ibid.*). Despite its blind spots, the WID framework still dominates much of educational development's approach to equality, as inserting women into the existing project of education for economic growth is far less

complicated than transforming men and women's rights and roles in society (Unterhalter, 2005:15).

Yet the persistent "wish that the part—crossing the line of earnings or years in school or attainment—equates to the whole—a full realization of rights" (Unterhalter, 2012: 257), is irresistible, and the WID framework continues to be favoured by donors. WID frameworks are acceptable to Cambodian policymakers, as inserting women into their quest for economic development is not particularly controversial. In this system "education for girls merely serves as a vehicle" for the end goal, and need not be accepted "as a right in itself" (Sivasurbramaniam, 2008:72). In this way, "education for girls and women presents a palatable compromise to change" (Stromquist, 2006:154).

In critique of WID, Gender and Development (GAD) theories developed from the late 1980s onwards stress "how much care and time needs to be allocated to redressing deeply entrenched and sometimes unacknowledged gender inequities in schools, education ministries, political decision making, families, and the labour market" (Unterhalter, 2005:26). Indeed, Stromquist (2006:24) asserts that conflating education with empowerment "is problematic because it assumes that the experience and knowledge attained in schooling automatically prepares girls to assess their worth and envisage new possibilities. It ignores the reproductive function of schooling."

While education continues to be seen as a crucial key to ending gender inequality globally, "the role of educational reform linked to social change is still not clearly defined, despite these global ambitions" (Arnot and Fennell, 2008:12). A 'transformative' education, in which men and women learn to treat each other equitably and are empowered to claim their human rights, would require simultaneous 'development' in private and public arenas. Freire (Freire and Shor, 1987:134) stresses that such transformative movements "demand mobilization, organization of people, programs, all these things...which cannot be organized just inside a classroom" and that liberatory education "goes on outside classrooms in social movements."

Donors and governments conducting educational development, however, may be unwilling to actively engage with social movements for gender equality. Unterhalter (2012) argues the MDGs side-step difficult ethical questions about gender equality, rights, and the role of schooling by focusing on WID-based minimal thresholds for

results such as parity in primary enrolment. They also tend to consider one goal in isolation, rather than interconnected issues; for example:

lack of attention in MDG2 to what girls might learn at primary school, and whether they are able to progress to secondary school, limits the achievement of the target in MDG3 on increased women's representation in parliament and that in MDG6 on larger numbers of skilled birth attendants to decrease maternal mortality (Unterhalter, 2012:255).

The result is that no "language of linkage" has been developed to address the connections between education, inequality, and gender (Unterhalter, 2012: 254).

An emerging body of scholarship on education, development and gender goes 'beyond access' by asserting that gender equality in education includes:

conditions in school and post-school opportunities... gender equality in education cannot be separated as a goal from gender equality in society as a whole... A quality education is not therefore acquired in isolation from the social setting in which students live. It embraces the notion of education as a transformative process which promotes social change and contributes to building a just and democratic society. Quality education cannot be achieved without gender equality and equity (Aikman and Unterhalter, 2005: 4).

These theories draw on Amartya Sen's theories that human development, including in education, should be aimed at widening human 'capabilities', or "developing the freedoms of all individuals, irrespective of gender or other markers of discrimination, to choose actions, aspirations, and attributes that they have reason to value" (*ibid.*:3). In this framework, education should enhance economic opportunities, but is not narrowly defined by them alone.

The capabilities approach "contains an ethical injunction" to affirm girls' and women's right to education and its intrinsic value (Unterhalter, 2005:29). This represents a significant shift, as "most of society's justifications for educating girls remains one of counting the benefits at large, while ignoring her individual rights and personal worth" (Haider, 1995, as cited by Raynor, 2005:89). While the MDGs focus on justifying girls' education as a benefit to society, UNESCO (2014:7) now acknowledges that "[t]he shape of new goals after 2015 should be guided by the principles of upholding education as a right."

While capabilities approaches have been rightfully criticized when veering towards universalizing human desires, Unterhalter (2005) stresses that capabilities should be used as a framework for a framework; Robyns (2005:196) asserts that "it is the people

who will be affected by the policies who should decide on what will count as valuable capabilities.”

Evaluating education in this manner goes beyond whether students will be able to get certain things, towards whether they may become certain things. Thus, rather than avoiding societal gendered norms, this approach to education requires examining them—and whether and how education contributes to ‘empowering’ girls and women to create the lives, the selves, that they seek.

2.3 IDENTITY

Approaching a discussion of ‘selves’ requires a working understanding of what makes a self. Identity is “...an invention ‘which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within representation,’” that is, how the self is presented to others (Parry, 1994, as cited by Lilja, 2008:38). This self is not created apart from others, but “rather it is the kinds of associations we inhabit that define the kind of individuals we become” (Benhabib, 1992, as cited by Kabeer, 2011:503).

This social aspect of identity is important to bear in mind in order to look beyond a purely Western notion of the self, an individual apart and distinct from all others. Kabeer (2011:502) notes that “a somewhat different account of identity and selfhood emerges in contexts where the processes of socialization are built around *interdependence* rather than *separation* as the basis of gender roles and responsibilities.” As discussed further in Chapter Three, one’s responsibilities to others are core to placing one’s ‘self’ in Cambodian society. This embeddedness creates “a connective notion of selfhood...‘one that sees itself embedded in others and fosters relationality as a central charter of selfhood’” (Joseph, 1997, as cited by Kabeer, 2011:502).

Relationality, however, does not mean uncritical acceptance of social hierarchies (Kabeer, 2011). Creating identities involves self-reflection, or ‘subjectivity’. Lilja (2008:43) states subjectivity is used “to understand, interpret and act in the world(s) through which we are formed.” Subjectivity creates choice in making the self, though the possibilities one can imagine are shaped by wider society, and thus, people tend to select their speech, dress, and actions “from a menu they had no hand in writing” (Friedman 1999, as cited by Lilja, 2008:41).

This selection process, however, also means that one's identity may be comprised of several choices, or several identities that are multiple and shifting (Lilja, 2008). As the self shifts and multiplies, subjectivities are "mobile" and "multiple", "temporary places to stand and from which to act" (Ferguson, 1993, as cited by Lilja, 2008:44).

2.4 GENDER

While gender differences are often characterised as 'natural' in order to defend their power, gender—like other elements of identity—is socially formed and negotiable (Butler, 2009). It is also influenced by and intersects with other aspects of identity such as ethnicity, class, religion, and sexual orientation—thus universals on "the man and the woman" do not exist (Davids and van Driel, 2001:159). As gender is socially negotiated, Butler (2009:i) characterizes it as 'performative', asserting that:

...the 'appearance' of gender is often mistaken as a sign of its internal or inherent truth; gender is prompted by obligatory norms to be one gender or the other (usually within a strictly binary frame), and the reproduction of gender is thus always a negotiation with power... there is no gender without this reproduction of norms that risks undoing or redoing the norm in unexpected ways, thus opening up the possibility of a remaking of gendered reality along new lines.

This notion of the 'redoing' of gender is useful for exploring how idealised gender norms from the past interact with present realities. For example, an idealised traditional woman may 'belong' in the home, but the need for household income may find her working 'for' her home in other spaces.

As past and present interact to create norms, so too do the 'global' and the 'local', which are "no longer two dichotomous positions" but spaces "inextricably connected" through globalization, "an increasing interconnectedness of the world through technology and flows of capital, commodities, people, and culture (Davids and van Driel, 2001:154). Davids and van Driel (*ibid.*) theorise that just as globalisation creates interconnected hybrid global/local forms of culture, so too are gender norms redone by 'interweaving' local and foreign norms into 'multidimensional' layers.

Scholars have used many adjectives like 'fluid', 'layered', and 'interwoven' to describe gender (Brickell, 2011; Davids and van Driel, 2001). The core concept in these metaphors is that people continually reproduce shifting genders using material from many different sources. According to the situation, one may foreground certain aspects of their gender and subsume others.

These 'performativities' of gender occur in order to "negotiate with power" (Butler, 2009:i). Gender norms create power relationships between men and women, and thus the slippery term 'empowerment' often comes into play when examining gender relationships.

2.5 EMPOWERMENT

The term 'empowerment' is often "used to add glamour (rather than value) to interventions which actually seek to achieve a variety of economic and social outcomes, which, though they may be extremely desirable in themselves, do not necessarily challenge existing patterns of power" (Mosedale, 2005:252). This terminological bedazzling creates confusion about what 'empowerment' means, but several scholars have outlined its key features.

Mosedale (2005) identifies how empowerment operates. First, "empowerment cannot be bestowed by a third party. Rather those who would become empowered must claim it. Development agencies cannot therefore empower women... They may be able to create conditions favourable to empowerment but they cannot make it happen" (*ibid.*:244). Second, empowerment is "an ongoing process rather than a product. There is no final goal. One does not arrive at a stage of being empowered in some absolute sense. People are empowered, or disempowered, relative to others or, importantly, relative to themselves at a previous time" (*ibid.*).

Thus, young women may claim their right to an education and gain skills and knowledge through schooling, but cannot be handed 'empowerment' in school as though it is a gold star. Further, gaining education may increase a women's empowerment, but it does not end with any particular degree.

Kabeer (1999) identifies three components useful for evaluating empowerment: 1) access to resources, 2) agency in making decisions, and 3) achievement of outcomes of value. Agency, "the ability to define one's goals and act upon them," includes not just overt decision-making but also "bargaining and negotiation, deception and manipulation, subversion and resistance" (*ibid.*:438).

Unterhalter (2005) applies Kabeer's components to educational development. For resources, Unterhalter (*ibid.*) notes the importance of accessing knowledge, not just

schooling, and retaining access to higher levels. Agency would require both household and policy-level decisions about education to be guided by women themselves, and achievement would have to be measured not just according to “narrowly defined notions of reading and writing up to a certain level, or GDP per capita, but more complex notions of well-being” (*ibid.*:22, emphasis original).

Kabeer and Unterhalter’s interpretations of empowerment indicate its temporal element—moving from resources (‘pre-conditions’) to agency (‘process’) to achievements (‘outcomes’) (Kabeer, 1999:437). Alternatively, Stromquist (2002) identifies dimensions in which empowerment occurs. Two are internal—cognitive and psychological empowerment; meaning “critical understanding of one’s reality” and “feeling of self-esteem” (*ibid.*:23). Two face externally: political empowerment, “awareness of power inequalities and the ability to organize and mobilize,” and economic empowerment, “capacity to generate independent income” (*ibid.*). Stromquist states that education may contribute to all four dimensions, “but require the educational programme to be designed explicitly to achieve each of those ends” (*ibid.*).

While empowerment is generally conceived as an individual process, these criteria apply to individuals and groups. As empowerment is relative to others, it does require group action in order to manifest. Freire (Freire and Shor, 1987) argues that empowerment at the individual level is just a feeling—correlating with Stromquist’s first two internal dimensions. While these feelings are crucial initial stages of empowerment, Freire argues empowerment occurs through social acts—echoed by Kabeer’s element of agency and Stromquist’s elements of organizing and mobilizing. Rowlands (1997, as cited by Mosedale, 2005:248) describes this process as “moving from insight to action” and notes empowerment must occur personally, in close relationships, and collectively. Thus ‘power within’ as well as collective power are essential to “participate effectively in shaping the social limits that define what is possible” (Hayward, 1998, as cited by Mosedale, 2005: 251).

2.6 HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC PUBLIC SPACES

Parpart, et. al. (2002:4) assert that:

[g]roups become empowered through collective action, but that action is enabled or constrained by the structures of power they encounter. [...] [M]uch closer attention must be paid to the broad political and economic structures, cultural assumptions, notions of human rights, law and practices in which women and men seek to survive and even flourish.

Thus, empowerment processes do not end with degrees and jobs, but inevitably encounter the politics of rights.

Certain rights, such as freedom of assembly, are codified as universal ‘human rights’—inherent freedoms and protections that all are entitled to—under the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). A related UN instrument, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), specifically addresses women’s rights such as equal access to education and active participation in public and political life. Following the Cold War, the UN has actively promoted these human rights globally, and several states in which the UN has attempted to build liberal democracy, such as Cambodia, have ratified these instruments (Ledgerwood and Un, 2003). The universality, however, of these rights has been contested by many, including the governments adopting these instruments (*ibid.*)

Just as empowerment cannot be granted, rights—while ‘given’ through laws—only exist when claimed (Butler, 2009). Claiming rights may be difficult in contexts where human rights are considered to be expressions of Western individualism, rather than universally inherent rights (Kabeer, 2011). Yet Kabeer (*ibid.*:326) asserts that societies based around hierarchies and collective interests are capable of an ethics towards personhood: “A commitment to the rights of individuals is perfectly compatible with an ontological worldview that recognizes the connections between people [and] the socially embedded nature of their identities and experiences.” Thus inherent human rights may be conceptualized not just as individualistic, but as societal duty for “the recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others” (Keown, 1998, as cited by Ledgerwood and Un, 2003:541). In this model, upholding women’s rights becomes a collective cultural responsibility. The framing of women’s rights as an integral part of one’s duty to society conceptualises rights in a manner that ties them to social harmony, rather than imposed ideas of individualism.

In order for all people to directly contest their rights, unmediated by government, civil society, or market institutions, democratic public space must be created (Springer, 2010). While democracy is a term that has been “mercilessly overworked”, it may be defined at a basic level as a process whereby people are empowered through their political participation (*ibid.*:16). As democracy is definitively inclusive, public spaces are important and thus, “public space can be regarded as ‘the very practice of democracy’” (Henaff and Strong, 2001, as cited by Springer, 2010:38). Public space is a forum where “collective rights to performance and speech are entrenched” (Goheen, 1994, as cited by Springer, 2010:39). Public space is also important for identity formation, as it is in public spaces that individuals or groups “represent themselves as legitimate claimants” and “make their desires and needs known” (Springer, 2010).

2.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the theoretical frames underpinning the research. It explored how education and gender equality in education have been understood by development actors, as well as rights-bases that may affirm education’s intrinsic value. This chapter outlined what constitutes identity, gender, and empowerment, paying particular attention to how education fits within empowerment as well as how collective empowerment and associational identity may be useful in understanding contexts not centred around individualism. Lastly, this chapter explored some of the political dimensions of empowerment—human rights and democratic public spaces.

CHAPTER THREE - CAMBODIAN CONTEXTS

Figure 4, from Marin. Rice fields, Siem Reap province.

Figure 5, from Serey Roth. Rally for road safety, Phnom Penh.

This Chapter describes facets of Cambodia relevant to this research. The first section reviews Cambodia's educational development, particularly in higher education, and particularly from reconstruction in the 1990s onwards. Subsequent sections outline contemporary expressions of gender and politics. This chapter provides an understanding of the broader environment through which participants have navigated their lives. In the last year Phnom Penh has been shaped by electioneering and protest, peace and violence, hopeful and wary views of the future. This chapter also attempts to illuminate that particular time-space in which this research is situated.

3.1 OVERVIEW OF PHNOM PENH AND MODERN CAMBODIA

Cambodia's capital city sits at the confluence of Cambodia's three major rivers, the Tonle Sap, the Mekong, and the Tonle Bassac. Phnom Penh is also headquarters for international and local NGOs, the base for export manufacturing, a major tourism hub, and hosts the vast majority of higher education institutions. English is spoken widely in Phnom Penh and English proficiency is a significant advantage in education and employment.

Tourism sustains a "cultural economy" in Cambodia built around narratives of "apprehension and awe, intrigue and excitement" embodied in the Khmer Rouge and Angkor (Winter and Ollier, 2006:12), and these narratives are infused in many analyses of Cambodia. Davis (2013:n.p.) likens such analyses to "reading a newspaper from three decades ago; no time seems to have passed that needs to be explained."

The Vietnamese military, supported finically by the Soviet Union, invaded Cambodia in 1979, ending the Khmer Rouge regime and backing a group of Cambodian politico-military exiles to form the People's Republic of Kampuchea (Chandler, 1992). After Soviet support ended and the Vietnamese withdrew in 1989, Cambodia aimed to quickly shift from economic and political isolation to a free-market economy and state stable enough to attract foreign investment and aid (Lim, 2013). Regime insiders were able to take possession of land and assets released through rapid privitisation and concentrated their wealth and influence (Hughes, 2007). Cambodia took on International Monetary Fund (IMF) and WB directives to privatise and deregulate the economy, as well as its develop manufacturing, with garment exports dominating economic expansion and spurring rural to urban migration (Springer, 2010).

In 1991, the UN brokered the Paris Peace Agreement to declare Cambodia's sovereignty and end factional fighting that had periodically burst out since the fall of the Khmer Rouge. The UN Transitional Authority (UNTAC) was established in 1992 to conduct peacekeeping, educate citizenry on human rights, and introduce democratic elections. UNTAC-managed reconstruction also initiated an influx of international aid and foreign aid workers into Cambodia. In recent years, roughly half of the national budget has been funded by foreign aid (Ear, 2007).

As Cambodia became one of the most aid dependent countries in the world, the "NGOisation" of Cambodia's development drew upon culture as a resource to further its own ends—yet the flipside of this dynamic is that Cambodian policymakers have been successful at funding their own interests by adopting "foundationspeak" (Winter and Ollier, 2006:11).

While the Khmer Rouge legacy legitimises donor intervention in Cambodia, it also allows half-hearted promises of governance reform to pass muster:

high indebtedness and a high poverty rate put great pressure on donors to give even when the governance situation is disappointing. In effect this gives the government freedom to ignore donor pressures and perpetuates poor governance (Ear, 2007:78).

Nevertheless, dramatic gains have been made in universalising access to primary school, reducing child mortality, combating HIV/AIDS, and clearing the countryside of vast numbers of landmines from the Khmer Rouge era (RGC, 2013). The small number of artists who survived the Khmer Rouge have since spurred a revival of classical dance, theatre and music, and performing and visual arts movements are also growing, some distinctly contemporary and others blending traditional and modern forms (Ollier and Winter, 2006).

While the Khmer Rouge regime eliminated Buddhist institutions during its rule, they have since strongly reemerged (Harris, 2005). Many "duty-based values and practices" (Brickell, 2011:448) in Cambodian culture reflect its Buddhist underpinning. About 96 percent of the population engage in a uniquely Cambodian practice of Theravada Buddhism, influenced by remnants of Hinduism from the Angkorean period and incorporating of pre-Buddhist animist beliefs and traditions (Harris, 2005). Cambodia's

main religious minorities are small pockets of Cham Muslims in central Cambodia and indigenous tribes with animist beliefs in the northeast (*ibid.*).

As noted in Chapter One, as Cambodia verges toward middle-income economic status, land concessions, forced evictions, and rapid deforestation are visible evidence of the corruption and inequalities dominating economic 'development'. The Cambodian human rights organization LICADHO (2012) has verified government concession of 2.1 million hectares of land to private entities since 1993. Since 2003, an estimated 400,000 people have been affected by land disputes (*ibid.*). The logging, rubber, and sugar enterprises that often utilise this land have contributed to rapid deforestation, with rates in Cambodia over the last 12 years the fifth highest in the world (Peter, 2013).

As subsistence livelihoods built around land and fisheries become scarcer and urban manufacturing grows, migration internally and internationally is rising. Employment opportunities often adhere to gendered patterns, with many women working in domestic garment factories or illegally migrating to Thailand or Malaysia for employment as domestic workers. Men more often migrate internationally to work in industries like fishing. International migration puts workers at significant risk of being sold into indentured servitude; the International Organization for Migration (as cited by Davis, 2013) lists Cambodia as the sixth most significant point of origin for trafficked people worldwide.

In addition, the human rights situation has worsened in Cambodia in recent years, leading to a 'crisis' marked by forced evictions, the murder of rights activists, periodic constriction or outright suspension of freedom of assembly, wrongful imprisonment, and unchecked state violence against political demonstrators or bystanders caught in the scrum (HRW, 2014).

Thus, rising inequality and disregard for human rights have marked Cambodian development. An elderly woman at a political forum I attended in Phnom Penh described Cambodia's development as 'anarchic'. In compiling their recommendations to the UN for global post-2015 development goals, Cambodian NGOs, provincial communities, and informal associations who participated in feedback sessions most commonly requested that new development goals focus on human rights rather than

economic targets (Peter, 2013).

As Cambodia moves toward ASEAN regional integration in 2015, concerns mount that Cambodia's workforce does not have the education and skills to compete with its neighbours in an open market (Sen, 2013). In the next section I review how education, and in particular, higher education, have figured in Cambodia's shifting landscape.

3.2 CAMBODIAN FORMAL EDUCATION

Much scholarship is devoted to illustrating donor dominance in education frameworks, which undermines Cambodia's ownership of its formal education system (Courtney, 2008; McCormick, 2012; Tan, 2010; Velasco, 2004). Yet much of the donor discourse about the human capital advantages of education may not be out of alignment with Cambodian policymakers' economic goals. Indeed, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MOEYS, 2010:2) characterises its students as "engines for social and economic development." Further, adopting donor frameworks may be a strategic manoeuvre to convince donors to fund Cambodia's educational system. Investment in education amounts to less than 10 percent of the government's total budget, and less than 2 percent of the country's gross domestic product (Peter and Hul, 2013).

Designated by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as an Education for All (EFA) 'Fast Track Initiative' country in 2006, Cambodia's aid inflows have supported the education sector's rapid expansion, particularly in primary education (Marshall et al., 2009; McCormick, 2012). Yet this rapid expansion has overshadowed considerations of quality (*ibid.*), which continues to be under-prioritised due to the difficulties in defining and measuring it (Courtney, 2008; McCormick, 2012). Cambodia's NGO Education Partnership (2011:6, 16) notes that amongst Cambodia's education policymakers there is "[n]o shared understanding of the elements of quality education" and that "it is important to know and have a common understanding of what is quality education in order to be effective in promoting it."

