

## **Understanding Cambodia's urban poor: A quantitative and qualitative methodology.**

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Predominantly a rural society and agricultural based economy, very little attention is given to the lives and livelihoods of Cambodia's urban poor. Excluded from National Strategic Development plans, labour law, evicted and relocated seemingly at will; Cambodia's urban poor are seen more as an obstacle to development rather than in need of integration into development efforts. Developing at an alarming rate, with little regard for the residents of the city, an estimated 10% of the capital's population having been forcibly evicted from 1990-2009 (LICADHO, 2009) with thousands, if not tens of thousands more in since 2009.

In an attempt to fill this gap in both policy and scholarship, 10 months of doctoral fieldwork was undertaken between August 2011 - May 2012 and March - April 2013 (*forthcoming*). An extensive household and labour survey was conducted in seven different urban poor communities, in both those facing eviction and those in relocation sites. Alongside the main survey, semi structured life history interviews were conducted with urban poor residents as well as tuk-tuk and motodop drivers. Finally, international organisations, local urban poor NGOs and the Cambodian informal economic trade union (IDEA) were interviewed and archival sources consulted.

This paper will be presented in three sections: Firstly, I will present in detail my fieldwork methodology, the (many!) problems experienced including access, language and translation, gender considerations, localised political interests and threats of violence, and the responses enacted. Secondly I will outline the findings and analysis from a combination of my empirical and qualitative analysis covering *inter alia* household expenses, education, food, transport, the increasing debt problem and the consequences of this to answer the questions of *who are the urban poor? And upon what resources, networks, institutions and relationships do they rely upon to live?* I will draw comparisons both longitudinally and geographically to demonstrate the impact of forced relocation on urban poor household incomes. Thirdly I will suggest theoretical frameworks that could be used to shed light on the urban poor and their relationship to the state, situating my empirical and qualitative data within the political economy literature of the “reserve army of labour” and the “rentier state”.