No matter how 'quality' may be defined, teachers are not adequately equipped to deliver quality education to students. Rapid expansion has meant higher teacher-to-student ratios, poor in-service training with little follow-up, and persistently paltry wages (Kalyanpur, 2011). Cambodian teachers remain the fourth lowest paid in the world

(*ibid.*), and teachers' efforts to unionise and demand better wages have been met with government intimidation (Ben and Blomberg, 2014).

To supplement meagre wages, teachers often withhold material or full explanation in regular classes and charge 'informal fees' for extra tutoring sessions or cheat sheets (Bray, 2009; Kalyanpur, 2011; Tan, 2008). Additionally, problems of corruption are not limited to teachers. In 2014, an investigation found that textbooks funded by the Asian Development Bank, intended for free distribution to schools, were sold by district education officials to school principals and market vendors (Blomberg and Ben, 2014). Just 14.6 percent of students surveyed had received all of their required textbooks, and 42 percent received less than half. In response, the government is fining the purchasing vendors and recovering books, but no discernable actions have been taken to address officials' corruption.

These issues mean that despite providing nine years of ostensibly free and compulsory education, costs such as uniforms, teachers' fees, and textbooks remain significant. Tan (2008:563-4) found that for the poorest 20 percent of Cambodians, "the cost of schooling is extremely high at 79 percent of the per capita non-food expenditure." Education expenses also increase as students matriculate to higher levels. Often, there is an increasing distance to school that adds transportation and/or accommodation costs. In addition, added pressure to perform well on standardised tests and gain scholarships increases the demand for private tutoring. In 2012, about 41 percent of lower secondary students and 63 percent of upper secondary students received private lessons (NIS, 2013).

In this priced environment, "[i]t is tempting for the students to believe that their future is not so much due to their hard work and honesty, but determined by how much money their families could afford to pay" (Tan, 2008:564). While MOEYS scholarships for girls and poorer students have boosted enrolment for these groups, the larger issues that create inequalities in access and learning have not been addressed. While the gender gap has been nearly eliminated for urban students, it persists for rural students, particularly at upper levels due to the increased distance between upper secondary schools, which forces students to migrate from home to attend (No, et. al., 2012). Ethnic minorities and students with disabilities also continue to be at a significant disadvantage

accessing and remaining in school (Kalyanpur, 2011).

3.3 HIGHER EDUCATION IN CAMBODIA

The expectation that universities play a key role in “national development” (and not just economic development) and in educating “future leaders” figures prominently in rhetoric (e.g. in mission statements and political speeches), though this begs the questions as to whether, how, and how successfully such a role is fulfilled (DRF, 2010:19).

For rural students, the challenges of educational migration are particularly pronounced at the tertiary level. The vast majority of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs, including universities, institutes, and vocational schools) are in Phnom Penh, and about 80 percent of HEI students study there (DRF, 2010; Sam et al, 2013). In 2010, approximately 26 percent of students dropped out in their first year (Sam et al, 2013), hinting at the difficulties of migration and meeting the cost of higher education. The gender gap is also widest at the tertiary level, with 62 female students for every 100 males (World Bank, 2011).

Despite the challenges, demand for higher education is increasing, as the number of young people graduating from secondary school increases. HEI enrolments are booming in response, from “a modest 10,000 in 1997... to 168,000 in 2009” (DRF, 2010: 26). Yet due to the donor-driven heavy emphasis on universalising basic education, HEIs have received only “2 percent of the total public budget allocated to education since the early 1990s” (DRF, 2013:3). Most of the sector’s rapid expansion is funded by student fees at private HEIs, which provide “more than 80 percent of the total funding” for HEIs and “reverses the funding situation in most developing countries” (World Bank, 2010 as cited in CDRI, 2013:5). Roughly 60 percent of Cambodia’s HEIs are private institutions, and while they have sprouted quickly in response to demand, the quality of education they provide varies greatly (CDRI, 2013).

Evaluating HEI quality in Cambodia is difficult in large part due to ineffective regulation. Fourteen different ministries and authorities oversee HEIs (DRF, 2013:4), and the “application procedure for accreditation is very complex and bureaucratic” (Vann, 2012:35). In February 2014, Prime Minister Hun Sen announced that university degrees would no longer be signed by the Education Minister and that “[a]ll universities must sign [their own degrees] and be responsible for the education quality themselves... If

[students] apply for a job and are not accepted, they can no longer blame it on the Education Minister” (Khy and Blomberg, 2014).

Also impeding quality is HEI curriculum, which is largely in English and imported from overseas (Vann, 2012). Teachers agree that this curriculum is “not contextualized to fit the local industrial and market needs,” resulting “in graduates with skills not meeting the industry demand and the nation’s development needs” (*ibid.*:93).

Because of these disconnects, only 10 percent of university graduates are able to find employment in the first year after graduation (Hayden and Martin, 2011). While internships might provide professional learning and on-the-job training, CDRI (2013:14) notes a “lack of openness and willingness of many employers to provide internship opportunities for university students.”

3.4 GENDER IDEALS AND REALITIES FOR YOUNG WOMEN

Despite the cultural preference for daughters to stay close to home, many young women are now migrating from their home villages before marriage; mostly for employment opportunities but occasionally for education (Derks, 2008). Like employment, daughters’ education can be justified as means to increase family income (Brickell, 2011b; Derks, 2008). Tensions between idealised ‘traditional’ norms for women and practical necessities for contemporary women have resulted in melding, weaving, or hybridisations of both (*ibid.*).

The ideal virtuous woman is outlined in the *Chbap Srey* (Code of Women’s Behaviour), one in a series of *chbap* or Buddhist moral codes that describe how a woman brings honour and status to her family through good behaviour (Derks, 2008). While the *Chbap Srey* were composed between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries, a more recent version written by a former monk is taught and memorized in schools (*ibid.*) The *Chbap Srey* details how “a woman should serve and respect her husband and how she should keep peace in the house,” as well as proper comportment, “how to speak—not too much or too loud; walk—not in such a way that one can hear the skirt rustle or that it makes the house tremble; sit—with legs crossed, neatly; and work—devotedly and without a moment of distraction” (Derks, 2008:43). While Cambodian women today are not necessarily holding themselves to these ideals, the *Chbap Srey* is considered by many as an important part of Khmer culture, threatened by colonisation and the Khmer Rouge

(Brickell, 2011). In contemporary Cambodia, notions about pre-colonial Khmer splendour continue to legitimise power agendas and unequal gender hierarchies (*ibid.*).

Nevertheless, girls are increasingly getting basic education. Driven in part by donor goals for gender parity, girls' access to education has increased dramatically (CITE a number). However, educating sons still tends to be favoured, as the opportunity costs of girls' education are higher due to their domestic duties (GCE, 2005). Matriculating to higher grades is more difficult, particularly for young women from rural areas who must often move further and further away from home to remain in school. Since MOEYS and its donors prioritise primary education, upper secondary schools are fewer and farther between. Most young women, still located in rural areas, must commit what Brickell (2011b:452) terms "geographical promiscuity" in order to continue their education. Thus is it not surprising that the access gender gap throughout formal schooling is highest for rural women (MOEYS, 2013). Those who do succeed in their studies are those able to "creatively negotiate and balance the multiple demands placed on her by society, family, and self" (Brickell, 2011b:458).

While young women's access to education is increasing, their ability to participate in politics and be free from violence remains limited. As discussed further in Section 3.4.1, women's representation in government remains stagnant at about 20 percent (Crothers and Kaing, 2013). This may be because the WID approach to inserting women into the formal education and the workforce does not require deeper public and private social transformations.

Violence Against Women (VAW) is a pervasive problem in Cambodia, rooted in entrenched societal values about women and exacerbated by poor law enforcement (Brickell, Pach, and Poch, 2014, Fulu, et. al., 2013). In a recent survey of 1,863 Cambodian men, 20.8 percent admitted to raping a woman, with the most common motivation that they were entitled to sex regardless of consent, and 12 percent had committed physical violence against a woman (Fulu, et. al., 2013). Domestic violence is thought of as a private issue and victims rarely seek help; those that do seek help are often encouraged by police and judges to reconcile with their abusers for the sake of family harmony (Brickell, 2014).

Thus, addressing VAW openly and transforming gendered perceptions of VAW are core programmes for the Cambodian NGOs where participants work. As discussed further in Section 3.4.1 below and Chapter Seven, young women are becoming increasingly vocal about addressing VAW in society and transforming attitudes.

3.4.1 WOMEN IN POLITICS

In Cambodia, like many other parts of the world, the public sphere is considered to be a male space, and the private female (Arnot 2012b; Lilja 2008). Women have made strides in challenging this divide—a small percentage has gained political influence and others are becoming more publicly vocal about their political concerns. Prior to the 2013 election, Cambodian NGOs organised many forums on women in politics, and I was pleasantly surprised to see young and elder women alike boldly press party representatives for commitments. Nevertheless, there were fewer women representatives on candidate lists in 2013 than in 2009 (Crothers and Kaing, 2013). This disappointing outcome lends credence to assertion that politically, women are gaining “increased space, but not necessarily increased clout” (Ojendal and Sedara, 2006, as cited in Ward and Mouly, 2013:316).

Women’s ability to invest their time and energy to run for political office is limited. While women’s roles outside the home shift and expand, their domestic responsibilities remain entrenched, creating significant strains on their time (Brickell, 2011a). While women’s participation in politics has been heavily encouraged and promoted by civil society groups, women’s responsibilities in the home mean that potential candidates are often not able to leave their families and devote sufficient time to campaigning (CCHR, 2013).

Political candidacy is also hampered by the financial cost of campaigning and safety risk. Through forums promoting women in politics, one Cambodian NGO representative stated that their organisation had “found that even the young women who are highly educated got advice from their families not to play politics, because it’s still a dangerous issue for society at the moment” (as cited by Crothers and Kaing, 2013:para. 23).

Despite (and perhaps because of) this lack of formal representation, some groups of Cambodian women have taken to creating public political space for themselves. Garment workers, the vast majority of whom are women, have demonstrated for better wages

and treatment at various points since the mid-1990s (Hughes, 2007). Perhaps the most famous politically active Cambodian women today are land rights activists from Phnom Penh's *Boeung Kak* community.³ Forcibly evicted from their homes in 2008, *Boeung Kak* women have staged over 34 protests to garner attention to their still unresolved claims for sufficient resettlement support (Vink, 2013). In 2012, after 15 *Boeung Kak* women were arrested for demonstrating, increased protest led to international media attention and their eventual release. Undaunted by ongoing arrests and incidents of police brutality, *Boeung Kak* activists continue to press for a resolution to their claims.

Less confrontational but increasingly public are young women's empowerment groups. Part of my interest in young women activists for this research came from noticing, via facebook, these groups' increased organisation and advocacy. A number of young Cambodian women I knew from volunteering in 2009 belonged to groups organising large-scale demonstrations under the auspices of campaigns like 'One Billion Rising'. While less threatening to the ruling elite than groups like the women of *Boeung Kak*, these young women's groups were self-organising and publically vocal in ways that contradicted idealised notions of quiet and subservient daughters.

3.5 POLITICS AND RIGHTS

The concept of 'human rights' was never a part of Cambodia's governance structures or cultural discourse until the early 1990s and the arrival of UNTAC. UNTAC's mass media campaign to inform the public of their rights enshrined in declarations like UDHR and CEDAW was arguably the sole successful component of its mission, yet human rights concepts have been interpreted in very different ways (Ledgerwood and Un, 2003).

Cambodian NGOs tasked with conducting rights training translated UNTAC-introduced concepts to mirror Buddhist precepts of moral duty and obligation (*ibid.*). This created the notion that both individuals and the state are duty-bound to uphold "human dignity and mutual respect" (*ibid.*: 544). While this 'translation' of universal ideas was effective, Hughes (2007:840) notes that its emphasis on "moral behaviour in society" does not offer any "radical political critique of the political order." Conversely, the Hun Sen regime continues to characterise the full expression of universal human rights as undermining state authority and divergent from allegedly-Cambodian human rights

³ *Boeung*: lake.

granted and protected by the state (Ledgerwood & Un, 2003). In 2011, the outgoing head of the Cambodia office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights asserted that “human rights are tolerated to the extent that they do not challenge the political, economic and financial interests of the ruling elite” (as cited by Heder, 2012:106).

Lilja (2008) argues that Cambodia’s ‘hybrid’ democracy formed as introduced institutions melded with existing political processes the UN did not consider in its political frameworks. In such hybridisations, “new hierarchies are created, as local notions of decision-making are woven together with the new ‘democratic’ norms of leadership” (*ibid.*, 52). Lilja (*ibid.*:59) argues that Cambodians sought from introduced democracy the “stability that is expected to come with democracy as a more peaceful way of solving conflicts.” Yet rising government violence used to regulate citizenry reveals that peace has not been realised (Lim, 2013). Moreover, while Cambodian trauma from the Khmer Rouge era is used to justify entrenching the political status quo,

stability is not created by the short-term stifling of dissenting views; in fact, such stifling has the opposite effect. [...] [S]tability is achieved by the long-term ability of a society to tolerate multiple voices and views, and incorporate those differing perspectives into the ongoing development that all democratic societies experience (Yeng, 2006, as cited by Ear, 2007).

Yet as donors facilitated the formation of Cambodian governance and engaged with it, “a Faustian pact was made to promote stability at the expense of democracy,” reinforcing the political status quo in order to avoid potentially violent conflict (Ear, 2007:84). Yet this enforcement of stability perpetuates the corruption within the system, and aid conditionalities are rarely enforced: “[s]ince 2000, donors have linked aid to a slew of reforms (judicial, fiscal, administrative, etc.), though the Cambodian government’s failure to follow through has hardly brought any consequences” (You, 2013, n.p.). This lax enforcement shows “how hard it is for donors to be tough on a country that is genuinely aid-dependent for the survival of much of the population” (Ear, 2007:70).

Thus, the state continues to use violence and intimidation to crush grassroots’ claim to power, while donor preference for stability over rights means that donors avoid “taking sides with citizens” and shuttle citizens’ grievances through “highly regulated and atomizing modes of participation” (Hughes, 2007:21, 834).

In addition, corruption in the judiciary and a lack of separation between it and the executive branch of government make redressing citizens' concerns through the courts virtually impossible (Ear, 2007). Without independent courts or free media, voting is held as the centrepiece of what constitutes Cambodia's democracy (You, 2013). Conducting research in Phnom Penh during the pivotal 2013 election year meant that demonstrations, debates, and ideas about what Cambodia might or should become swirled through the dust of everyday life and impacted the research.

Largely fed by a huge increase in youth involvement, pre-election demonstrations and rallies surged through Phnom Penh's streets in June and July, 2013, with young men and women on motorbikes chanting campaign slogans and trucks blasting slogans and pop music. Analysts point to young people's increased access to formal education as well as their participation in alternative information networks like facebook as key drivers for their increased political involvement in the 2013 elections (Kasztelan, 2013). In addition, public protest, both before and especially after the elections, rose dramatically, with 2013 being Cambodia's "most strike-intensive year on record" (Ruom Collective, 2014:n.p.). Also of note was the breadth of protest involvement, from garment workers, land rights activists, opposition party supporters, farmers, activist monks, and civil society (Ou, 2014). While protest movements seem to shift away from the 'traditional' preference for societal harmony, protest may also be seen as expression of distress over the disharmony within the current status quo.

Opposition to the ruling party was energised by a merger between the Sam Rainsy party and Human Rights Party into the Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP), as well as Sam Rainsy's pardon on an outstanding warrant and his return from seven years' self-imposed exile. While the CNRP positioned themselves as the party that honours human rights, party leader Sam Rainsy frequently used anti-Vietnamese rhetoric and pejoratives to stir nationalistic support. Acts of discrimination and violence against ethnic Vietnamese people followed, including most tragically a man who was beaten to death at the scene of an accident after shouts of "*Yuon* fight with Khmer!"⁴ incited a mob to attack him (Eang, 2014). This illustrates that while Cambodia's ruling party leads with brutality, the opposition should be simplistically viewed as harbingers of a more just Cambodia.

⁴ *Yuon* is a pejorative term for Vietnamese people, which Rainsy claims is not racist.

Official election results showed the CPP winning by a small margin; itself an indication of change as in years previous, election results showed the CPP winning by much higher margins. However, rampant election fraud and irregularities meant that the CNRP refused to accept the results, believing, perhaps not unreasonably, that their party was the legitimate victor (Meyn and Hul, 2013).

From the release of official election results in September 2013 to the submission of this thesis in March 2014, periodic meetings and negotiations between the CPP and CNRP have been fruitless, with both sides too committed to their position to back down. The CNRP still refuses to take their seats in the National Assembly, and CPP will not agree to early elections. Because of lack of progress through negotiation, large-scale demonstrations have been held at various points throughout the last seven months, as a show of force and to petition other nations and international bodies like the UN for support. Demonstrations have ranged in size from a few hundred to a hundred thousand in December, variously calling for an investigation into the election, a mandate for early elections in 2015, or simply for Hun Sen to step down. State response to these actions has also varied widely; some proceeded peacefully and seemed to usher in a new era of freedom of expression. Others, particularly more recent protests held by garment unions in early 2014, have been met with batons or bullets (Ruom Collective, 2014).

And so as of March 2014, over seven months after the elections, the parties remain in a deadlock. While the CPP continues to wield all of the decision-making power in the National Assembly, it has been forced to take reform seriously, and has been unable to fully beat the citizenry into compliance. The partial openings and closings of political space do not seem to follow any consistent pattern, and therefore create great uncertainty about the future.

The link between voicing concerns and realising action is fraught. For garment workers, media attention after five were shot and killed and 23 arrested has prompted global brands to pressure the government to peacefully address their concerns, but in the meantime, the workers' movement has withered from fear, wages remain stagnant, and 23 remain imprisoned (Willemyns and Aun, 2014).

Election and post-election contestation, over partisan concerns, fair wages, or land justice, (re)shaped everyday life, and was therefore part of the generation this research. These events were frequently talked about wherever one went, and so they were talked about in the interviews as well. Moreover, as discussed further in Chapter Seven, participants situated themselves in this fraught space, and this Section has attempted to illustrate the wider movement of oppression and contestation that participants encountered and attempted to respond to in their own ways.

3.6 CONCLUSION

This Chapter describes the research context, with particular attention to aspects of Cambodia most important for this research. The first section broadly outlined trends and shifts in Cambodia from the fall of the Khmer Rouge to today. The second section described Cambodia's rebuilding education system and international development actors' role in that process. The third section specifically addressed higher education in Cambodia. The fourth section discussed gender ideals and realities for young women, and further examined women's emerging roles in politics. The fifth section discussed contemporary politics and rights, addressing how human rights have been interpreted in Cambodia and the particular election and protest events that marked Phnom Penh in 2013, thus illuminating the precarious political space that affected participants and which they attempted to enter.

CHAPTER FOUR – METHODOLOGY

Figure 6, from Serey Roth. Colleague in Banteay Meanchey province.

Serey Roth: They say one photo, one memory. *When we just take a photo, it does not seem very important, but when we look at it one by one, it is really meaningful; one photo, one memory.*

This Chapter describes the methodology used for the research, starting with reviewing the epistemologies discussed in Section 1.3 and outlining the frameworks that informed research design, leading me to adopt photovoice methodology. The second section describes how living ‘in the field’ affected my research design and the research process. Section Three describes how participants and the research assistant were located. Section Four describes photovoice methodology and how we used it in this research. Section Five outlines the processes of translation, transcription, and analysis. Finally, Section Five discusses the ethics central to this research process.

4.1 FRAMEWORKS

As discussed in Section 1.3, my post-structural feminist epistemology places women's voices and processes of knowledge construction at the centre of research, while recognising the inevitable plurality and inequality of those voices. The theoretical framework demonstrated that whether the purported aim of educational development is economic prosperity, women's empowerment, or social justice (often all of these things at once), these goals depend upon a variety of contextual and interconnected factors. Who better then, to delineate what these goals are and the relative success of reaching them, than students themselves? Why, after decades of insistence for participation in development, are students' voices largely absent from literature and policy? Schweisfurth (2011) notes that despite repeated reference to participatory icon Paolo Freire, educational development literature rarely showcases the voices of young learners.

The answer partly lies in the fact that representation and voice are dangerous territories to enter, particularly in cross-cultural and cross-lingual research. bell hooks (1990:151-152) highlights the dangers of 'voice' when one is speaking for others:

No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself [...] I want to know your story. And then I can tell it back to you in a new way [...] such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you, I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still the colonizer, the speaking subject and you are now the center of my talk.

In order to examine the research questions from my epistemological standpoint, this research drew from several methodological frameworks. One key component was an appreciative inquiry approach to educational histories. Appreciative inquiry bases research around the principle "that one way to understand the world is to ask questions about achievements, the things that people feel went well, and then to find out what people think helped these things to go well" (Reed, 2007:5). I appreciated the value of university graduates' insights about their successes, and benefits of these to development studies. Knowing, however, that I sought to critically examine the relationship between formal education and empowerment, problems and nuances in what occurred after and in addition to their education were important as well. Also important were methods that could draw out the complexities of experiences and feelings.

Honouring participant's 'voices' spurred my aims to incorporate participatory methods into the research. Participatory research seeks to:

a) make research and data collection more people-centred and democratic through negotiation, reciprocity and the development of research capacity and common goals; b) lessen the hierarchies between researchers/ facilitators and participants by fostering collaborative and emotional relationships...; c) provide accurate and reliable data using ethical and inclusive approaches... d) develop processes through which people can more easily and equitably influence the agenda and outcomes of research...; and e) facilitate the expression and negotiation of social difference (Kindon, 2010:518).

As discussed further in Section 4.4, I employed photovoice, a participatory method whereby participant-generated images guide qualitative interviews. I felt that visual data could help myself and the research audience better understand the complexities in participants' words and ideas; important to consider in research across languages. It seemed that when placed into context by the participant, images could speak effectively and affectively to the research audience.

As the research questions and impetus came from me, a researcher seeking a degree, it does not fall under the category of a 'purer' participatory framework wherein the research aims are identified and designed by participants. I did, however, keep the research questions somewhat open and exploratory so that participants could identify the aspects of their educational histories most important to them. As discussed further in Section 4.4, the participants and I were not able to conduct some participatory analysis of data as I had hoped. Nevertheless, the participatory process of receiving participants' images and exploring them together was successful.

4.2 LIVING IN THE FIELD

Scoping, searching, narrowing

Before my arrival, I designed a research timeline with several months 'in the field' for scoping, developing relationships, generating the data and translating and analysing that data in situ. I arrived in Phnom Penh three months before the national election, and this particular time-space greatly shaped my research focus. Several young men and women wanted to talk to me about politics—they were curious about what I, a *barang*⁵, thought about protest movements and the coming election. These frank and open discussions

⁵ Khmer word for foreigner, particularly one that is European/Caucasian.

contrasted sharply from the vague, elliptical, or strictly private references to politics I heard in 2009.

Initial time scoping in the field was critical to understanding how this time-space both resonated with and differed from the literature and my own memories. It allowed the appropriateness of research questions and methodologies to be examined and refined. I had thought that politics was strictly a taboo subject and the research would not address it directly, yet encountering young people's deep engagement with politics made it a key part of exploring participants' lives. As I aimed to locate participants through Cambodian NGOs working on gender equality, the intensive schedules of these organisations in the run up to the election extended the timeline for when we could actually meet and begin the research process. I made good use of this time by continuing my Khmer language studies and attending the political forums these NGOs organised, the latter very useful contextual data. I also established a working relationship with the research assistant.

I understood that taking a critically engaged and reflective approach to the day-to-day life around me in Cambodia could positively inform and affect the research. Cupples and Kindon (2003:223) assert that by living in the research site, "the cross-cultural encounter between self and other takes on more facets." The longer timeline also gave busy participants multiple opportunities to interact with me and become comfortable with me. It allowed our interview schedule to accommodate their weeks away traveling for work.

By the time we started interviews, I had been present for elections and other events that participants referenced, I had been to some of the places in their photographs, and I had attended a couple of the forums organised by their workplaces. This by no means made me 'one of them', but it did mean that I better understood what they were talking about and could demonstrate that understanding. In addition, because our lives were not equivalent, being able to discuss our frustrations with traffic or fascination with bat caves helped us develop rapport.

4.3 FINDING SREYHAK AND SIX YOUNG WOMEN

4.3.1 The research assistant: Sruong Sreyhak

While the participants are all fairly fluent in English, it was vital to have a bilingual woman present at meetings and interviews.⁶ I composed a position description and shared it widely through friends and online job forums. A mutual friend referred Sruon Sreyhak to me. I had known Sreyhak during my first stay in Cambodia—she studied Biology at the Royal University of Phnom Penh and lived at the dormitory where I volunteered. As we discussed her prior experience in interpreting and translation, I surmised that her history and ours would help us understand each other and that she would ‘get’ the goals I aimed for. My micro-level, exploratory and collaborative aims in the research and use of visual methods differed from larger-scale policy oriented research more often conducted in Cambodia.

Sreyhak was more than just a female interpreter, she was also the women’s peer—near their age, from a modest provincial background, and a university graduate. Whenever Sreyhak and I met with participants together, her presence markedly set them at ease. She also demonstrated to participants that the person interpreting their words understood something about their backgrounds.

Sreyhak acted as an interpreter, cultural advisor, and ally in planning the research phases. Our mutual familiarity and trust from the past greatly helped our new dynamic to form, but it was not without challenges. When we started working together, she was hesitant to give her opinion or be as decisive as I wanted. She was loath to tell me something that might disappoint me. This is in keeping with Cambodian cultural norms regarding professional relationships. Our relationship was just as much a learning experience for me as those with participants, and Sreyhak and I both adapted to each other’s needs and expectations. I became more careful about what I asked and *how* I asked her for things. And she became more outspoken about her needs and how she read our interactions with participants. Her insights were vital to giving me clarity on things that would have otherwise perplexed me.

⁶ During the design phase, feedback from female Cambodian colleagues indicated that women-only interview settings were important for participants to feel comfortable speaking freely.

4.3.2 The participants: Chamnorng, Marin, Sam Ang, Sophearet, Serey Roth, and Sreyton

In order to address processes of educational migration, empowerment, and claiming rights for young women, I sought research participants between the ages of 21 and 29 who were: 1) from rural backgrounds, migrating to Phnom Penh for education; 2) university graduates who completed their degree in the past two years; and 3) active in an organisation that promotes gender equality in Cambodia.

Selecting recent graduates aimed to ensure that participants' experiences were fresher in their minds and relevant to current formal education practices. I was interested in interviewing participants with a range of university majors in order to understand commonalities in their experiences across disciplines. The thread of affiliation with a gender equality organisation would act as a common factor between participants and how young women already grappling with gender and development understood their own empowerment.

Personal contacts referred me to women working in Cambodian gender equality organisations, who in turn referred me to their colleagues. **Sophearet** came from one such organization and expressed an interest in learning more about this kind of research by participating. Another NGO coordinated an active young women's volunteer group, and five of the participants learned about the research through working together in that NGO and volunteering in a young women activist network.

Because five of the participants worked together, I dropped interview questions on workplace dynamics, deciding that such questions could lead to tension, untruthfulness, or simply too much overlap to be fruitful. Discussing five individual viewpoints on their shared work did shed better light on those collective actions. In addition, **Sophearet's** experiences usefully illustrated commonalities and differences from the other five.

4.3.3 Everyone Else

This research aimed to examine higher education from an appreciative inquiry and strengths-based approach, explicitly seeking out young women who had obtained degrees, jobs, and who were organising together, in order to examine their successes and challenges. Implicit in such a study of six fairly similar women is the absence of

other young women with different educational experiences. At one women's forum I attended, a young women who had been forcefully evicted from her home spoke about how this prevented her from continuing her studies. During my scoping, a friend referred me to one potential participant who had run out of money during her first year of university and worked in a garment factory. Women with disabilities and ethnic minorities also face great difficulty in obtaining education (Kalyanpur, 2011).

As discussed previously, the richness of this research derives from focusing in rather surveying broadly. I acknowledge here some of what that leaves outside the frame in order to reiterate that the six women depicted in this thesis do not and cannot represent all young women in Cambodia.

4.4 ASSEMBLING WORDS AND IMAGES

Creating and Gathering Data

4.4.1 Photovoice

'Photovoice' methodology—whereby participants take photographs for the research and are interviewed about them—only recently and rarely appears in development literature (Gervais and Rivard, 2013; Lehtomaki et. al., 2014; Lundgren et. al., 2014). Yet its history spans decades and disciplines. Anthropologists Collier and Collier developed 'photo-elicitation interviewing', using researcher-generated images, from the mid-1950s throughout the latter half of the twentieth century (Lapenta, 2011). Collier and Collier (1986, as cited in Lapenta, 2011:206) found that photo-elicitation helped to reduce awkwardness and foster rapport between researcher and participant: "We are asking questions of the photographs, and the informants became our assistants in discovering the answers." In collaboratively generating images with participants, Parker (2008, as cited in Lapenta, 2011:215) found that photographs "can reveal how interviewees 'see' their world and their past, as well as how they wish themselves and their own roles to be visually represented, perceived and understood."

Many researchers adopting the 'photovoice' moniker trace its roots to feminist theory and Freirian 'problem-posing' education for critical consciousness (Gervais and Rivard, 2013; Wang and Burris, 1997). By posing question(s) that participants respond to visually, photovoice methodology invites participants to engage in processes of making meaning. Grounding the interview in participants' images also aims to reduce the 'asymmetry' between the researcher and participant in structured interviews (Lapenta,

2011), and to open the conversation to possibilities for more dialogical back and forth (Wang and Burris, 1997). This epistemological basis for using images also matched my own and built upon the attractive practical benefits noted above.

Photographs can also serve as a reference point and anchor the dialogue when it occurs across two languages. It cannot be assumed, however, that images are read the same way across cultures, as indeed images possess their own visual language that is open to different interpretations (Mitchell, 2008). This is why photovoice interviews aim to uncover the way that participants view their images.

4.4.2 How we used photovoice

How and Why Women Used their Agency to Break the ‘Rules’

An initial group meeting was held with participants to introduce the photovoice methodology and ask participants to reflect on the key steps that have led to their educational success thus far. I also hoped that these activities would build some measure of trust and rapport between us before the interviews started. While I had high hopes to spend time with participants just ‘hanging out’ in order to develop relationships and understanding between us (Evers, 2010), in point of fact the high demands upon their time meant that the opportunities for this were very limited.

I borrowed one digital camera from a friend as a backup, but participants by and large used their own devices—cameras, phones, and a mini-tablet—to take their pictures. I knew that use of these technologies was growing in Cambodia, particularly among the urban middle-class. I anticipated that this growth in digital photography would add to participants’ interest in the project and help them feel up to the task of accepting the challenge. I also strongly preferred digital images for the ease of sharing them between us and in this thesis. I stressed that a camera would be made available to any participant who needed it so that no one would be excluded from the project on a material basis. Ultimately, it was better that participants used their own devices for this research. It asked participants to think about how they use what they already have, and created the potential for sustainability, as participants can continue to engage in such processes if they wish, rather than thinking it requires a special piece of equipment.

As part of the first meeting, a lecturer from the department of media studies at a Cambodian university, herself a young woman, led a training session in Khmer on basic principles of photography. I instructed participants to take 20 photographs depicting the impact of education on their lives, the supports and the challenges, and to have them ready for me in two weeks' time. I sent everyone home with a handout that reiterated these points. I also, however, took great pains to stress that I considered each woman an expert in her own life, and that I wanted us to collaborate as much as we could.

Only one participant submitted her photographs by the two-week deadline; others pleaded for leniency due to their intensive work schedules. Because I lived 'in the field', the project was easily able to accommodate their requests. In participatory research design, it is crucial for researchers to understand the value of participants' time:

One of the most underrated limitations on participatory research is simply time. While researchers may be able to invest their total work time in a participatory research project, participants continue their regular life activities (Maguire 1987, as cited in Gervais and Rivard, 2013: 501).

Gervais and Rivard (2013) assert that one of photovoice's strengths as a method is the ability to adapt its elements according to participant and research needs. Participants took on my assertion that I wanted us to collaborate and adapted the process by submitting some photographs they took for the research process and some that they took prior to the research. At first I was concerned about the use of older photographs; I wondered whether the participants were taking our project seriously. Yet as participants explained their older photographs to me in interviews, I was delighted to realise the care and consideration that went into selecting them. There were certain people and places that participants wanted to show me, and using some older photographs made this achievable. At times it also seemed that participants were simply proud of certain images. Ultimately, I chose the photovoice method so that participants could make decisions about what was important to discuss and how they would like to be represented. And in bending the 'rules', in taking charge of which images to use, participants claimed their agency in constructing the stories about them.

My fears that participants were not taking it seriously were fears about myself; my inadequacy as a novice researcher. In deviating from my instructions, participants demonstrated their engagement with the research aims. I made a simple adjustment to my interview questions and asked regarding each photograph: 'Why did you take this

picture?', and 'Why did you want to include it for the research?', drawing out both intentions. Participants shared photographs of political demonstrations, their parents' homes, their friends, and illuminated moments and aspects of their lives that I otherwise never would have seen. And when I saw these things, I asked questions that I otherwise would not have thought to ask.

4.4.3 Interviews

Sreyhak and I came to interviews with printouts of the photos, as well as an audio recorder and an outline of topics to address, though I did not ask every single participant the exact same questions. The conversation flowed according to what each woman showed me with her pictures. At times she would say something that reminded me of topic I wanted to explore—for example, a photograph of a participant's sister would lead me to ask how many siblings she had and how many of them attended university.

With each tangent I asked us to take, I took pains to ensure that participants had space and time to fully describe what they wanted to say for all 20 images. This, along with interpreting between Khmer and English, meant that three participants' interviews occurred over two sessions, so that each photograph could be discussed in an unhurried manner.

Each interview was held in a private room at the participant's workplace. These interviews were often held during their lunch break (two hours in Cambodia), or in the evenings once work finished. While I had wished for a more secluded time-space, participants preferred the ease of setting their work aside and jumping into our conversations.

4.5 SPEAKING AND MAKING 'THE RECORD'

Translation, Transcription, Analysis and Selection

Only one woman spoke in English throughout her interview. The other five spoke in Khmer to varying degrees, jumping into their first language when searching for the right word or chewing over an idea. Translating these conversations inevitably added layers of subjectivity; Sreyhak's as interpreter, as well as those that participants and I carry

regarding language. Nonetheless, our discussions greatly benefitted from the flexibility of communicating in either or both languages. Sometimes when speaking in Khmer, participants still used a term in English, and these are shown in regular font in the midst of the italicised Khmer, as in this quote from Sam Ang in Chapter Seven: *“Because when we conduct advocacy, most of them are afraid.”*

The recording also allowed for all portions of the interviews in Khmer to be later translated and transcribed into English. Transcription, however, is never a straightforward act, and working across two languages greatly increases the amount of interpretation that occurs in writing up interviews (Bucholtz, 2000, Maclean, 2007). While I endeavoured to capture each word and sound in my initial transcription of the recordings in English, in this thesis I edit out some ‘ums’ and half-finished words when the speaker is correcting her English. Nevertheless, I strive to maintain women’s words, and hopefully meanings, over perfect grammar. I also leave in in my ‘ums’ and ‘likes’ to demonstrate that I also created messiness in the conversation, despite my advantage in using my first language. Box 2 is a key to the symbols used in transcription.

Box 2 Key to Transcript Symbols

<u>Text</u>	Stress added by speaker
<i>Text</i>	Words in or translated from Khmer
...	Pause
[...]	Indicates words edited from quote

Initial coding was conducted by hand on hard copies of transcripts, with printouts of the photographs on hand to understand the interplay between the two. This drafting process allowed initial themes to emerge. Those themes were then revisited and reworked into codes using TAMS Analyzer, an Apple-compatible, open source coding software similar to NVIVO.

While I had hoped that some collaborative analysis could take place in the second group meeting, mismatched schedules and time constraints prevented that meeting from occurring. I did not attempt to get analytical feedback from some participants, as this would problematically mean those women ‘speaking for’ the others. While I was

distraught about missing the chance to collectively discuss what the research might mean, participants seemed comfortable to have shared what they had to share and leave it at that. While their right to participate was important, it would be presumptuous to assert that they needed to participate. I took care to respect the boundaries of participants' schedules, and did not assume that participation in the research process took precedent over other essential areas of their lives.

Thus, this thesis is my analysis of their images and our conversations. I have selected photographs and quotations primarily on the basis of how they, in concert, illustrate a core theme in the thesis. I have endeavoured to differentiate between participants' views of events and my own—especially because as author I am more critical of events than participants. Participants' achievements are substantial, and digging into them ought not rob them of their importance.

4.6 ETHICS

Manzo and Brightbill (2007) note that participatory ethics reach above and beyond important yet baseline considerations of anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent. Participatory ethics include: the right of participants to represent themselves and not be wholly represented by the researcher; accountability of the researcher to co-researchers, participants, and communities where research takes place; reflexivity in reviewing one's actions and committing to adjust what seems problematic; and social responsiveness, or willingness to adjust the research process in accordance with participants' needs and perspectives (*ibid.*).

Both in selecting my methodology and in working out how to approach its day-by-day execution, I trusted that better research would emerge from following these ethical principles as best I could. I found it challenging, however, to communicate this intention across language barriers. I was aware of the harmful attitudes and practices of other researchers, and other foreigners, in Cambodia. Cambodia often faces 'Othering' from foreigners, some of whom treat Cambodia as a free zone where the confines of politeness and decency learned in their home cultures do not apply. I wanted to show that I was different, that I held to higher values. But this was not easy to communicate in words—I had to remember first and foremost how I might demonstrate my ethics in my actions.

The Victoria University Human Ethics Committee approved the ethics application for this research. See Appendix A for the approved information sheets and consent forms. Sreyhak translated these forms into Khmer and copies of each form in both languages were given to participants to review both before and during the first group meeting.

With both words and digital images, with my thesis as one definite end goal but an exhibit a possibility, the ethics of each element had to be considered. We were dealing with different kinds of data, generated at different times by different people, which might be used in several different ways. It was important to make explicit the procedure for how each piece of data would be stored, shared, and used. In the initial meeting, I stressed that each woman's words and images were her property, which she could share with me as she wished. I would credit her for these by her real name or a pseudonym, as she chose. I wanted participants to feel comfortable speaking and shooting. In addition, because so many of the participants worked together, I wanted to mitigate any fear that the things they shared might circulate around the office, so I stressed the private nature of the one-on-one interviews.

Using photographs also meant that a whole other group of people had to be considered—those who may appear in the photographs. During the first group meeting the photography trainer included the ethics of photographing others, public versus private spaces, photographing children, and consent in her session. I asked that she cover these topics in Khmer so they would not risk getting lost in translation.

Throughout, I aimed to keep these research ethics visible in our research process by making my intentions as clear as possible, encouraging participants to ask me about anything they wished to know, and being open and responsive to participants' needs and wishes.

4.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the methodology of the research, first discussing how feminist, appreciative inquiry, and participatory frameworks influenced the design and methods used. Section Two describes the process of living ‘in the field’ and how that informed the research. Section Three describes how I found the research assistant and participants, and how they found me. Section Four describes the photovoice methodology used. Section Six discussed the processes of translating, transcribing and quoting participants’ words, how I conducted analysis, and how I selected which images to include in the thesis. Finally, Section Seven discussed the centrality of my ethics in conducting the research.

CHAPTER FIVE - GETTING THERE

Figure 7, from Sophearet. Statue of female and male students at her high school.

Anna: ...when you were younger, did you think that you would go to university?

Sophearet: I always dream. [laughing] During that time, I always dream, what I really wish the time in high school to be faster, [laughing] because, I mean I want to end high school as quick as I can, because I really want to pursue my study at university. Because I always have a dream that...I want to be a university student. After that I can have a good job, with better pay, that I can help my parents and my brothers. Yes.

This chapter illustrates the factors and feelings that participants associated with getting to university. The first section discusses the strong importance and influence of family in participants' success, and examines especially their relationships with siblings. The second pays particular attention to ways in which some participants and their family members performed their gender in unconventional ways, thus enhancing participants' ability to imagine alternatives and persist in their education.

The third section addresses how paid and unpaid work figured in participants'

girlhoods, asserting that placing both forms of work in context is essential to understanding how they may enhance and constrain children's educational opportunities and well-being (Abebe and Bessell, 2011). Finally, the fourth section examines participants' varied migrations to Phnom Penh, noting the material and emotional stresses of this process as well as how family support lessened their sting.

5.1 FAMILY

"In Cambodia, not belonging to a nuclear family is deemed equivalent to a person missing a limb"
(Ovesen et al, 1996, as cited in Brickell and Chant, 2010:152).

Family is a core part of participants' identity. None of the participants come from wealthy backgrounds; each faced financial constraints in pursuing their education. Yet each had familial support that enabled her to continue. When asked who supported them in their studies, all participants cited a parent, sibling or uncle. Education was framed by both participants and their family members as a benefit to her family as well as herself. It then explores the strong connections between participants and their siblings, often identified as the strongest enabling factor in their educational success.

Only **Sreyton**'s parents felt she should drop out of school. Her own resoluteness—coupled with older siblings' support—allowed her to continue. **Sreyton** is the only participant whose education defied her parents' vision of what a girl should do. For the other participants, getting an education worked in concert with their families' wishes:

SA: My uncle wanted to improve the living standard of my family because my family is poor. He wanted me to stay at his house and study like my sister because he saw my older sister was staying at my aunt's house and studying at university. He thought that when we both get high education, we would be able to support our family in the future.

This uncle's argument, as **Sam Ang** relayed it, presented education purely as a means to improve family income. It relied on his faith in both education's ability to generate income and in **Sam Ang**'s sense of duty to share that income with her family. His offer also allowed **Sam Ang** to leave her parents' home without leaving her family network.

Serey Roth's parents encouraged her to enrol in teacher training closer to home, rather than emigrating to Phnom Penh. Both teachers, they hoped that she would follow in their footsteps and encouraged her to pursue higher study. **Serey Roth** also had an older

female ally in her life: *My aunt also struggled in her life that I should follow her footsteps. In my family, she is the one who has high knowledge.*

For **Marin**, their extended family in Kampong Cham was too close for comfort:

My family decided to move here [Phnom Penh] because there are a lot of members in my extended family, so we can't just keep living together in one house and depend on a single source of income. At that time, we thought that we had enough money to move here to get a job, so we can earn more money to support our relatives. Moreover, we thought that if we kept living together, we would have conflict one day because of the house and land inheritance. We didn't want this problem to happen, that's why we decided to move to Phnom Penh for study and for business. Actually, my parents wanted their children to get a good education, because outstanding and experienced teachers are located in Phnom Penh.

Thus moving to Phnom Penh seemed to promise better opportunities for **Marin's** whole family. Living in the city from the age of ten, Marin was in closer proximity to her schools. Though her parents could not finance her university courses, she lived at home while working full-time, saving her income for part-time study. She acknowledged the difficulty of this while reiterating how her education benefitted her family:

Sometimes I cry but I think I must strong. Because I can find the money. And now I working here...when I have money, I can help my mother. And my young brother. To study.

These sentiments echo **Sophearet's** comment at the start of this chapter. **Sophearet's** dream for herself was presented as a benefit to her family. Yet **Sophearet** discussed how her mother desired independence for her daughter:

SP: My mother really support me to study. She always told me that... a girl should study, and should have a high education so that the girl can support herself. A girl does not need to depend on her husband. A girl does not need to depend on a man. Because she herself experienced a lot of suffering, she has a husband, [laughing], but my father, honestly speaking, he is not a very responsible person. Yes. So my mother has to earn money herself. To take care of the children, and to make sure that the family has enough to eat.

A: So she kinda does all the work—

SP: Yeah. Yes. She always thought that because she has little education, low education, because she experienced now, many time of wars, because our Cambodia have many regime changes, so she cannot get a high education—By the way, during her childhood, her mother, my grandmother, she was not very supportive for the daughter to attend school. I don't know why, because they always think that... the daughter can have a husband and the husband will take care of her. But, my mother is different from my grandmother. She

encouraged me to study. And she always said that she will try to get me to get high education.

This echoes Velasco's (2001) finding that Cambodian parents who keep their girls in school were motivated by desire for their daughters to be independent from their husbands.

Similarly, **Chamnorng**'s mother placed a high value on her daughters' future:

My siblings are all girls. My villagers always said daughters should go to help your business, they should drop out of school, but my mother didn't listen to them. She even added that I need to send all my daughters to get higher education. She said she doesn't want the leaves of the tree to fall near the tree trunk. She told me you should overcome those insulting words. So I decided to come to Phnom Penh.

Here **Chamnorng**'s mother referenced a common Khmer proverb: "The leaves of the tree fall near the tree trunk." Yet she turned it around, using a familiar phrase to present an unconventional choice. In her study of Cambodian female politicians, Lilja (2008:180) noted that such a "creative misuse of an expression" creates "space for new possibilities."

The one participant who spoke of family conflict over her education was **Sreyton**. She was the fifth participant interviewed, and after hearing delightful tales of **Chamnorng** and **Sophearet**'s progressive mothers, **Sreyton**'s stories were a sobering reminder of the constraining values that continue to exert strong control over girls' education: "Khmer culture doesn't want daughters to go to school... most in my family, even my mother, want the son to go to school. Not the girl." Her grandmother encouraged her parents to keep her at home, but **Sreyton** argued that the health problems she had experienced since birth meant she was too weak for farming, and destined for other things: "I told my father, I don't want to stop. I want to study. Because I can't do the farm like you. My mother thought, yes, it's right." Nonetheless, her mother continued to favour her older brother, giving him more allowance each day and providing him with a bicycle: "It's so difficult, unfair. I said, *why* you do like this? She told that, 'they are the boy. You are a girl.'" Yet **Sreyton** refused to internalize this hierarchy between them, persisting in her studies largely through her own tenacity. Crucially, however, her siblings would also give her the boosts she needed to keep studying.

5.1.2 Siblings

Figure 8, from Sam Ang. Her sister cooking in their Phnom Penh home.

Sam Ang began our first interview with a declaration: “This my sister”, pointing to Figure 8 above. In Khmer, siblings are referred to by their gender and status: *bong proh* (older brother), *bong srey* (older sister), *poh-oun proh* (younger brother) and *poh-oun srey* (younger sister). These terms of respect and affinity may also be used for extended family or close friends who are not technically one’s siblings.

By starting with her photograph of her sister, **Sam Ang** placed high value on their shared life in Phnom Penh:

First she came here to study but when she graduated, she started working to earn money to support my studying. Until I graduated university, I worked with her as well.

This picture expresses that my sister and I left our homeland for Phnom Penh city. We are both working and studying together. This is the rental house. We are living together and we help each other for cooking.

Sam Ang went on to highlight how her sister has been her strongest ally throughout her life:

A: When you were a young girl, like going to school in your home province, did you think that you would go to university later? Did you have this plan, or what did you think?

SA: I never think like this.

A: Yeah? [pause] Who, like, who encouraged you to keep studying?

SA: My sister.

By going to Phnom Penh first and demonstrating that life and study there is possible, **Sam Ang**'s sister opened a new pathway. Her sister also now supports their younger brother's university studies.

Participants' siblings varied greatly in their levels of educational attainment. This pointed towards the choices that families made in keeping some of their children in school. Many older siblings could not afford to study at higher levels and went straight into work, supporting younger siblings' school fees instead.

Sreyton is the sixth child in a family of eight children. Though her mother was resistant to her educational pursuits, older siblings had established themselves enough to provide **Sreyton** with some financial support. Only **Sreyton** and her younger brother have studied at university. Her younger sister, not fond of school, married and started a business after high school. Her two older sisters left school after grade two.

Most of **Sreyton**'s older siblings scattered when they reached adulthood: one sister lives in Massachusetts; one brother lives in California; and another brother lives in Vietnam. Her older sister in nearby Takao Province has supported **Sreyton** throughout her life, and vice-versa. Married without living in-laws or children at that time, **Sreyton**'s sister looked after her: "She say that, 'If mother and father, or grandmother don't allow you to go to school, I support you. Don't worry.'"

As there were no high schools near home, **Sreyton** moved to Kampong Cham province and lived with her sister during high school, helping her sell *tik ampow*⁷ just outside the

⁷ Sugarcane juice, a common item offered by vendors along busy streets.

school during breaks. **Sreyton** spoke at length about the many ways her sister helped her to study, despite her sister's very limited education:

ST: ...she always support me, every, anything. Yes. She call her husband. She don't know Khmer [script] because she study to grade two. She call her husband to help me, to teach me anything that I don't know... But maths or chemistry, he don't know exactly. 'I never study before.'

A: Yeah, yeah.

ST: 'I study just grade seven.' Yes.

In addition, though **Sreyton**'s older brother was physically distant in the United States, his regular contact and financial support were crucial to her making it from her sister's in Kampong Cham to her own room in Phnom Penh: "He said, 'You girl. You live alone?' 'Don't worry. I can take care of myself.' Yes. Yes, my brother said, 'Ok. If you say like that... If you do like that, ok I support you. For rent a room.'" Though **Sreyton** often acted in defiance of her parents by continuing her education, she too passed on the support she received, as her younger brother now lives with her in Phnom Penh.

In **Sophearet**'s family, her parents had not been able to afford university for their two eldest children, but her older brother helped support **Sophearet**'s studies:

They couldn't attend the school because my parents cannot afford. Yes. So, my eldest brother just, when he finish his high school, he came to Phnom Penh, and found a job. Earn some money, and pay back to my parents. And my parents also use that money to support me.

Chamnong explained that she and her **six** sisters created a stair-step method for funding each other's studies:

A: Forgive me, how was your family able to, like, afford for all of you to go to university?

C: No. It is simple. My oldest sister support my second sister. And my second support my third. And then my third support me. And me support my younger.

A: Mmm.

C: Step by step.

A: Yeah, yeah.

C: We try to find the money by ourselves.

Thus, many participants relied on their older siblings' support for their education; often older siblings who could not afford study and went straight into full-time work.

Serey Roth is the only participant who is the oldest child in her family. One of her brothers studies nursing in Stung Treng province in the far northeast, the other attends high school. Yet **Serey Roth** was not confined to caring and housework activities often expected of older sisters. She discusses this through her photograph of her brothers, taken near their home on the Mekong River:

Figure 9, from Serey Roth. Her brothers on the Mekong River, near their home in Kratie province.

SR: I used to do like this too.

A: Really?

SR: When I, back home, before I go to study in high school or university. I do like this.

A: Did you catch a lot of fish—

SR: Until now, I can fish, I can eat more. [laughing]

A: Mm. Nice. Did you do all the same things that your brothers did?

SR: Yes, yes. When I was young, I do like a man.

A: Mm.

SR: *I went to tend cattle.*

When **Serey Roth** interprets this image, she sees herself in the boys. As discussed further in Chapter Six, **Serey Roth**'s ability to integrate herself into male activities was social capital that would serve her at university. It is likely that her girlhood with her brothers helped her assimilate into largely male classrooms.

Participants emphasized their strong interconnections with siblings, and a few studies on gender and education in Cambodia address this. Sibling care was found to be a major contributing factor to girls dropping out of school, while sibling care and housework were the main ways that girls in school spent their time outside of class (Keng, 2003; Poxton, 2010; Velasco, 2001). Poxton (2010) noted that establishing Early Childhood Development Centres allows younger siblings to begin their schooling and affords older siblings more time from their roles as carers (*ibid.*).

Significantly, most participants in this research are on the younger end of the birth order. As discussed further below, many often discussed their work duties in and outside the home, but did not note sibling care as part of their history. Sibling interdependence formed many of the opportunities available to participants, and siblings were a key source of emotional and monetary support that parents were either unwilling or unable to provide.

5.2 UNCONVENTIONS AND NON-CONFORMINGS

Figure 10, from Chamnorng. Neighbour with his son, Battambang province.

Chamnorng: *In this picture there is a man with a child on his lap while he was talking with his wife. It reminded me when I was young I used to sleep in my father's lap. It seems like I am reminded of all of my history.*

[...]

My father as a mother. Because... he cook. And bathe all of my sisters. And my mother, she is a businesswoman. She goes to sell vegetables at the market. And my father stays home. And takes care of the baby. I, I really like my family so much. Because I never saw the man who can take care of the children. And can cook.

Chamnorng's pride and love for her family were central to our interview. Above, she notes how rarely men perform caring and nurturing roles in the home. Brickell (2011a) found that despite Cambodian women's increased participation in 'masculine' income-earning roles, men rarely take on 'feminine' household roles. Men framed the issue of

housework in terms of cultural/historical roles, yet women's acceptance of this burden was often "pragmatically rooted in men's refusal to help" (*ibid.*:1367). In Kenya, Chege (2012) found that women crossing into men's work was more acceptable than the reverse, and that men were teased by their peers when they did take on household duties. **Chamnorn**'s photograph and words are significant not just for their affective beauty, but for what they demonstrate about her upbringing. Her unconventional parents valued their daughters' education and demonstrated that life outside the bounds of traditional roles was not only possible, but fulfilling.

While **Sophearet**'s father was 'not a responsible person', this meant that her mother took on the roles of both parents: "Everything. Yes. She, she, do everything. Earning money, taking care of the family. She...perform as a mother and a father. [laughing] Yes." In addition, she noted that most of her friends in high school were boys, partly because girls spent too much time on things like makeup:

A: And you weren't interested in wearing makeup, or things like that?

SP: Ah, during that time, no, they, they always call me a boy.

A: Oh, really?

SP: Yes. Not a girl. Because sometimes I also dress up like a boy.

Sophearet's use of the term 'perform' corresponds with Butler's (2009) definition of gender as performative. Both **Sophearet** and **Serey Roth**'s ability to perform 'like a boy' demonstrate that both were able to cross boundaries and perform their gender differently in younger years.

Of the participants, **Sreyton**'s family was the most concerned about girls' traditional roles. Yet perhaps in opposition to this, she more than any other participant asserted a complete lack of concern about such norms. **Sreyton** recalled when her mother admonished her for proposing moving to Phnom Penh and live alone:

'You are a girl. Khmer culture is not like this.' [...] I say, 'Oh, I don't care. Anything at all. Speak. [...] I don't care.' I care one thing: how can I live in Phnom Penh? [laughing]

Brickell (2011b) similarly found that Cambodian girls boarding away from home for high school were derided by their peers. For **Sreyton**, her ability to focus on her goal

and tune out such talk helped her succeed. Each participant, in her own way, was able to witness or enact alternatives to gender norms in her social relationships. This ability contributed to participants successfully persisting through their studies.

5.3 WORK

Figure 11, from Chamnorng. *Num chang*, sticky rice and bean cakes wrapped in banana leaf.

Chamnorng: *When I was around 9 or 10 years old, I had to help my mother's business, or find firewood, or sometimes I had to help another vendor selling cake to get money for school fees. What I have today is like a dream.*

Regardless of their attitudes towards girls' education or future windfalls, each participant's family faced immediate financial constraints. **Chamnorng's** words above indicate how her family relied on her contributions. Yet she describes these not as burdensome, but with pride:

I have today, because of this cake. [pause] Last week, I went to my homeland and bought this cake in order to take pictures for Anna because while I was studying in the province, I sold this kind of cake. Anyway, when I went to my homeland and saw this, it reminded me of when I sold this cake. 10 pieces of cake cost 1000 Riel and I gained 200 Riel [in profits].⁸ [...] I made and sold this kind of cake from when I was 9 or 10 years old until I finished grade twelve. I just stopped doing it before I left to study in Phnom Penh. I loved the way I was.

⁸ 200 Cambodian riel is approximately five cents in US Dollars, or six cents in New Zealand Dollars.

Interestingly, this story also created a point of connection between **Chamnong** and the research assistant Sreyhak, who shared that she also sold *num chang* as a girl.

For **Sreyton**, since her parents were resistant to her education, finding ways of earning money to support her studies was essential:

ST: I say, it's ok, I can, I can do my business. And I earn money to study at the high school. Yes. I drive...I learn to drive a bicycle. And then I bought ice. And sold to the people around...

A: Ah, yeah.

ST: Yeah, the area near me. And the village. Yes. I went, since I wake up at five o'clock, and I go to Vietnam. Yes. Because in my province its not sold the ice.

A: Mhmm.

ST: Yes. I race the bicycle to Vietnam, and then I... I sold the ice, come to Cambodia. But... I so *small*!

ST: Yeah. Uh... I think in Khmer... 200 riel. Yes. Every day. Then I save in...*piggybank*.

[...]

ST: *I went to find firewood and transported it by ox-cart. I went into the forest without fear. Then I rode on the firewood pile and directed the cows back home. I was really happy.*

These stories raise the important and contentious connection between education and child labour in Cambodia. Kim (2011:500) found that Cambodia's education policymakers have a 'passive' acceptance of the issue of child labour, viewing it as "beyond their control" and limiting "the boundaries of their influence of what occurs within the school." Meanwhile, child labour is under debate in development discourses. The dominant view in policy is that childhoods should be labour-free, but that under certain conditions 'light' work is acceptable (Abebe and Bessell, 2011). Yet this presents contradictions:

Work is alright so long as it is unpaid; children may also work for pay when they do not need to (for 'pocket money') but not when they need to; children may help their parents' income earning efforts (and gain pride and satisfaction from it) only if their parents own a family enterprise, but not if they are propertyless wage-workers (White, 1994, as cited by Abebe and Bessell, 2011:768)

Alternatively, socio-cultural approaches recognise that children's work is based in normative values, and that

The presentation of school and work as incompatible often sits uncomfortably with children's own views and experiences. Many children combine school and work quite effectively, and for some work provides the means by which they can afford to attend school. Moreover, for many children, school itself is work and not a particularly pleasant form of work at that (Abebe and Bessell, 2011:770).

Yet even as socio-cultural studies have illustrated that children's work may have value in certain contexts, child exploitation still often occurs (*ibid.*). Significantly, participants' work supported their studies, not the other way around, and participants did not speak of missing school for work.

What child labour debates often do not recognise is the time and energy burden placed on girls domestically in unpaid work. **Sam Ang** became visibly upset when recalling the farm work she and her sister did as girls:

I grew the plantation [fruits and vegetables] but my sister had a heavy burden because she had to cultivate and harvest rice with my father in the paddy field. She had to walk through mud up to her thighs in the rice field. Sometimes my sister and I went to collect the grass [to feed cattle] far away from home.

Household responsibilities are the most significant factor in Cambodian girls dropping out of school (Keng, 2003; Poxton, 2010; Velasco, 2001). Because boys are not expected to do domestic work, this places an inequitable strain on girls' study (Brickell, 2011a; Velasco, 2001).

For participants, finding spaces for themselves where housework was less demanding was critical to their educational success. During high school, far from home, **Serey Roth** convinced her parents to let her rent a room rather than live with an aunt:

My aunt allowed me to live in another big house of hers [...] but I refused because I think if I live with her, I have to help her doing her housework while I had to try to study hard during grade twelve. My schedule was from six am until eight pm. So I thought I couldn't live with my relative.

During university, **Sam Ang** and her sister also decided to move out of their relatives' homes to their own place:

It was hard for me to live with my uncle and my sister was also hard because while we were busy with study, we didn't have time to help their housework, so later on I also left my uncle's house and we moved in a rental house together.

For these participants, it was only in strategic avoidance of their relatives' homes that domestic responsibilities were eased.

For many participants, it was not possible in girlhood to make a choice between study and work, and the two often, though not always, worked in concert. As study time increased at higher levels, participants often shifted themselves away from unpaid housework that would have otherwise strained their studies. The relationship between child labour and education in Cambodia needs to be better addressed and understood, and if schooling is to be truly gender equitable, the inequality of housework must also be addressed (Brickell, 2011a; Velasco, 2001).

5.4 MIGRATING TO PHNOM PENH

C: I feel...warm. [laughing] With my family, so I...I don't want to leave my home to stay in Phnom Penh. But, I have no choice. Because, at my homeland, in the previous [time], we don't have university. A good university.

A: Right.

C: My mother forced me. You need to come to Phnom Penh. And then I cry from Battambang to Phnom Penh. [laughing]

As evidenced throughout later chapters, participants' migrations to Phnom Penh affected their identities and opportunities. This section highlights the variance within participants' migration pathways, and describes the particular feelings, supports, and challenges that came with that process.

Three participants had women in their lives who paved the way for their migration and eased their transition into homes away from home. **Serey Roth, Chamnorng, and Sam Ang** lived with an older sister or aunt in Phnom Penh and received critical emotional and financial support from them. Derks' (2006) study of Cambodian women migrating

for work also found that having a relative who migrated first greatly reduced the difficulties and fears of their transition.

These transitions were often marked by confusion and loneliness, even with such supports. **Serey Roth** described the confusion of living with her aunt and new roommates:

Firstly, I felt quiet and lonely because I had to live with people who I didn't know before. It was difficult to read the person's mind in Phnom Penh. Sometimes I didn't really understand. They didn't respond when we are wrong but they will raise it and blame later in the day.

Chamnorng echoes this sentiment when describing moving in with her sister:

And, I feel that, uh, the first time come to Phnom Penh I feel that I am so lonely, because I have only my sister. She's close to me. And, I don't know another. Just come to school and back home only.

Here **Chamnorng** described that despite her entrance into a new environment, she remained isolated by only moving between school and home. For **Sophearet**, her home was close enough to Phnom Penh that her brothers could shuttle her to her university classes. Thus, while her family's worries about her safety could be mitigated, she was isolated during her studies:

Because I am just the only daughter in my family, my parents really care about me, and when I came to Phnom Penh, at the beginning, they always worry, 'oh you should not do this, you should not go for a walk, and you should stay home. After you finish school you have to come back home. [...] I did not have many friends at the university, because [...] I rarely spend my time with them. Because when I finish school, I have to back home.

These feelings are echoed by Cambodian women in Ward's (2012) study, who found urban life to be isolating and lonely compared to provincial life.

In **Marin's** case, her whole nuclear family moved to Phnom Penh when she was ten—in part to avoid family disputes over land, and in part to ensure that the family would be close to good schools:

Yes. Because my school at province was so far. So my parents worry about me. About when I go to school. What problem will I meet? So, and one more have a problem with big family. So, my family change. Come to migrate to Phnom Penh.

Unique among participants, **Marin**'s family migration kept her close to home while allowing her to continue her studies. When **Marin** enrolled in university, she did not have to find accommodation or adjust to the new environment. Working full-time, she was able to save money to attend university during the weekends. However, she noted the strain of doing both:

So, Monday to Friday I work. So tired. [laughing] [...] Sometime, I cry. I was tired. Uh, my friend lucky than me. Because, parent can pay, and she no work. But she have money. [...] I cry but I think I must strong. Because I can find the money.

Serey Roth also highlighted the fatigue of work and study. As in Section 5.1.2, she described these feelings through a photograph of a male peer, in this case her classmate at university:

Figure 12, from Serey Roth. Sleepy friend at university.

He is my friend! In my classroom. Sometime I'm like this too. *At that time, I studied at night. When I was both working and studying university.... I stopped working as receptionist. After that I worked for two places, first I worked as a promotion [brochure] distributor in the morning, and I volunteered for an NGO in the afternoon. Some days, when I studied a difficult lesson, I... This is my friend, he is working at KFC. His shift is from morning to afternoon. He also studies in the afternoon shift. [...] Sometimes, I could not catch up on lessons when I was both working and studying university because I felt tired.*

Chamnorng similarly highlighted the strain of her and her sister's limited resources. She used a photograph of a rundown house in Battambang to illustrate their experience:

Figure 13, from Chamnorng. Dilapidated old house, Battambang province.

This is at my homeland. But, I just want to show that, uh, the house in Phnom Penh that I, I rent. It's so old! [laughing] Not comfortable. Uh, and...it's so hot. I, I don't know how to show about my feeling in that house. Because, we have less money to rent. Only thirty dollars a month. [...] Fluently. [laughing] *I want to say that when I first arrived in Phnom Penh, my sister didn't have much money. In order to support us, she decided to rent a small house in an anarchic area. It's size is equal to that bathroom [pointing to a small bathroom nearby]. It was showering when it was raining. We struggled to live in that small house. Sometimes we cried together.*

Participants' recollections of their early days in Phnom Penh show the difficulty of this migration. Even when they can do no more than 'cry together', participants' allies helped to ease their troubles. In recent years, an international NGO and MOEYS have started building dormitories to house young women migrating from home for upper secondary school or university. Not only do such dormitories provide decent accommodation, but they may also help to alleviate the loneliness that women feel when they migrate away from home.

5.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that participants' families, and in particular their siblings, were crucial to their educational success. While much research has usefully illuminated parental attitudes towards education, further investigation of the interdependency of siblings needed. It also demonstrated that unconventional gender performance figured significantly in some participants' girlhoods.

In examining participants' work and schooling, this chapter indicated that participants had a bit more space to contribute to their families through work in younger years when school was less demanding (before high school), and less time to contribute to work in teenage years when study hours became longer. Participants succeeded in finding ways to step back from household chores as their study burdens increased. More context-specific understanding of girls' paid and unpaid labour is crucial to supporting their educational needs, and MOEYS cannot shy away from the relationship between school and labour if it is to adequately address children's access to school.

This chapter also described some of the challenges participants faced when migrating to Phnom Penh. Their loneliness, and the difficulties that some like **Chamnorng** had finding a decent place to live indicated that a few new dormitories at upper secondary schools and universities can provide pleasant and social living experiences for young women migrating for their education.

Many participants described qualities or attributes of their girlhood lives that were empowering, and thus did not arise from education, but enabled their educational success. Some participants spoke of their dreams, their ability to aspire and envision themselves as university students. **Sreyton** had faith in her own agency to defy her parents' wishes, make the decisions about her education, and secure sources of funding. **Sophearet** and **Serey Roth** were allowed to go against cultural norms by dressing or behaving 'like a boy', and **Chamnorng's** business-minded mother and nurturing father developed her critical understanding that gender codes do not have to be followed. Through these empowering relationships and acts, participants were better enabled to succeed educationally, which in turn reinforced the confidence and awareness they gained from their education.

CHAPTER SIX - FORMING NETWORKS AND IDENTITIES

Figure 14, from Chamnorng. Giving gifts to elder women in her home village, Battambang province.

Chamnorng: One more good point is that they admire me and my sister who could take care of each other while living in Phnom Penh independently, while some others could not take care with their body when they came to live independently like us. We didn't do something that goes beyond tradition. In addition, the elders always tell their children to follow in my footsteps because I could learn how to live by myself.

This Chapter follows participants into their emerging adulthoods, introducing some of the core ways in which education was used and supplemented in creating adult selves. The first section demonstrates how participants framed their non-traditional activities, such as moving away from home, in familiar altruistic terms. The second section describes how higher education both confers status on women and maintains gendered norms. In light of this maintenance, the third section demonstrates how alternative networks of belonging supported participants in crafting alternative notions of womanhood. This section highlights participants' professional networks, as their professional identities came through strongly in their photographs and interviews. The final section considers how these strong professional identities informed how participants discussed marriage and motherhood, noting that the two participants who

had entered/were entering marriage and motherhood had successfully melded these relationships with their professional goals.

6.1 BEING GOOD, HELPING OTHERS

As discussed in Chapter Five, participants' education was presented in terms of the benefits it would provide to their families. Participants stressed in interviews that pursuing education was not a self-centred act, tying new notions of their mobility to entrenched notions of women's duties to their families, as migrating women in Derks' (2008) study did. Cambodian women are expected to act altruistically, and assuming this mantle both constrains how they express their desires and enables new behaviours (Brickell, 2010).

In the chapter's opening quote, **Chamnorn** demonstrated that she and her sister have proven themselves to be proper women. Girls are often denied higher education because of the perceived risks of being far from home— that women will become 'too modern' or inadvertently fall prey to attack due to 'feminine' vulnerability (Derks, 2008). **Chamnorn** and her sister challenged this by striking out on their own while also staying in line with cultural norms. She insists that, in themselves, studying and living 'independently' are not deviant: "We didn't do something that goes beyond tradition." Cambodian female politicians in Lilja's (2008:117) study also broke apart the two supposed halves of this truth, insisting that: "there are no norms or laws that say that women cannot go out if she behaves properly." **Chamnorn** does not wholly counter the belief in 'feminine' vulnerability—citing 'others' who did not "take care with their body." Rather, she insists that not all women are the same, and that being good while living 'independently' is possible.

In this way, notions of 'being good' may limit and enable women's activities, often simultaneously. Saigal (2008:135) found that community-based female educators in Mumbai applied "the very logic of good womanhood in order to secure their participation... In so doing, they simultaneously create an enabling space for themselves, and reinforce the norms that constrain the same."

This contradictory strategy has utility both for aspirations and past deeds. Chant (2006:14-15) notes that:

...some women compensate for 'encroaching' on 'male terrain'...by re-doubling their efforts to live up to altruistic ideals attached to idealized norms of 'good wives' and 'dutiful daughters'. This not only helps to reaffirm their 'femininity', but to defuse the conflict which often erupts when men feel threatened by changes in women's activities.

Though previous generations of women were rarely, if ever, permitted to spend leisure time outside the home, young women's *daeleng*⁹ is permitted as long as it is not perceived as excessive (Brickell, 2011; Derks, 2008). In describing a photograph of her sister and other women's network members eating fast food, **Sam Ang** made a distinction about 'good' *daeleng*, asserting that 'good' women don't just frivolously enjoy themselves but also seek to help others:

Figure 15, from Sam Ang. Sister and friends from volunteer group hanging out at a fast food restaurant.

I want to... show about strong and brave ladies, for instance, when they go eat something, they are not only eating, they always find the best way to help all of young women's problems in society... when they daeleng together, they usually discuss young women's issues.

⁹ *Daeleng* means to socialise/go out/hang out, and literally translates as 'to walk for fun'.

Serey Roth took a different approach to remaining familiar in her culture. Rather than heightening her femininity, she explained that her behaviour is 'like a man'. She socialised with men, integrating herself into their group: "Sometimes when they talk, they think [of] me as a man like them [laughing]." Yet despite denouncing femininity, she retained a strong ethic of service to others. She submitted Figure 5 of a road safety rally to illustrate this, stating: *"I wanted to show that I love to participate in any activity that helps society."*

Sophearet expressed a different view, which may be linked to the fact that she was not in the same intensive work and volunteer network as the other participants. **Sophearet** did not define herself according to her social work:

I will only, uh, involve in the social work just...not too long. Just around ten years or fifteen years, something like that. And then I will use...time for my own. Yes. But, you know, even though we involve in business we still can help society. But it just that focus more on to serve ourselves and our family. And anyway, I see other businessmen, you know they can help a lot of people. They can, at the same time they can earn the profit and also can help the people, like, create employment.

Sophearet uniquely expressed a desire to have "time for my own." Yet she also made it a point to justify why her own time will still benefit others, as if to respond to perceived criticism.

Participants' presentations of their altruism demonstrated that choosing between what one wants and what others expect is not an either/or binary. Indeed, any person will negotiate these tensions in their own society (Butler, 2009). Brickell and Chant (2010: 150) assert that:

Despite the possibility of simultaneously fulfilling self and collective interests, [...] scholarly work in development studies has tended to narrowly focus on female altruism as the complete denial of self-interest with less attention given to the potential (and even strategic) synergies between the two.

For participants, this synergy has allowed them to do unconventional things like move away from home and go out with friends without becoming 'bad' women. This notion of synergy also important to understand that participants' desire to help others was not feigned. Participants gained a sense of strength and worth

through these activities, and also took pleasure in their accomplishments. As **Serey Roth** noted when discussing a provincial women's forum, *"when we organise this kind of forum, we can share and explain a lot of information about women power and let our local network help to settle their concerns. I feel so happy."* Rather, participants' individual desires are often expressed in terms of their value to others—placing some constraints on women's desires and also granting them legitimacy.

6.2 NEW STATUS AND FAMILIAR NORMS

Higher education exposed participants to new environments and often gave them chances to live on their own. It ascribed them with the status of knowledge. Yet it also reinforced or failed to challenge other gendered norms.

Lilja (2008:105) notes the strong tie between education and status in Cambodia, where intelligence is not perceived as inherent, but gained through learning, "making education one of the main factors that matter when individuals are ranked and classified." **Sophearet** illustrated this benefit in a photograph of friends from high school:

Figure 16, from Sophearet. Friends planting a tree at their old high school, Prey Veng province.

This picture, I want to show that we are all female, and because of education, now we can get somehow a superior status. Than before. And this picture shows about... when we went back to our high school, we plant the tree together.

This process of returning to the place of one's girlhood with new status was also something that **Chamnorn** discussed through Figure 14 at the start of this chapter:

C: When I met elder people in my village, they said 'If you didn't decide to study in Phnom Penh, you would not today have a job and money.' And they regret that if they had sent their children or grandchildren to university like me, those would have a better life, the same as me.

[...]

In this picture I want to show that when I can earn money, I never forget all the women in my village. Those women never got a chance to take university classes and join social activities like me. They just stay at home, so they don't have comprehensive thinking. I pity those women. So when I can earn some money, I share little good deed with them as charity.

Thus, **Chamnorn** cemented the relationship for her between formal education and material wealth. Yet she also noted the importance of broadening her thinking. Lilja (2008:173) asserts that when women gain high-status knowledge, this allows them to "re-construct femininity...and load it with new value." In Bangladesh, girls in Raynor's study (2008) felt that self-esteem and the ability to command respect were among the most important outcomes of education, which occurred regardless of its quality or content.

While higher education brought status in the eyes of participants' home communities, university classrooms themselves often either reinforced, or failed to challenge societal norms. **Sophearet** recalled that peer pressure from other young women at university prompted her to change her appearance from the tomboy style she adopted in younger years:

SP: When I came to university some of my friends, they tease me. I should wear like this, I should behave like this, as a female, a real girl, something like that. [laughing] And I, when I saw many female students, they [wear] make up, they dress up. Beautiful. I also want to be the same as them, that's why. [laughing]

A: So do you feel like you enjoy that stuff now? Do you like doing it?

SP: Yes, I can say that.

In this case, **Sophearet**'s university was not a place where women's roles were challenged, but where women themselves reproduced social norms; indeed, this reproduction is an inherent aspect of formal education (Stromquist, 2006).

Conversely, new knowledges that women gain in school may not be sufficient to challenge the social norms that men learn outside of school. When asked whether higher education changed young men's perception of women, **Sam Ang** noted that gender norms transmitted through families were often more influential:

I think the family influence over this old concept remains the most important factor of how younger men treat women. In university, we don't include the subject of gender in academic programs. Sometimes those men accept that women students are outstanding and clever in class but they still joke, tease the women. Moreover, some said 'how clever you are, but you will still become a wife.' This is the family factor that retains the conservative concept.

Sam Ang went on to assert that young men could change their thinking, but that this happened through workshops and trainings like the ones her organisation provides to specifically address gender.

6.3 ALTERNATIVE NETWORKS

If it is through the 'given' relationships of family and kinship...that women gain their sense of identity and personhood, then it is through participation in alternative forms of associational life that they can acquire a reflexive vantage point from which to evaluate these relationships (Kabeer, 2011:503).

Sophearet: "Most females just stay at home."

Alternative networks such as volunteer groups often gave participants opportunities to form peer relationships that supported their emerging hybrid identities. For **Chamnong**, part-time work as a researcher broadened her social network and countered the loneliness she described in Chapter Five:

When I started to do research, I could increase my relationships. I had a lot of friends. I made good relationships with all the people around me, so I am not lonely like when I first came to Phnom Penh anymore.

For **Sophearet**, a supportive network of female friends in her hometown was a key part of her success in high school:

SP: In the evening after finish the extra class [...] we always went to the riverside. Sit and watch the sunset [...] And sometimes, we share our worry. To each other. Because, you know, some of my friend, she has many problems. With her personal...stuff, like, one of my friends, she have only mother, and step-father. And sometimes she really did not like her step-father. So she has many problems, and share with our friends, and we just motivated her, encourage her. What to do, what she can do [...] To make our... friends feel happier. What we can do, we have to do.

A: Yeah, yeah. Support each other.

SP: And sometimes, because in my group, some, some my female friend, she is not, uh, very strong student. [pause] So, we can help her, like, sometimes we bring the lesson to the riverside and then help her to summarise or memorise the lesson. Mathematic. So we help each other.

While some of these friends also moved to Phnom Penh, they did not meet up with the frequency that they once had, and commuting directly from university to home left Sophearet little opportunity to make new friends in Phnom Penh.

For other participants, activities outside of class such as volunteering created new spaces of belonging. Yet such groups are not unproblematic. **Marin** noted that in their volunteer group: *“Some people think that they do for themselves not for group. One more thing, they want us to listen and only follow what they said.”* These conflicts are inevitable in forming groups, but can be resolved when planned for and addressed. Ward (2013) found that some women’s self-help groups in Phnom Penh failed because of assumptions of sameness and harmony amongst members. For **Marin**, her group’s conflicts were resolved by openly discussing their different motivations and goals at a group retreat: *“Close with other. Because, for example, I know your mind. And you know my mind. Ok? So, we can work or do something together. After this.”*

6.3.1 Professional Networks

Participants’ professional networks were the environments in which they spent most of their time, and participants often put forward their professional identities in their photographs and interviews. When asked about their dreams for the future, the goals that participants outlined were by and large professional ones.

While participants’ degrees granted them the status needed to get their jobs, their professional networks gave them skills and experiences that opened alternative ways of

being women. It is significant that participants worked for prominent Cambodian NGOs led by women. Other workplaces not oriented towards women's rights may not have opened as many alternatives for participants. Additionally, while female representation in Cambodian government is scant, participants' workplaces provided examples of successful women leaders.

When I attended pre-election forums run by participants' organisations on women's political representation, representatives of several political parties claimed that women's lack of confidence was responsible for their party's lack of female candidates. Yet **Sam Ang** challenged this notion of women's inherent timidity, and asserted that leadership ability is created through experience:

Women can become leaders when they get training and participate in social activities.¹⁰ In the past, men never gave value to women because a proverb reads, 'women are just for doing kitchen work.' But now, there are a lot of women who become leaders.

Through their work, participants gained experience leading workshops and forums. Stromquist (2006) asserts that this informal 'on the job' education can be crucial to women's empowerment. Participants' new identities as NGO workers conferred a legitimacy on their leadership that their identities as women may not have (Lilja, 2008). Their work also developed participants' skills in engaging with the influential NGO world in Phnom Penh. **Serey Roth** volunteered with her NGO before being hired on full-time because "*I found that I can develop myself, I can communicate with NGOs and ASEAN members.*" This ability to communicate is useful capital when buzzwords and 'development-speak' exclude most Cambodians from development spaces (McCormick, 2012; Shutt, 2006).

Participants blended this professional identity with a more familiar feminine friendliness, just as they blended their educated and altruistic selves. Marin used the picture below to describe the importance of developing familiarity between herself and the communities she worked with:

¹⁰ The phrase 'social activities' refers to activities done for the benefit of society, such as volunteering, participating in forums, etc.

Figure 17, from Marin. Visiting a village for her work, Kampong Thom province.

I want to [get] close with citizens. [...] I think it is important because, uh, *when we first arrive, we are like a stranger*. [...] All the people there look at me. [making a face, laughing] And I don't want like this, so I say something, or say hello with everybody, yeah? [...] I want to make friends with them.

Sam Ang also noted the importance of 'closeness' in her work, drawing from her degree in communications to develop rapport with rural women: *"we can't get close to those women in the province if we don't have good communication with them."*

Sophearet also discussed the importance of relating to communities in her gender advocacy work by communicating across 'development-speak' and everyday language:

Rural people, they do not know about the terminology, especially like gender, it's a kind of terminology. But, if we use their language, they understand, because they live with gender every day.

Lilja (2008:142) found that for a Cambodian female politician, other women may "have problems identifying themselves with her" if she distances herself too much from female norms, and "an us-them divide is created and her potential as role model is diminished." Above, participants demonstrated that success in their work came from hybridizing their roles as NGO workers and Cambodians sensitive to rural communities' lives.

Professional networks were also spaces for participants to socialize. Participants' photographs often depicted colleagues who were also their friends, such as Figures 1, 6, and 15. When I visited participants' workplaces for interviews or planning, I was often included in sharing stories, snacks and jokes, recalling Shutt's (2006: 81) experience that "everyday office life was full of fun and laughter, an aspect of Aidland which gets inadequate attention in dour development texts".

Participants' work also allowed them to travel throughout their country. **Sophearet** linked this travel to her education and freedom through a photograph of a hilltop temple she visited during a work trip:

Figure 18, from Sophearet. Steps to a hilltop temple, Phnom Banon, Battambang province.

You know, when I was a child, because I am an only daughter in my family, my parents or my relatives they rarely allow me to go far. But because of education, I can get a job. And after I get a job, you know, I can travel. Travel most everywhere. Especially to such province. It is very far from my province, my birthplace. And I want to show that, because now, I can get a job and I can travel and I can also see such view. Mmhmm. It also shows about my freedom. After I get education.

Sophearet contrasted her former isolation with the ability to travel through her work. Almost all participants discussed travel in relation to their work projects or volunteer

workshops they attended. Only **Serey Roth** mentioned travel for fun—something she and university classmates did before becoming busy with professional life.

6.4 WIVES AND MOTHERS

Participants' identities as professionals often dominated our conversations on their present lives, while romantic relationships and the prospect of motherhood were either integrated into professional life or not discussed. The latter topics are sensitive, whereas the former may be much easier to share. Additionally, it may be that their work, which stems from their education and differentiates them from contemporaries, seemed more important to share with a foreign researcher than typical expressions of womanhood, marriage and motherhood.

I did not expect to delve into romantic relationships in any depth, because of the sensitivity of the topic. Yet as we discussed participants' personal histories, friendships, and dreams, it seemed this aspect of life should be addressed. While **Marin** noted with pride that an umbrella Cambodian youth association she belongs to organises training on respect and rights for LGBTI youth, participants themselves spoke about their own potential or actual relationships in heteronormative terms. They also framed these relationships according to their personal goals. When I broached the subject with **Sam Ang**, she stressed her professional goals above all else:

A: So what do you think in the future about, like, husband and babies, and all that stuff?

SA: [laughing]

[pause]

A: [laughing]

SA: Uh, I don't know when.

A: Yeah? Mm.

SA: But, if I have husband and baby, I want to do this work.

A: Mm. Yeah, yeah. Do you think you can do both?

SA: [laughing] Yeah, I think in the future, I can.

Her responses create the impression that there is no time available for marriage in the present—"I don't know when"—but perhaps will in the future: "in the future, I can." There is no indication in her response that marriage is something she wants, but if it is, she presents it as being less important than her work.

Sophearet indicated that marriage is something she has thought about carefully, and intends for her future— after some other goals have been accomplished:

I want another scholarship to study abroad, but I will have to try hard. At that. And then will, maybe have family, something like that, yes. [...] I always think that if I have a family, before marriage I will discuss with my partner. What we can do together. What we can help each other. And what you should do this and what I should do. Yes. So that we can avoid any argument after the marriage. And we have to have a... specific plan or plan together. So that we will not curse or blame each other. When we have any argument.

Until then Sophearet was dating, but on her own terms, emphasising her independence and the equality of their concerns:

I have own principle and rule. I will never... let a boy pay for me. We can share, because I also have money. [laughing]... I saw that many girls when they go out for date, they always let the boy pay. For everything. And sometimes boy have to buy something to, uh, favour her. [...] He also have his family. To responsible. He also has his own personal stuff to think about.

A: Yeah.

SP: And by the way, I also have my own money. [laughing] Why? It's not necessary for him to pay for me. [laughing]

Sophearet demonstrated that she values her self-sufficiency, which her mother encouraged. Yet **Sophearet** also had to resist her mother's insistence that she needed to be married:

A: Does your mother, um, does your mother encourage you to get married, or...?

SP: Yes, she always. [laughing] Yeah. Because, you know, Khmer culture, lady should not...stay single.

SH: Until thirty.

SP: Yeah, yeah, until thirty. So she should, if possible, should get married at the age of eighteen. Sixteen or nineteen, or something... she also urge. Yeah, urge me to marry, because she saw other daughters of other families, they get married and something like that, so she also want me. But sometimes, I explain to her. It's not necessary now. [laughing] Yes?

A: Well, you're not thirty yet, right?

SP: Yeah! [laughing]

Despite the growing prevalence of dating among young Cambodians, particularly in urban areas, it is a practice that had no place in traditional culture—premarital sex remains strictly taboo, and dating is seen as a dangerous threat to women’s chastity. Perhaps not surprisingly then, the two participants most open to discussing romantic relationships were those in engagement and marriage.

Amongst **Marin**’s many photographs of her volunteer and professional work was one that included her fiancé:

Figure 19, from Marin. With fiancé’s work group at Oudong Mountain, Kampong Speu province.

Marin’s fiancé works as a teacher for a children’s NGO, and she occasionally joins them as a volunteer (she and her fiancé are in the light blue shirts signifying they are from the NGO). They met when he volunteered at her organisation. Thus the romantic relationship and family that she seeks to create is also embedded in her/their shared work. She has specific plans to be married for three years before having children, and at that stage, continuing to work on ‘women’s projects’ at another organisation. She also noted that her husband is emotionally and financially supportive of her goal to get her Master’s degree.

This alignment of their lives was no accident:

A: ...Do you think it matters if, like, your husband has been to university or not?

M: *I worried a lot about his education. Before I say I love him. I think [about this].*

She asserted that without education, husbands are less likely to understand their wives, leading to conflict. Yet she noted that this is not universal:

Not all educated husbands are good. It doesn't mean that a man who has high knowledge is willing to listen his wife's reasons. But at least 70 percent among them are better. They would not use violence in the family and they... understand each other. The other 30 percent are maybe useless although they are highly educated.

For **Marin**, the commonality between her and her fiancé's activities seemed to be key to their understanding of one another.

Similarly, **Chamnornng** met her husband at an NGO training session. He works on peace and justice issues and is working towards a Master's degree in Philosophy. They married in 2013. Chamnornng also considered what she wanted her husband to be before marriage:

I used to have idea how my husband would be. I need one who is kind and can live in harmony with family. That's enough, because property we can find later. I didn't have many requirements. I was really happy when I got a husband as my wishes. Otherwise I would have been deeply disappointed if my wish was not successful.

She stressed that because of she and her husband's common work, having a child was not a strain on their lives:

When I became a mother, it didn't have much influence on my work because we both, husband and wife, like the social activities. For example, if there is a Peace Walk procession, we can carry the child and walk together. It means we always participate in events together. Anyway we have only one child, so it is not really an influence.

A crucial component of lessening the strain on their lives was their practice of sharing not just activities, but domestic responsibility as well:

My husband as my father. Because, he can take care of me and my son. As his son and his daughter. I like him. As my father. And he can cook, and he can... prepare house, and clean. He respond. [laughing]

In this way **Chamnorn**’s ability to reconcile her work with motherhood rested not only on sharing her work with her husband, but with her husband deviating from tradition and sharing domestic responsibilities.

Through her stories, **Chamnorn** discussed her and her husband’s lives as a shared project. He cared for their family, and she assisted him with his Philosophy homework. Even their son’s name—“JustPeace” or Peace for short—shows the centrality of their work to their lives. She explains that they chose this name “because my husband working on peace and justice, so... [laughing] He likes his work.”

She denied that motherhood had impacted her work, though later contradicted this:

Before I got married, I could go anywhere on my own, like missions in the province... Since I got married, I have to take care of my husband. I have to do something to get family happiness. Reducing missions to the province by finding full time work is the best way.

Despite such compromises, **Chamnorn**’s approach to motherhood integrated her child into her activities:

I was also scared when I went the province during my pregnancy. But I thought it was the best way for me to teach him since he was inside my body. I felt so close with him when I talked with other people about him that I wanted to teach him.

Importantly, she also noted the joy that a ‘noisy’ child brought into her home:

Before we had only our couple because after I got married, I lived separately from my older sister, so I was silent and quiet but now it is more noisy and happy. Of course, I was busy sometimes but my life is really different from the past because we have an additional family member.

6.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has demonstrated how participants merge their non-traditional aspirations into commonly understood societal expectations. This is not a failing of their empowerment, but rather, an inherent aspect of it, as “pathways of empowerment are generally characterized by a certain degree of path dependence. They carry the imprint of the societies in which they occur” (Kabeer, 2011:500).

Nevertheless, participants created new opportunities for themselves by “redoing the norm in unexpected ways” (Butler, 2009:i). They fulfilled their roles as dutiful daughters and altruistic women by obtaining degrees, earning better income, and working for Cambodian NGOs.

Societal norms create boundaries not just for what is expected, but for “who and what will be legible” (Butler, 2009:iii), or recognisable, to others. The desire to avoid being unrecognisable to one’s family and society is reasonable. For participants, remaining recognisable to the rural communities that they work with also enabled their work to succeed.

This chapter also demonstrated that while university may not challenge gender norms, it does confer status that women may use to enter into other potentially-transformative spaces such as professional networks. For participants, these networks developed their skills, helped them make friends, and afforded them the chance to travel.

Finally, this chapter demonstrated that the participants who had entered or were entering into marriage and motherhood carried their professional identities and values into those relationships, and that equity-minded men were well-suited to supporting such wives.

On the whole, this chapter illustrated that participants’ identities were multiple—daughter, student, volunteer, professional, wife. It demonstrated that these identities interacted with each other, and were therefore fluid. It showed that emphasising one identity did not deny others. The common themes outlined in each subsection of this chapter were elements that each participant grappled with in her own unique manner. Thus, this chapter shows that each participant created her own distinctive identity.

CHAPTER SEVEN - CLAIMING RIGHTS

Sreyton: “I think it’s so difficult but...really difficult, but, if we don’t do anything, it’s still like that.”

Figure 20, from Sreyton. Some of the crowd at an opposition demonstration, Phnom Penh.

This chapter demonstrates how grappling with political spaces was a crucial component of participants’ ongoing empowerment. The first section discusses how participants viewed knowledge as central to building women’s networks and claiming rights, and shows that networks of adult women may be better positioned to create and receive transformative education (Stromquist, 2006). The next section considers into how participants engaged with precarious political spaces, claiming their right to assembly while also promoting peace and avoiding potentially dangerous confrontation. The third section reflects on the first two to demonstrate that participants’ empowerment is an ongoing process. Finally, the fourth section discusses how participants prized encouragement from older women who supported their actions.

7.1 BUILDING OTHER WOMEN'S KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTIONS

Participants, themselves professional disseminators of rights education, saw greater knowledge as the key for all Cambodians, and especially women, to improve their lives. Knowledge included awareness of their inherent rights and power, as well as the surrounding sociopolitical world, and might come from formal education, informal networks, or online discussion. Participants themselves received much, though not all, of this education informally through work and volunteering, and they discussed their efforts to subsequently informally educate other women. Because of the reproductive nature of formal schooling, informal educational spaces such as those created by women's rights organisations are far more likely to engage with transformative knowledge (Stromquist, 2006).

Sam Ang stressed the centrality of rights education when we discussed the workshops she conducts with provincial women:

A: So, when you do these kinds of meetings, what is your...like, goal? Like, how would you like to see things change for people?

SA: *We see a lot changes. Those provincial women gained general knowledge including women's rights in society, so they can fight against the things that are injustices to them. They knew how to demand their rights. We created a network for them to help each other when there is violence in the family.*

Sam Ang understood rights as what women will demand from duty-bearers once they are aware of them. She saw a causal relationship between an increase in women's knowledge and action to secure their rights. **Sophearet** also highlighted this connection: "I think women now they get more understanding, and are involved more in political life. They know about their rights. They advocate for what they want." Stromquist (2002:30) asserts that "knowledge of the laws creates spaces for action, promotes their implementation and ultimately helps to inject a rights-based approach to development."

In our group discussion about empowerment, **Sophearet** noted converse connections between knowledge and action—that women who desired to act must empower themselves with knowledge:

If they want to advocate for their rights, they have to have the knowledge of human rights. And especially students, they have to have the knowledge on the... any international human right law, domestic human rights law. So it is very important to have the knowledge.

As a policy advocate herself, **Sophearet** noted that those who wish to claim their rights must demonstrate their international and domestic legal legitimacy. This lends authority to rights claimants when those in opposition argue that human rights are foreign concepts. As governmental duty-bearers continue to disregard domestic human rights law in Cambodia, legal knowledge can also serve notice that claimants cannot be duped.

Sam Ang also emphasises legal authority as a mechanism to overcome fear:

CEDAW is stopping the discrimination of women and children. And we taught them to know article of their rights, they are listed in the Constitution. Because when we conduct advocacy, most of them are afraid. But we also tell them the article of Constitution for using their rights.

Fear is also overcome by working together with allies. By creating networks, **Sam Ang**'s organisation encouraged women to confront issues collectively. As Kabeer (2011:327) notes, "it is only through their collective efforts that individuals find the capacity to challenge injustice." For women newly engaging in civic action, collectives provide assurance that their efforts have support. Additionally, these groups help women create shared identities, which can act as "sources of power...to challenge the status quo" and "lead women to mobilize" (Stromquist, 2002:32). While groups have the potential to create internal unjust hierarchies, in respect of overcoming fear and mobilising, collectives are better able to empower themselves than individuals.

In discussing differences between rural and urban women, **Sam Ang** identified a causal relationship between knowledge and bravery:

Young women in Phnom Penh and in provinces are different. Indeed, the Phnom Penh young women are more knowledgeable than those living in the provinces because they can access more information and advanced technology, so they are braver, while young women in the provinces can access less information, so they are not as brave as women in Phnom Penh.

By linking bravery to knowledge, **Sam Ang** undermined the traditional notion that women are inherently timid.

Sam Ang noted a difference in rural and urban women's knowledge and therefore, their bravery. **Sophearet** surmised that there was not a 'huge difference' between urban and rural women because rural women in her own home community were also gaining bravery through awareness:

SP: Um...for now I can say that it's...not a very huge difference [between women in the city and in the countryside]. Because now people think, they have better understanding about political life. And, they have more education, it might be because they experience many suffer from politics. Yes, especially women. [pause] Because you know...women are always in the frontlines. Before the men. For instance, like, land grabbings, you see? There are always women. Go to protest. Not just in the city, but in the countryside. Farmers, female farmers. Female vendors. For instance, in my province, you know, several months ago, they had the demonstration. Protesting. To the electricity owner. And the water supplier company. They protest to the man, to lower the price. And you know who is the leader? Who was the leader? It's the women street vendors. Women vendors, in the market. So, to compare to the old generation, I think women now they get more understanding, and involved more in political life. They know about their rights. They advocate for what they want. And it's not just happening in the city, but also in the provinces. Women are...I think, about to...stand up.

Sophearet surmised that women's experiences of suffering from political discrimination led to better awareness of injustice. This is one reason why rights organisations work with adult women, because transformative education tends to have "greater impact on adult women [...] as adults have experienced more situations of gender disadvantage throughout their lives" (Stromquist, 2006:150). **Sophearet** also pointed out that "women are always in the frontlines" of action because of their suffering.

While some human rights curriculum has been introduced in Cambodian schools, it does not attempt to link human rights concepts to students' lives, and students in Tan's (2008:567) study found this curriculum "too foreign, abstract and philosophical." Students' disconnect with uncontextualised curriculum relates back to participants' use of NGO knowledge in Chapter Six. Participants felt that uncontextualised 'NGO-speak' would not be well-received by rural Cambodians, and so participants blended their NGO knowledge with their cultural knowledge in order to succeed in engaging men and women in the provinces. **Sophearet** discussed how she shared her knowledge in gender advocacy in rural communities:

Rural people, they do not know about the terminology, especially like gender, it's a kind of terminology. But, if we use their language, they understand, because they live with gender every day.

A: Yeah, yeah.

SP: For example, the relationship between you and your husband. How, he treat you, and how your mother treat you. And how you treat him back. And your mother, something like that... And that she understands, because it reflects about her real life.

One means of increasing rural access to information is through online networks. **Sam Ang** discussed her organisation's work to create a youth network at a university in Kratie province:

Actually those people didn't really know about ASEAN. We registered those university students in order to create a youth network like the women's network, because it will pave the way for us to contact them, but most of them didn't have email or other social networks. Our team came back and had a discussion with our superior, and then we got permission to train those youth about how to use email and facebook.

Online space may become effective for bridging rural and urban spaces. With public space severely restricted, online space is open for debate and may be safer than public ones. In addition, online space may also be useful for building the confidence to claim rights in more confrontational spaces. As discussed in Chapter Three, greater knowledge about government violations of Cambodian's rights via facebook and other online media stirred young people to political engagement in 2013 (Kasztelan, 2013).

7.2 STAYING SAFE, PROMOTING PEACE

Figure 21, from Sam Ang. Peace demonstration, Phnom Penh.

SA: *I showed you this picture because I think that we can't live in Cambodia unless Cambodia is peaceful. If arguments and war always happen in Cambodia, how can the people live? That's why I included this picture in your research.*

Above, **Sam Ang** stressed the central importance of peace in living itself and therefore, development. While the ruling party has characterized itself as uniquely capable of maintaining post-war peace, regular government violence has rendered this claim less and less convincing. In addition, participants' non-violent claiming of public space is an example that contestation can occur peacefully.

Chamnong echoed **Sam Ang**'s concerns when I asked her what change she would like to see in Cambodia:

People in Phnom Penh as well as provincial people, we all need peace. In order to get peace, it starts from all of us. We start by doing everything for peace. [...] The kinds of change that I want to see are the respect of human rights, housing rights, freedom of speech for all Cambodian people. The method for those kinds of change is not violence. Being a good citizen, the peaceful way is the best way. As my idea, I want all people to take part in this movement of power. This is not a secessionist movement. This is the people's spirit that fights to get real democracy in our country.

Chamnong asserts that 'real democracy' affirms human rights. She also asserts that her methods of change do not involve violence or some kind of separatist movement, but building collective power.

While space for political discourse opened in 2013, pushes against the boundaries of that space also resulted in brutal government violence and retribution (HRW, 2014). True to form, **Sreyton** characterized the risks bluntly:

If we talk about the government, we arrest. The government arrest us. It's not good.

This does not mean that young women are without options. However, participants discussed their images of political action both in terms of the boundaries they pushed and their mitigations of risk.

Marin discussed organizing a large demonstration through the streets of Phnom Penh, intended to raise awareness about individual and state violence against women:

Figure 22, from Marin. Dressed for demonstration, Phnom Penh. Banner: 'No violence, family happiness.'

I think that because before we do this, we saw the police hit women from Boeung Kak and then our group started thinking that we have to do something like this to give a message to the police and the government. We decided to work on violence against women, then everyone started to write something on my banner like do not mistreat women. And on this a lot of people and my group gave their palm print on my banner.

In conducting an unsanctioned demonstration, their action was quite bold:

When we wanted to celebrate this event, the authorities didn't allow us to do this campaign. We didn't have any more strategies because whenever we ask permission from the government to do any event, it doesn't allow it. So we decided to do it without permission.

However, they were only able to proceed by strategically avoiding 'the Boeung Kak issue':

The police didn't stop us because they think that we don't show much information that attacked the government. There were many programs in our events. We didn't show the pictures that the police used violence against them [Boeung Kak protestors]. We didn't really focus on the Boeung Kak issue.

Thus one of the prime motivations for their action—police violence against Boeung Kak women—was subsumed into a less confrontational programme. While this may seem to undercut the event’s effectiveness, participation in later, more overt actions indicates that initial efforts were important in growing political voices ‘step-by-step.’

By August 2013, five months later, the group joined other NGOs and activist monks in coordinating a rally for peace, shown in **Sam Ang**’s image above (Figure 21):

We always celebrate peace events every holy Buddhist Day. The purpose of the events is to create peace for Cambodia. We don’t want the government to use violence on protesters. All protesters that join demonstrations don’t need violence. That’s why we celebrate this event, to remind the government about peace.

Centring their call for peace in Buddhist meditation and prayer, a coalition of volunteer groups joined activist monks to call on all parties to end post-election violence. **Chamnorn**g also discussed this event in her interview, explaining that the religious element kept police from intervening: “They think the action is about meditation. So they don’t want to disturb.”

The ingenuity of grounding the event in Buddhist practices reinforces Ledgerwood’s (2003) findings that Buddhist moral codes can translate universal human rights into new Cambodian contexts. It also lifted the act of demonstrating above partisan debate and affirmed Cambodian desires for peace. Nonetheless, **Chamnorn**g noted that when the event reached a critical mass of about 200 participants, it was shut down:

We got more and more people who joined our meditation. When the police saw there were more and more people, the police came to stop us and put a ban on my leader.

Because of *Prakas* (legal codes) that prevent NGOs from making partisan alliances, acting above partisanship was essential for participants. Many expressed frustration at election fraud, but did not join an opposition-led three-day demonstration in September to protest the election results. Instead, **Sreyton** and others formed a first aid group and secured training for themselves. They set up first aid stations at the demonstration and patrolled through the tens of thousands present to administer care. **Sreyton** pointed out that although most of the first aid volunteers were young women, several young women

who signed up ultimately did not participate because their parents were worried about their safety. For **Sreyton**, she simply concealed her involvement from her parents:

ST: [...] my parents don't allow me. But I don't tell them.

A: [laughing]

ST: [laughing] So I don't tell them. I don't want them to worry about me.

Here again **Sreyton** was uniquely blunt about her disobedience. She went on to explain that her need to conceal her disobedience was culturally rooted: “[in] Khmer culture, the girl always worry about parents. Don't want to make them upset.” **Sreyton** also raised a critical aspect of educational migration—that one leaves family supervision. This makes it possible to present one identity in Phnom Penh and a different one when visiting home (Derks, 2008). While young people's political participation has been linked to increase awareness via social media, their increasing migration away from home may also play a role.

While peace and democratic political participation may be seen as outcomes of women's empowerment, for **Sam Ang** and other participants, peace and democracy are also necessary to fulfil women's empowerment. While order has been maintained through Cambodia's governance, the use of regular state violence to enforce that order cannot be accepted as 'good enough' relative peace.

Through the “promotion of stability rather than empowered representation of the collective interests of the poor” (Hughes, 2007:836), international development organisations have tacitly accepted the state violence used to reinforce order and failed to support Cambodian people's rights to contest for true political participation (*ibid.*; Springer, 2010). Stability supports economic development, but can stagnate democracy, which requires claiming spaces for debate and contestation in order to open up power to diverse groups of people and affirm their rights (Springer, 2010).

Butler (2009:vii) asserts that rights do “not exist in an ideal sphere,” but come into being and are exercised through collective, public performance. By claiming their right to

freedom of expression, a right that exists legally but not in practice, participants affirmed their rights. By engaging in demonstrations that were unsanctioned or broken up by authorities, participants called attention to the unjust boundaries of their power and carefully danced around them.

As political space shrinks in the post-election period, participants and the organisations they work for continue to appeal to international actors to support their political rights. Rather than strengthening bureaucracies to diffuse conflict, international organisations should endorse Cambodians' right to contest for power (Hughes, 2007). State responses to political action in Cambodia have varied according to the "expected degree of international attention," and better support from the international community for grassroots groups would strengthen these groups' safety and bargaining position in unstable environments (*ibid.*:850).

7.3 IN PROCESS

The first two sections of this chapter illustrated that participants saw building women's knowledge and networks as crucial first steps to change, and that while creativity can help meet the challenges in claiming their rights, a lack of political space has stymied their efforts. Thus, it was not surprising that when asked about the best methods for change, participants often expressed some uncertainty. **Sreyton**'s comments at the start of this chapter—"I think it's so difficult"—acknowledged the complexity of collectively claiming rights.

Perhaps because of uncertainty, participants felt it necessary to begin the process of change within themselves:

Serey Roth: *In order to change someone's way of thought, it starts from changing ourselves first. I just want to see the result from my advocacy before I can explain the benefit of it to other people. So that it will be clear that these activities are really helpful to society.*

Chamnorn: *"In order to get peace, it starts from all of us."*

Stymied in their efforts for collective empowerment, participants continued to rework their internal empowerment and build solidarity amongst women. This reinforces that participants have not arrived at an 'end state' of empowerment (which does not exist), but that their empowerment remains an ongoing process (Mosedale, 2005). Further,

while participants efforts to claim political space have had varied and partial success, this incremental change remains significant, and may be seen to reflect a Cambodian ‘step-by-step’ approach to change (Kalyanpur, 2011:1068).

7.4 ACROSS GENERATIONS

While the change that participants have created may be incremental, the process of claiming political space is in itself significant, particularly in comparison to previous generations of Cambodian women. When asked about the older generation of women and political expression, **Sreyton** perceived a sharp contrast between generations: “When somebody say, one. They say one. Two, two. But now it’s not like that. It’s now revolution. The young women [...] claim anything, all the rights that they have.”

In discussing the peace demonstration introduced in Section 7.2, **Chamnornng** noted with pride the older people who approached her group and encouraged them, with some even joining in:

*I really admire you, because you are younger, and, and, you have, uh, good—
The older generation admires what we are doing because we dare to fight for democracy while they didn’t dare to do any action that affects the government because of the legacy of fear from the Pol Pot regime. Now when they see that the younger generation has the ability to organize this event, I think they feel like they want to join with us. On that day I was very happy when those women came to meditate with us.*

Chamnornng proudly notes how their action shows the older generation that the younger one is capable of organising and mobilising people. Such actions show older generations the group’s concerns and their skill and boldness in expressing them publicly. For older and younger Cambodians who agree on the value of peace demonstrations, witnessing them in public or even engaging in them together fosters understanding and solidarity between generations.

When participants saw examples of solidarity between generations of women, this was prized. **Sam Ang** pointed out that *Boeung Kak* women praised their peace action, and that youth are not in opposition to, but learning from previous generations:

Some of them also join the meditation for peace with us like Boeung Kak women. Anyway, they told me that only the next generation could help their

advocacy. Moreover, they also encouraged us to join with them in demanding rights and to get peace for Cambodia. To me, youth's activities are very important because they can make Cambodia progress. We should learn from the old generation's experience, so that in the future we can play this role instead of them.

While *Boeung Kak* activists range widely in age (some elderly women and some not much older than participants), they are forbearers in the sense that they have been engaging in political action for the last seven years.

Marin illustrated inter-generational solidarity through a photograph of a workshop for women in Banteay Meanchey province:

Figure 23, from Marin. Women participating in a workshop, Banteay Meanchey province.

This picture expresses that we work in a team. Our team has both old and young women members but we could still work together. [...] They could work together because if they don't empower young women, no one could continue this work when the old generation gets older and retires. This is a way of sharing experience with the young generation.

Through her photograph, **Marin** describes a certain continuity among older women activists and the younger women to whom they pass their experience. While examples of

female leadership among the older generation may be rare, participants' organisations themselves are led by women.

Despite these role models, **Sophearet** noted that the continued meagre representation of women in government indicated the maintenance of 'old culture':

SP: The old generation, they seem careless about politics. Especially women. As you know, even for the older person, they do not allow her daughter to attend school. So, how can that daughter be involved in politics? Cannot be, because she cannot access broader information. She has to do what she was told. Only. And most mothers and grandmothers, they are always thinking with this kind of concept. They never step far from that kind of old culture, I can say that, yeah? [laughing] And, as you see, even in the public sphere, like, the government body. They rarely have the female members who participate at the official level, or leader level.

A: Mmhmm. Mmhm. Yeah.

SP: Most female just stay at home.

Like **Sam Ang**, **Sophearet** sees nothing inherent in women's character or ability that keeps them from getting involved in politics. Rather, she attributes women's lack of political participation to lack of education and isolation in the home. For participants, the contrast between that isolated, uneducated existence and their own is striking. While many participants expressed desires to be leaders in the future, whether in business, law, or the non-profit sector, none mentioned aspirations to become politicians. It remains to be seen how participants' generation of women will engage with this aspect of political life.

7.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed how participants and their allies are in an ongoing process of empowerment to build their collective agency. It showed that personal empowerment created the knowledge and courage for collective empowerment, and conversely that collective empowerment gave individuals the ability to claim personal empowerment. Thus, two processes interact and are interdependent. It also showed that building women's knowledge and networks was critical to forming that collective, but that claiming rights in public political spaces remains fraught with risks and challenges.

While the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness affirms the laudable principle that aid-receiving countries should have 'ownership' of their development strategies, this inevitably begs the question of whose ownership? Countries contain "countless heterogeneous and often conflicting views and interests," and their governments may lack "representational legitimacy or democratic credentials" (Buiter, 2007:649, 647). In Cambodia, international aid to the ruling elite in the name of stability has cemented elite control (Springer, 2010). As long as development continues to fund the political elite in the name of 'ownership', women at the grassroots level will still struggle to gain power.

The demonstrations that participants engaged in claimed and defined a space for publicly voicing their concerns and receiving feedback from the wider public. This chapter demonstrated that while claiming their rights was difficult and uncertain work, participants' actions were significant steps in their political empowerment, especially as women in previous generations were expected to live quietly in the private domain of the home.

This chapter also showed that some women in the previous generation have been engaged in their own political struggles, and that participants prized the encouragement and affirmations they received from older women. Participants believed that generations of women could work together and that they had much to learn from their elders.

CONCLUSION

Figure 24, from Sophearet. Woman watching the sea, Kampot province.

SP: Yes, you see the girl seem like, concentrate much. I don't know what she is thinking about, but, for me, if I were her. Even sitting there, I'm concentrating, or focusing on my future. What, what should I do next? What can I do next? What kind of problem I will face? And how can I solve it? Who can help me? [laughing] Something like that. There are a lot of things that I think about.

A: Yeah, yeah. Just really thinking about your life.

SP: Yes, like, you see... we cannot see the other side of the land, yeah? Because there is not any boundary on the sea. [laughing] So it's my... thinking about the long future. Yeah. What can we do.

A: Mm. You don't know what's on the other side.

SP: Yeah. [laughing]

Here I review and summarise each chapter's findings, how they respond to the research questions, and what they suggest for educational development, women's empowerment, and the interconnections between these. I then offer some final reflections on the research process and the work as a whole.

This micro-level study illuminates lived experiences of claiming higher education, public political space, and (re)forming gendered identities. These insights open windows to understanding under-researched processes of higher education and empowerment for some women in Cambodia. They cannot, nor do they intend to put forth development policy recommendations for all young Cambodian women. As demonstrated in the contextual chapter and in participants' stories, on-paper policy often does not manifest in practice. Where this research does confirm other findings or shed new light on emerging areas of study, it indicates areas beyond Cambodia's classrooms that deserve further research and engagement in development interventions. In addition, the research's tailored photovoice methodology itself exposes the variety of formal and informal spaces young women engaged with to enhance their own knowledge and others' awareness.

8.1 FINDINGS

Chapter Five illustrated that family support has been crucial to participants' education, and that often older siblings provided the opportunities that enabled participants to succeed. At times family or community members did not approve of these women's education, but one supportive relative was enough to persevere. Supportive relatives had faith that education would provide better future income for both the participant and her family, and this faith justified the immediate opportunity cost of keeping her in school. If universities in Cambodia continue operating out-of-sync with the job skills graduates need, this faith may diminish.

It also demonstrated the interdependency between participants and their siblings. Early childcare centres supported by MOEYS and international NGOs recognize this and help alleviate older sisters' obligations. While existing research on parental choices in education has provided important insights, further research and greater attention to sibling relationships would enhance development interventions in education.

Related to sibling support, this chapter illustrated that part of participants' success came from freeing themselves from overly burdensome housework. As household responsibilities contribute most to Cambodian girls dropping out of school (Velasco, 2001), gender equality in education cannot be achieved without addressing the uneven burden typically placed on girls in the home. Only some participants engaged in paid

labour as girls, but those that did took pride in how that work supported their schooling. It is crucial to note that these participants supplemented their studies with some work, not the other way around, and did not have to miss classes in order to work. The issues of education and child labour are strongly linked in Cambodia, and these links cannot be avoided or treated simplistically. It is odd and inconsistent to view children's activities in the North like unpaid household chores or cookie fundraising sales as positive, but paid work in the Global South as automatically exploitative. Of greater import is how much time and energy children contribute to paid and unpaid work, and how both impact their educational opportunities and well-being.

This chapter also shed light on the migrations and transitions participants made from their childhood homes to secondary school and university. Participants described missing their families, and the loneliness of such journeys, as well as the difficulties of finding suitable living conditions. In addition, young women's safety is often identified as the reason they are denied these journeys, and this chapter demonstrated that participants' parents shared those concerns. In recent years both international NGOs and MOEYS are addressing this issue by creating dormitories for young women, which in turn can alleviate the stresses of loneliness and navigating new cities.

Chapter Five demonstrated that empowering relationships, roles, and attitudes in their girlhood lives enabled their educational success, without which the empowering effects of education may not have manifested. To succeed in their studies, participants drew from unconventional role models in their families, flexibility to behave 'like a boy', and/or seemingly-intuitive capacities to aspire, plan, and dream.

This chapter's findings support the notion that if development goals like MGD3 aspire to transform gender equality in homes through formal education, it must more fully address the reinforcing cycle of that relationship. Thus, transforming gender equality in homes is necessary to improve gender equality in education.

Chapter Six demonstrated that alternate identities, such as 'student', 'volunteer', and 'NGO worker', allowed participants to explore additional ways of defining themselves. These new definitions, however, did not abdicate or replace other ones of 'dutiful daughter' or 'altruistic woman'. Hybrid and multi-layer identities that incorporate all of

these roles allowed participants to engage in unconventional activities without becoming unrecognizable in their society. Thus, it reinforced that such gender hybridities, while partially reproductive, are effective in reconciling competing pressures and desires (Brickell, 2011b).

It illustrated that formal education granted participants higher status in society, but not necessarily new roles. As schooling reproduces social norms, educated young men and women can maintain gender biases learned at home even as their knowledge in their area of study increases. It showed that education that specifically addresses gender can transform attitudes and practices, and that currently, this education most often occurs outside formal classrooms in workshops and training sessions.

Chapter Six showed that participants' engagement with chosen work and volunteer networks supported the development of their new identities. Indeed, all participants first discussed and learned about gender issues through these networks, not in school. In these networks, participants' alternate identities were supported, and their skills enhanced. This confirms that adult networks built around enhancing women's rights may be much better positioned than schools to address gender inequalities (Stromquist, 2006). It also showed that participants' networks were strengthened by appreciating and addressing the misunderstandings, competing interests and tensions that can arise in groups. Thus, development interventions that seek to support such groups cannot assume group homogeneity, as this risks exacerbating such tensions (Ward, 2013). In addition, participants understood that women did not always join volunteer groups for altruistic reasons, and development interventions to build women's self-help groups must also unlearn that gendered assumption (Brickell and Chant, 2010; Ward, 2013).

Chapter Six also showed that participants prized the levels of independence, freedom, and flexibility of movement that their work accorded them. Throughout the research, participants foregrounded their professional identities.

Because of this professional focus, participants expressed a desire for their romantic, potentially matrimonial and parental roles to be in harmony with their professional roles. This highlights the need for formal or informal gender education to engage with men in order encourage equitable relationships.

Chapter Seven illustrated participants' work to apply their formal and informal learning to collectively claiming women's rights. They highlighted the importance of building women's knowledge about human rights and supporting one another through networks. They asserted that knowledge of rights and public issues can come from anywhere, and that online media like facebook were useful in building bridges between rural and urban young people. It is this finding that is perhaps the most instrumental in the thesis: **Sam Ang** noted that her group has conducted training and built contacts with rural students; all they needed to go forward with their rural-urban youth network was the funding to buy modems and set up an internet connection.

This chapter also illustrated participants' engagements with public political space. These acts are courageous, given that political space in Cambodia is in flux, unstable, and still subject to fearmongering and violence. Grounding their actions in peace and non-partisanship, participants were successful in staying safe and creatively generating public political space. Yet compromises on their message, as well as instances of police forcing these spaces to close, prevented participants from fully realising their right to political expression. These actions are therefore both manifestations of participants' empowerment and evidence of persistent political disempowerment from a restrictive and authoritative state. As public political space remains severely restricted and female representation in government is scant, it is perhaps the difficult transition from education to political rights that deserves greatest attention in 'empowering' Cambodian women.

Changemaking is complicated and confusing, not just for outsiders, but for insiders as well. Testing the bounds of what is possible and creating political spaces that do not yet exist is involved and uncertain work. The empowerment of women and other marginalized groups does, however, require "the simultaneous disempowerment of those who currently occupy a privileged position in society, and as such powerful elites will try to impede any movement toward a 'from below' vision of democracy and development" (Springer, 2010:155). As long as donors continue to fund Cambodia's elite-controlled development institutions, human rights will be tacked onto policy without true commitment, and opportunities afforded to women will be framed in terms of the economic benefits to others rather than in women's inherent rights.

The inevitable disempowerments in transforming these structure may mean that development “is much bigger than donors and much rougher than donors care to get” (Hughes and Hutchison, 2012:24). Development interventions, however, cannot claim that societal transformation will spring from the status quo. Participants proved themselves to be creative, courageous, and committed to non-violence and human rights. Other than modems, their material needs are met. If development stakeholders wish to support such a grassroots youth movement for change, they can learn, as McGee’s (2010) international NGO in Colombia did, to meet the real needs of local human rights NGOs by visibly backing these groups and offering security support. Development ‘partners’ can be more visible and vocal about supporting groups that advocate for women’s rights and insist on collectives’ right to engage in political space without restriction or threat of violence.

8.2 REFLECTIONS ON PHOTOVOICE

“The best journeys answer questions that, in the beginning, you didn’t even think to ask.” – Jeff Johnson (in Copland and Malloy, 2010).

Participants are not merely subjects, but makers of development, and as such, should and can have greater say in representing themselves. The photovoice process that we used, adapted to both my needs as a thesis researcher and participants’ needs as time-constrained professionals, opened windows into the multitude of spaces and relationships that impacted participants’ learning and empowerment. Further, opening up the research space, in the partial way that we were able to, created something much different than what it would have been if entirely bounded by me. The photovoice methodology used in this research was created in-process by my design and willingness to adapt it, as well as by participants’ choices as they followed and deviated from my ‘instructions’. This process brought forth participants’ views of themselves and their present concerns, causing me as researcher to focus much more on their identities and their political efforts than I had anticipated. And this occurred even though there were limits to our collaboration—both in the time constraints on these women’s participation and in my power as sole author of this work.

Lilja (2008), drawing on theories from Rosenberg and Spivak, notes “the importance of distance, which de-familiarizes the ordinary and this makes it possible for us to question it” (186). Revisiting photographs with some distance from the moment and place in which they were taken allowed participants not just to report but to reflect on their lives, and to present those reflections to me. To return to her photograph and quote at the opening of Chapter Three, **Serey Roth** noted the value of such reflection in our interview: “They say one photo, one memory. *When we just take a photo, it does not seem very important, but when we look at it one by one, it is really meaningful; one photo, one memory.*”

Photovoice methodology also helped participants and myself bridge the many gaps between us linguistically, culturally, and as ‘researcher’ and ‘researched’. Participants showed me places and people that I would not have otherwise seen. In addition, these photographs, put into context by participants’ words, are affective and vivid data that help draw the Reader of this thesis into their worlds. As with any other data, photographs have the potential to be manipulated and misrepresent participants, but when treated ethically they may be very effective means of communicating people’s concerns to policymakers and other stakeholders far removed from participants’ spheres of influence.

Through their photographs, participants had the opportunity to show me their views, and thus only in hindsight could I understand what participants came to me with—the selves that they wanted me, and other foreigners like me, to see. The knowledge, rights, and lives that they claimed for themselves and their ongoing work to expand on that success. In addition to the strictly analytical insights this research brings forward, this thesis honours and aims to convey the complexity, interconnectedness, and worth of participants’ journeys.

8.3 FINAL REFLECTIONS

Sophearet: If I compare to when I was a child, or before joining university, I was like a frog in the well, you know? [laughing] I cannot see many things. [laughing] Just only, only the small thing. But now I can see broader.

Through their photographs, participants showcased their challenges and the crucial factors that enabled them to succeed. They also presented their hard work, altruism, sense of duty and bravery in speaking out against cultural norms. Making their way

through the educational system through a combination of family support, self-determinism, and a creative ability to balance competing demands, participants' empowerment has been ongoing, both enabling and being reinforced by their formal and informal education.

Like Cambodian students in Brickell's (2011) study, participants did not make much distinction between formal and informal learning. For them, the source of knowledge was less important than its usefulness. A university degree did, however, grant them status, and promised increased wealth for women's families, thus conferring legitimacy on their educational aspirations and making it acceptable for young women to leave their parents' homes. Their socialising, travel, and political action under the banner of social work also grant these actions a measure of legitimacy they would not otherwise possess. Thus, participants' roles as students and altruistic NGO workers opened alternative spaces that may be (re)labeled as within the bounds of 'good' female behaviour.

Through such practices, women may find ways to fulfil their desires without being excommunicated. Thus, the "expansion of women's sphere of social interactions will not necessarily lead to a rupture with the past" (Kabeer, 2011:504). Further, such a rupture may be too untethering for many to be desirable. When speaking to me in English about their approach to goals and their accomplishments, participants often used the phrase "step-by-step", which I have often heard in interactions with Cambodians throughout the years. Measured and incremental change may be more desirable than swift and unchecked transformations, from the political coup of 1997 to forced evictions today.

This research confirmed that education was very useful to participants in reconfiguring the terms of their lives. It also indicated that the benefits and outcomes of education depended upon and were enmeshed within family situations, volunteer and professional networks, and expanding yet precarious political spaces. In keeping with that interconnected complexity, it is important to note that the ideas and concerns that participants brought to this research were wide and varied. In addition to the core subjects presented here, participants also expressed concern about other issues such as Cambodians with disabilities, environmental degradation, and the loss of everyday

markers of culture to globalization. Participants' views on development went beyond their gender and formal education because of development's interconnected complexity.

Contextual dependency should be remembered for educational development not just towards social empowerment, but also towards more mainstream aims such as better employment. This thesis discussed that while better income and employment through education are worthwhile pursuits, these outcomes are not certain, and educational development ought not guarantee benefits it cannot deliver. Educational development can, however—in keeping with requests from policymakers, academics, grassroots people—ground its work in affirming boys and girls', men and women's right to education, which can support a variety of pursuits, and values gender equality as a worthwhile goal in itself, regardless of its profitability.

This thesis cannot comprehensively analyse participants' levels of empowerment in their homes, workplaces, and communities. Rather, it illustrates the interconnectedness of these spaces, and of participants' concerns. MOEYS and international donors cannot view schooling as bounded to a realm outside the rest of young people's lives. Thus, which element might be held responsible for participants' empowerment: university education, moving out of their parents' homes, peer networks, or NGO education on their rights? In truth these things cannot be parcelled apart or traced neatly. All interact and bleed together; indeed, “education outcomes are less direct and more complex than is often believed” and “the embeddedness of education, as part of social relations, implies that cause and effect can be very difficult to disentangle” (Colclough, 2012:144-5). While education has had vital transformative effects on participants' lives, those strands cannot be ripped out of the whole and deemed the cause of participants' empowerment, as many development models and policies argue and assume.

My standpoint of resisting a simplistic relationship between education and empowerment does not deny education's capacity for transformation. Rather, I assert that education can create possibilities, which require nourishment from other areas of life in order to thrive. In addition, the entanglement of education and empowerment processes means that they cannot be treated as simple linear equations where an input at one end (increased access) guarantees an output (empowerment) at another. Such attempts are based in a belief that “we can somehow predict the nature and direction

that change is going to assume. In actual fact, human agency is indeterminate and hence unpredictable in a way that is antithetical to requirements of measurement” (Kabeer 1999: 462).

Thus, the education-women’s empowerment-development nexus deserves much greater attention and research in development studies. Like the chapters and sections that analyse data from participants’ lives, human development goals may organise facets of well-being into manageable outlines. These facets, however, are not discrete and do not operate in isolation (Unterhalter, 2012). This thesis ventured ‘beyond access’ to illuminate through words and images just how the interconnections between education-women’s empowerment-development have supported some young women’s lives. This thesis illustrates how these women aim to strengthen these connections to realise rights-based development; to create the Cambodia they envision.

APPENDIX 1: INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

SCHOOL OF GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT AND EARTH SCIENCES
Te Kura Tātai Aro Whenua

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON, PO Box 600, Wellington 6140, New Zealand
Phone +64 4 463 5337 **Fax** +64-4-463 5261 **Email** geo-enquiries@vuw.ac.nz **Web** [Http://www.victoria.ac.nz/sgees](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/sgees)

Participation Information Sheet for Research on Young Women's Educational Experiences

Research Team

Researcher: Anna V. Rogers

Interpreter: Sruong Sreyhak

Research Supervisor: Dr Sara Kindon

Introduction

I am a Masters student in Development Studies at Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand. As part of my degree I am conducting research for a written thesis. This research investigates how young women from rural backgrounds achieve the goal of obtaining university education in Phnom Penh—as well as how this education affects their personal, professional, and civic lives. Through exploring these topics, this research aims to identify factors that can support young women in obtaining university education and using their education towards full and meaningful lives. The Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee has granted ethical approval for this project.

Overview of the Research

The research will use 'photovoice' methodology, where participants record aspects of their lives that are meaningful to them by taking photographs. An introductory meeting will be held with all participants in order to:

- introduce the research and the photovoice methodology,
- review photography methods and the ethics of photographing others, and
- explore your educational background through an interactive activity.

This meeting will be held at time and place we agree on and will last 2-3 hours. With permission, it will be audio/video recorded, and later transcribed and analyzed. Any participant may have the recorder turned off at any time without having to give reasons. This recorded information will be kept confidential.

After the meeting, participants will photograph aspects of the research topic that are meaningful to them, using digital cameras or cameraphones. Before her interview, each participant will share with the research team about 10 of the photos that she considers most relevant. We will then discuss these photos during the interview. The interview will be held at a mutually agreed time and place and will take 1-2 hours. The interview will be audio/video recorded, but you may turn off the recorder at any time without having to give reasons. A second interview may be held in order to clarify information from the first interview. The second interview will be held in the same manner as the first and will take about 1 hour.

After all interviews are completed, a closing meeting will be held with all participants to review the photos and discuss the key themes coming out of this research. As before, this meeting will be held at a time and place we agree on and will last about 2 hours. With permission, it will be audio/video recorded, and later transcribed and analyzed. Any participant may have the recorder turned off at any time without having to give reasons. We will also discuss the possibility of showing some of the photos in an exhibition in Phnom Penh. Participants will determine whether or not they want to show their photos, and may choose to keep some or all of the photos confidential.

Your Rights as a Participant

- Unless you would like to have your identity shown in this research, personal identifying details will only be known to the research team and other participants in the group meetings. The information and opinions you provide will be credited to a Cambodian pseudonym, which you may choose for yourself. By signing the attached Consent Form, other participants in the meetings agree to keep your identity and information confidential, as you will do for them.
- Participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the research at any time up to two months after the last group meeting, without having to give reasons. Any photos and information you have provided in interviews will be returned to you, and your responses in recordings of group meetings will not be identified or analyzed.
- Only Anna Rogers and the interpreter will be present during the interview. We will discuss the photos you have taken and selected for the research. I will also prepare some questions in advance. These will be open questions and you may say as much or as little as you choose. You may also choose not to answer certain questions.
- The interview will be audio/video recorded, but you may turn off the recorder at any time without having to give reasons. The recording will be transcribed, and the interpreter will translate these transcripts as needed (from English to Khmer, and from Khmer to English). Interview data will only be accessed by the research team. You will be provided with a copy of your interview transcript for your review and approval before it is included in the thesis.
- You may choose to keep some or all of your photos confidential. I will ask for your written permission for each photo before it is used in the thesis or for another purpose, such as in an article or exhibition. Your photos will always be credited to you by the name you choose. I will only use each photo for the purposes you approve. At the end of the research, any copies of photos that I do not have permission to use will be returned to you if you want them, or destroyed. I will also give you digital copies and prints of your interview photos for you to use as you wish.
- All written and audio/video data will be stored in a locked cabinet or as password-protected electronic documents, and will be destroyed after 5 years.

- The thesis will be submitted for a grade to the School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences and deposited in the University Library. If you would like one, I will give you a summary of the thesis after it is complete. It is intended that findings from this research will be used to present at one or more academic conferences and/or written in academic articles for publication.

If you have any questions or would like more information about this research, you are welcome to contact Anna, her research supervisor, or the interpreter.

Researcher:

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Based in Phnom Penh

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Interpreter:

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INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS IN KHMER

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ព័ត៌មាននៃការចូលរួមសំរាប់ការស្រាវជ្រាវលើប្រធានបទ បទពិសោធន៍នៃការអប់រំចំពោះស្ត្រីវ័យក្មេង

ក្រុមស្រាវជ្រាវ

អ្នកស្រាវជ្រាវ: Anna V. Rogers

អ្នកបកប្រែ: ស្រីហាក់

អ្នកដឹកនាំស្រាវជ្រាវ: Dr. Sara Kindon

ការណែនាំខ្លី

នាងខ្ញុំឈ្មោះ Anna V. Rogers គឺជានិស្សិតកំពុងរៀនអនុបណ្ឌិតផ្នែក Development Studies នៃសាកលវិទ្យាល័យ Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand។ ខ្ញុំកំពុងរៀបចំការស្រាវជ្រាវមួយសំរាប់ការសរសេរសារណា ដែលជាផ្នែកមួយនៃការបញ្ចប់នូវសញ្ញាបត្ររបស់ខ្ញុំ។ ការស្រាវជ្រាវនេះគឺផ្ដោតទៅលើ តើស្ត្រីវ័យក្មេងដែលមានប្រវត្តិមកពីតំបន់ដាច់ស្រយាលធ្វើយ៉ាងណាដើម្បីសម្រេចបាននូវគោលបំណងក្នុងការរៀននៅថ្នាក់សាកលវិទ្យាល័យនៅក្នុងទីក្រុងភ្នំពេញ? ហើយម្យ៉ាងទៀតក៏ដូចជាឥទ្ធិពលនៃការអប់រំទៅលើជីវិតផ្ទាល់ខ្លួន ជំនាញការងារ និងភាពជាពលរដ្ឋផងដែរ។ ឆ្លងតាមប្រធានបទនេះ គោលបំណងនៃការស្រាវជ្រាវគឺដើម្បីដឹងនិងបង្ហាញពីកត្តាផ្សេងៗដែលអាចគាំទ្រស្ត្រីវ័យក្មេងឲ្យបានរៀននៅសាកលវិទ្យាល័យ និងការប្រើប្រាស់ចំណេះដឹងរបស់ពួកគេឆ្ពោះទៅរកភាពជោគជ័យ និងពេញលេញដោយអត្ថន័យក្នុងជីវិតរបស់ពួកគេ។ សាកលវិទ្យាល័យ The Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee បានអនុញ្ញាតអោយមានការស្រាវជ្រាវលើគំរោងនេះ។

សេចក្តីសង្ខេបនៃការស្រាវជ្រាវ

ការស្រាវជ្រាវនេះនឹងធ្វើឡើងតាមវិធីសាស្ត្រ 'photovoice' ឬខ្មែរហៅថា រូបភាពសំលេង ដែលអ្នកចូលរួមនឹងកត់ត្រាតាមទិដ្ឋភាពនៃជីវិតរបស់ពួកគេ ដែលមានអត្ថន័យចំពោះពួកគេតាមរយៈការថតរូប។ ការជួបជុំណែនាំដំបូងនឹងធ្វើឡើងដោយមានការចូលរួមពីអ្នកចូលរួមទាំងអស់ក្នុងគោលបំណង:

- ណែនាំការស្រាវជ្រាវ និងវិធីសាស្ត្រ photovoice
- ណែនាំរបៀបថតរូប និងសីលធម៌នៃការថតរូបរបស់អ្នកដទៃ និង
- ការពិនិត្យប្រវត្តិនៃការសិក្សារបស់អ្នកតាមរយៈ អន្តរសកម្មភាព

ការជួបជុំនេះនឹងរៀបចំឡើងក្នុងពេលវេលានិងទីកន្លែងជាក់លាក់មួយទៅតាមការព្រមព្រៀង ក្នុងរយៈពេលពី២ទៅ៣ម៉ោង។ ដោយមានការសុំការអនុញ្ញាត នឹងមានការប្រើប្រាស់ជាប្រដាប់ថតសំឡេង ឬវីដេអូ ដើម្បីយកទៅបកប្រែនិងធ្វើការវិភាគ។ អ្នកចូលរួមម្នាក់ៗមានសិទ្ធិបិទប្រដាប់ថតសំឡេងបានគ្រប់ពេលដោយមិនបាច់ប្រាប់ពីហេតុផលរបស់ខ្លួន ហើយព័ត៌មានដែលថតសំឡេងនេះនឹងរក្សាការសំងាត់។

បន្ទាប់ពីការប្រជុំ អ្នកចូលរួមនឹងថតរូបទៅតាមទិដ្ឋភាពនៃប្រធានបទស្រាវជ្រាវដែលមានអត្ថន័យជ្រាលជ្រៅចំពោះពួកគេ ដោយប្រើប្រាស់ការមេរ័យ ឬការមេរ័យទូរស័ព្ទ។ មុនការស្រាវជ្រាវ អ្នកចូលរួមម្នាក់ៗ នឹងចែករំលែករូបថតទៅក្រុមស្រាវជ្រាវប្រហែល១០សន្លឹក ដែលអ្នកចូលរួមម្នាក់ៗ គិតថាវាត្រូវនឹងប្រធានបទបំផុត។ បន្ទាប់មក យើងនឹងពិភាក្សាទៅលើរូបថតទាំងអស់នេះនៅកន្លែងពេលសំភាសន៍។ ការសំភាសន៍នឹងធ្វើឡើងនៅក្នុងពេលវេលា និងទីកន្លែងមួយដែលមានការព្រមព្រាគ្នា ក្នុងរយៈពេលពី១ទៅ២ម៉ោង។ ការសំភាសន៍នឹងប្រើប្រាស់ជាលក្ខណៈថតសំឡេង ឬជាវីដេអូ ប៉ុន្តែអ្នកអាចបិទឧបករណ៍ថតសំឡេងនេះបានគ្រប់ពេលដោយពុំចាំបាច់ប្រាប់ពីហេតុផលផ្សេងៗឡើយ។ ការសំភាសន៍លើកទី២នឹងធ្វើឡើងដើម្បីបញ្ជាក់ព័ត៌មានឲ្យច្បាស់ពីបទសំភាសន៍ដំបូង។ ការសំភាសន៍លើកទី២នឹងធ្វើឡើងដូចលើកទី១ដែរ ក្នុងរយៈពេល១ម៉ោង។

បន្ទាប់ពីការសំភាសន៍ចប់សព្វគ្រប់ ការជួបជុំក្នុងក្រោយនឹងធ្វើឡើងដោយមានការចូលរួមពីអ្នកចូលរួមទាំងអស់ដើម្បីត្រួតពិនិត្យមើលរូបថត និងពិភាក្សាពីគន្លឹះអត្ថបទសំរាប់ការស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ។ ដូចកាលពីលើកមុនដែរ ការជួបជុំនេះនឹងធ្វើឡើងនៅពេលវេលា និងទីកន្លែងមួយជាក់លាក់ទៅតាមការព្រមព្រាគ្នាក្នុងរយៈពេលប្រហែល២ម៉ោង។ ដោយមានការយល់ព្រម នឹងមានការប្រើប្រាស់ឧបករណ៍ថតសំឡេង ឬជាវីដេអូដើម្បីយកទៅបកប្រែ និងធ្វើការវិភាគ។ អ្នកចូលរួមទាំងអស់មានសិទ្ធិបិទឧបករណ៍ថតសំឡេងបានគ្រប់ពេលដោយមិនចាំបាច់ប្រាប់ពីហេតុផលផ្សេងៗ។ យើងក៏មានការពិភាក្សាពីការសុំការអនុញ្ញាតយករូបថតដាក់តាំងពិពណ៌នារូបថតនៅក្នុងទីក្រុងភ្នំពេញផងដែរ។ អ្នកចូលរួមម្នាក់ៗនឹងធ្វើការសម្រេចចិត្តថាតើនឹងមានការអនុញ្ញាតឲ្យដាក់តាំងរូបថតរឺក៏មិនឲ្យដាក់តាំង និងធ្វើការជ្រើសរើសរូបថតណាមួយដែលចង់រក្សាការសំងាត់ ឬរូបថតទាំងអស់ត្រូវរក្សាការសំងាត់។

សិទ្ធិរបស់អ្នកចូលរួម

- ក្នុងករណីអ្នកចូលរួមបង្ហាញអត្តសញ្ញាណរបស់ខ្លួននៅក្នុងការស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ អត្តសញ្ញាណលំអិតផ្ទាល់ខ្លួននឹងត្រូវបានដឹងតែនៅក្នុងក្រុមអ្នកស្រាវជ្រាវ និងអ្នកចូលរួមនៅក្នុងការប្រជុំតែប៉ុណ្ណោះ។ ព័ត៌មាននិងគំនិតដែលអ្នកបានផ្តល់ឲ្យនឹងទទួលបានកិត្តិយសដល់ជនជាតិ កម្ពុជាតាមការប្រើប្រាស់ស្បែកដែលអ្នកបានជ្រើសរើសឲ្យប្រើប្រាស់ដោយខ្លួនរបស់អ្នកផ្ទាល់។ ដោយយោងទៅតាមការផ្ញើជូននូវកិច្ចព្រមព្រៀង អ្នកចូលរួមដទៃទៀតយល់ព្រមទៅតាមការប្រជុំដើម្បីរក្សាអត្តសញ្ញាណ និងព័ត៌មានជាការសំងាត់អោយគ្នាទៅវិញទៅមក។
- អ្នកចូលរួមទាំងអស់គឺចូលរួមដោយស្ម័គ្រចិត្ត។ អ្នកអាចមានសិទ្ធិក្នុងការដកចេញពីការស្រាវជ្រាវបានគ្រប់ពេលក្នុងរយៈពេល២ខែបន្ទាប់ពីការប្រជុំជាភ្រុមក្នុងក្រោយបំផុតដោយពុំចាំបាច់ផ្តល់នូវហេតុផលផ្សេងៗ។ រាល់រូបថត និងព័ត៌មានដែលអ្នកបានផ្តល់អោយនៅក្នុងការសំភាសន៍នឹងត្រូវផ្តល់ជូនគ្រលប់អោយអ្នកវិញ និងចម្លើយរបស់អ្នកនៅក្នុងឧបករណ៍ថតសំឡេងនៅក្នុងការប្រជុំជាភ្រុមនឹងមិនត្រូវបានកំណត់ចំណាំ ឬវិភាគ។
- មានតែ Anna Rogers និងអ្នកបកប្រែដែលនឹងមានវត្តមាននៅក្នុងការសំភាសន៍។ យើងនឹងពិភាក្សាពីរូបថតដែលអ្នកបានថត និងជ្រើសរើសសំរាប់ការស្រាវជ្រាវ។ ខ្ញុំក៏មានការរៀបចំសំនួរមួយចំនួនទុកជាមុនផងដែរ។ សំណួរទាំងនេះជាសំនួរទំរង់បើក និងនិយាយទៅតាមលទ្ធភាពដែលអ្នកអាចនិយាយបាន ឬក៏បន្តិចបន្តួចទៅតាមការជ្រើសរើសរបស់អ្នក។ អ្នកក៏អាចមានសិទ្ធិមិនឆ្លើយនូវសំណួរពិតប្រាកដបានផងដែរ។

- ការសំភាសនឹងធ្វើឡើងជាលក្ខណៈមាតិកាសំលេង ឬជាវីដេអូ ប៉ុន្តែអ្នកអាចមានសិទ្ធិបិទឧបករណ៍មាតិកាសំលេងបានគ្រប់ពេលដោយពុំចាំបាច់ប្រាប់ពីហេតុផលផ្សេងៗរបស់ខ្លួនឡើយ។ ការមាតិកាសំលេងនឹងត្រូវបានបកប្រែ ហើយអ្នកបកប្រែនឹងបកប្រែនូវការមាតិកាសំលេងទាំងនេះក្នុងករណីចាំបាច់ (ពីអង់គ្លេសទៅខ្មែរ និងពីខ្មែរទៅអង់គ្លេស)។ ទិន្នន័យសំភាសនឹងត្រូវបានដាក់បញ្ចូលដោយក្រុមអ្នកស្រាវជ្រាវ។ អ្នកនឹងទទួលបាននូវឯកសារបកប្រែការសំភាសរបស់អ្នកចំនួនមួយច្បាប់សំរាប់រំលឹក និងការយល់ព្រមមុននឹងមានការសរសេរដាក់ក្នុងសារណា។
- អ្នកអាចមានសិទ្ធិជ្រើសរើសរូបថតមួយចំនួនរបស់អ្នក ឬរូបថតទាំងអស់របស់អ្នករក្សាជាការសំងាត់។ ខ្ញុំនឹងស្នើសុំការអនុញ្ញាតពីអ្នកសំរាប់រូបថតនីមួយៗមុនពេលយកវាទៅប្រើនៅក្នុងសារណា ឬក៏ក្នុងគោលបំណងផ្សេងៗ ដូចជាដាក់ក្នុងអត្ថបទ ឬការតាំងពិពណ៌នាជាដើម។ រាល់រូបថតទាំងអស់របស់អ្នកនឹងត្រូវបានផ្តល់កិត្តិយសជូនអ្នកទៅតាមឈ្មោះដែលអ្នកបានជ្រើសរើសអោយ។។ ខ្ញុំនឹងប្រើប្រាស់រូបថតនីមួយៗទៅតាមគោលបំណងដែលអ្នកអនុញ្ញាតអោយ។ នៅចុងបញ្ចប់នៃការស្រាវជ្រាវ រាល់ការមាតិកាសំលេងរូបថតនីមួយៗ ដែលខ្ញុំមិនបានសុំការអនុញ្ញាតដើម្បីប្រើប្រាស់នឹងផ្តល់ជូនទៅកាន់អ្នកវិញក្នុងករណីបើអ្នកចង់បានវិញ ឬក៏កំទេចចោល។ ខ្ញុំក៏ផ្តល់អោយអ្នកវិញផងដែរនូវការមាតិកាសំលេងរូបថតអេឡិចត្រូនិច និងរូបថតដែលផ្តិតចេញទៅកាន់អ្នកវិញសំរាប់ការប្រើប្រាស់របស់អ្នកទៅតាមតំរូវការ។
- រាល់ការសរសេរ និងទិន្នន័យមាតិកាសំលេង ឬវីដេអូនឹងត្រូវបានទុកនៅកន្លែងចាក់សោរ ឬក៏ដាក់លេខសំងាត់ដើម្បីការពារឯកសារអេឡិចត្រូនិច និងត្រូវបានបំផ្លាញចោលបន្ទាប់ពី៥ឆ្នាំក្រោយនៃការស្រាវជ្រាវ
- សារណានឹងត្រូវបានដាក់ជូនទៅសាលាដើម្បីយកពិន្ទុពីសាលាភូមិសាស្ត្ររបស់វិទ្យាសាស្ត្រផែនដី និងបរិស្ថាន និងរក្សាទុកក្នុងបណ្ណាល័យរបស់សាកលវិទ្យាល័យ។ ប្រសិនបើអ្នកចង់បាន ខ្ញុំនឹងផ្តល់ជូនអោយអ្នកនូវសេចក្តីសង្ខេបនៃសារណាមួយទៅអ្នកបន្ទាប់ពីសារណាបានបញ្ចប់។ បានពីការស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ វានឹងត្រូវបានរក្សាទុកដើម្បីនឹងធ្វើបទបង្ហាញមួយ ឬនៅក្នុងសន្និសីទមុខវិទ្យាផ្សេងៗ និងសរសេរអត្ថបទលើមុខវិជ្ជាសំរាប់ការបោះពុម្ពផ្សាយ។

ប្រសិនបើអ្នកមានសំណួរផ្សេងៗ ឬចង់ដឹងព័ត៌មានបន្ថែមអំពីការស្រាវជ្រាវ អ្នកត្រូវបានស្វាគមន៍ក្នុងការទាក់ទងទៅកាន់Anna រឺ អ្នកដឹកនាំការស្រាវជ្រាវរបស់នាង រឺអ្នកបកប្រែ។

អ្នកស្រាវជ្រាវ:
 នាងខ្ញុំឈ្មោះ Anna V. Rogers ជានិស្សិតកំពុងរៀនអនុបណ្ឌិតផ្នែកអភិវឌ្ឍន៍ការសិក្សា នៅ Victoria University of Wellington និងមានទីតាំងនៅក្នុងទីក្រុងវ៉ូឡង់។
 E-mail: Anna.Rogers@vuw.ac.nz
 Phone: (855) 066 394 929

អ្នកបកប្រែ:
 ស្រ្តី ឆ័យ ហាក់
 (855) 092 580 037

អ្នកដឹកនាំការស្រាវជ្រាវ:
 Dr Sara Kindon
 Senior Lecturer in Human Geography and Development Studies, School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand
 E-mail: Sara.Kindon@vuw.ac.nz

APPENDIX 2: CONSENT FORM

SCHOOL OF GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT AND EARTH SCIENCES
Te Kura Tātai Aro Whenua

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON, PO Box 600, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

Phone +64 4 463 5337 Fax +64-4-463 5261 Email geo-enquiries@vuw.ac.nz Web [Http://www.victoria.ac.nz/sgees](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/sgees)

CONSENT FORM

Research on Young Women's Educational Experiences

Research team:

Anna V. Rogers, researcher

Sruong Sreyhak, interpreter

Dr Sara Kindon, research supervisor

- I have read and understood the attached Information Sheet. I have had an opportunity to ask any questions I may have about participating in the project and have had them answered to my satisfaction.
- I agree to participate in the photovoice research and interviews. I understand that I may withdraw myself and the information I have provided up to two months following the last meeting without having to give reasons.
- I understand that my identity and information will be kept confidential by the research team and credited to a pseudonym, unless I decide to show my identity. I understand that other participants in group meetings will keep my identity and information confidential. I agree to keep other participants' identities and information confidential.
- I understand that, if I agree, the group meetings and interview will be audio/video recorded. I understand that I may ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time without having to give reasons. I understand that only the research team will have access to this material.
- I understand that I may keep some or all of my photos confidential. I understand that my photos will only be used with my written permission for the purposes I approve, and will be credited to the name I choose.
- I understand that all written and audio/video material will be stored in a locked filing cabinet, or as password-protected electronic documents, and will be destroyed after 5 years.
- I understand that the information and images I provide will not be used for purposes other than those listed in the Information Sheet, and will not be released to others, without my written consent.

I _____ (full name) hereby consent to participate in this study as outlined above.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

CONSENT FORM IN KHMER

SCHOOL OF GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT AND EARTH SCIENCES
Te Kura Tātai Aro Whenua

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON, PO Box 600, Wellington 6140, New Zealand
Phone +64 4 463 5337 Fax +64 4 463 5261 Email geo-enquiries@vuw.ac.nz Web Http://www.victoria.ac.nz/sgees

កិច្ចព្រមព្រៀង

ការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវអំពី បទពិសោធន៍អប់រំរបស់ស្ត្រីវ័យក្មេង

ក្រុមសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវ៖

អេនណា វ៉ាន់ចឺស៍ អ្នកស្រាវជ្រាវ

ស្រួង ស្រីហាក់ អ្នកបកប្រែ

សាស្ត្រាចារ្យ សាក៌ យ៉ែនដុន អ្នកផ្តល់ប្រឹក្សានិងដឹកនាំ

- ខ្ញុំបានអាន និងយល់ពីក្រដាសព័ត៌មាន ដែលភ្ជាប់ជាមួយ។ ខ្ញុំមានឱកាសសំរាប់សួរសំណួរ ខ្ញុំអាចចូលរួមក្នុងគម្រោងនេះ ហើយក៏ពួកគេបានឆ្លើយតបទៅនឹងអ្វីដែលខ្ញុំពេញចិត្ត។
- ខ្ញុំយល់ព្រមចូលរួមក្នុង ការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវពី សំលេងរូបភាព និងការសំភាសន៍។ ខ្ញុំយល់ឃើញថា ខ្ញុំអាចដកខ្លួនចេញដោយខ្លួនឯង និងដកចេញវិញនូវព័ត៌មានដែលខ្ញុំបានផ្តល់ជូនរយៈពេលពីរខែកន្លងមក តាមរយៈការជួបពេលចុងក្រោយដោយគ្មានការផ្តល់នូវហេតុផលផ្សេងៗ។
- ខ្ញុំទទួលស្គាល់ថា អត្តសញ្ញាណ និងព័ត៌មានរបស់ខ្ញុំនឹងត្រូវបានរក្សាទុកជាការសម្ងាត់ដោយក្រុមសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវ និងត្រូវបានផ្តល់របាយការណ៍ លុះត្រា ខ្ញុំសម្រេចចិត្តបង្ហាញអត្តសញ្ញាណរបស់ខ្ញុំ។ ខ្ញុំទទួលស្គាល់ថា អ្នកចូលរួមដទៃទៀតនៅក្នុងក្រុមពិភាក្សានឹងរក្សាអត្តសញ្ញាណ និងព័ត៌មានរបស់ខ្ញុំជាការសម្ងាត់។ ខ្ញុំយល់ព្រមរក្សាអត្តសញ្ញាណ និងព័ត៌មានអ្នកដទៃទៀតជាការសម្ងាត់។
- ខ្ញុំទទួលស្គាល់ថា (ប្រសិនបើខ្ញុំយល់ព្រម) ក្រុមពិភាក្សា និងសំភាសន៍ នឹងត្រូវបានថតសំឡេង ឬវីដេអូទុក។ ខ្ញុំទទួលស្គាល់ថា ខ្ញុំអាចសុំការថតសំឡេងត្រឡប់មកវិញគ្រប់ពេលវេលា ដោយមិនចាំបាច់ផ្តល់ហេតុផល។ ខ្ញុំទទួលស្គាល់ថា ត្រឹមតែក្រុមសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវទេ ដែលមានសិទ្ធិភ្ជាប់ទៅនឹងសំភារៈទាំងនោះ។

- ខ្ញុំទទួលស្គាល់ថាខ្ញុំអាចទុករូបថតខ្លះ ឬទាំងអស់របស់ខ្ញុំជាការសម្ងាត់។ ខ្ញុំទទួលស្គាល់ថា រូបថតរបស់ខ្ញុំ នឹងត្រូវប្រើប្រាស់តែការសរសេររបស់ខ្ញុំ ក្នុងគោលបំណងដែលខ្ញុំបានទទួលស្គាល់ ហើយនឹងត្រូវបានដាក់ឈ្មោះណាមួយដែលខ្ញុំជ្រើសរើស។
- ខ្ញុំទទួលស្គាល់ថា ការសរសេរ និងឧបករណ៍ ថតសម្លេង ឬវីដេអូ និងត្រូវរក្សាទុកក្នុងប្រអប់ដែលចាក់សោត្រឹមត្រូវក្នុងកេរ្តិ៍ ឬមានលេខសម្ងាត់អេឡិចត្រូនិច ការពារឯកសារ ហើយនឹងមិនបាត់បង់រយៈពេល៥ឆ្នាំ។
- ខ្ញុំទទួលស្គាល់ថា រាល់ព័ត៌មាន និងរូបភាព ដែលខ្ញុំផ្តល់ នឹងមិនត្រូវប្រើប្រាស់ក្នុងគោលបំណងផ្សេងទៀត ដែលមានចុះនៅក្នុងបញ្ជីក្នុងក្រដាសព័ត៌មាន ហើយនឹងមិនបញ្ចេញទៅអ្នកដទៃក្រៅពីកិច្ចព្រមព្រៀងនេះ។

នាងខ្ញុំ _____ (ឈ្មោះពេញ) ជាភាគីក្នុងកិច្ចព្រមព្រៀង
ដែលចូលរួមក្នុងការសិក្សា ដូចដែលមានពន្យល់ខាងលើ។

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