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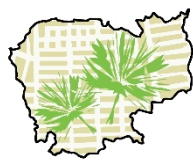
Sahmakum Teang Tnaut Organization • a Cambodian Urban NGO

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**Living Condition of
Non-Standard Forms of
Employment Workers**



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Sahmakum Teang Tnaut Organization • a Cambodian Urban NGO

Sahmakum Teang Tnaut (STT) was found in 2005 and officially registered in 2006 as a local NGO supporting urban poor communities. STT started as a small NGO that focused on technical upgrades in poor communities and since grown to produce community maps, research and advocacy in order to achieve its goal of helping urban poor and vulnerable communities realize their rights to land and housing.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This paper brings attention to the living conditions of Non-Standard Forms of Employment Workers (NSEWs) during the COVID-19 pandemic. The crisis has negatively affected their income largely because they are not secured by formal work contracts.

COVID-19 has affected NSEWs by stifling the economy and taking away their sources of income. This research examines the effects of COVID-19 on nearly a hundred NSEWs from around Phnom Penh.

COVID-19 has affected people around the world. The health risks are devastating, and the economic effects are becoming increasingly clear. Cambodia's economy is suffering.¹ The effect of this is being felt especially strongly by some of Cambodia's most vulnerable groups - NSEWs.

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in this research was qualitative and quantitative, using an open-ended survey. The sample size for the survey was 96 respondents. More than 60% of these males, with females making up around 39% of the respondents.

The survey was conducted between May and June. Surveys were conducted across 25 communities in Phnom Penh. These communities come from Khan Chamkar Mon, Chbar Ampov, Mean Chey, Dangkor, Tuol kork, Sen Sok, Prek Pnov, and Russey Keo.

The findings presented in this research are not statistically representative of all NSEWs experiences during COVID-19. However, they are indicative of the emerging problems being faced, and already faced, by NSEWs in Phnom Penh during the COVID-19 pandemic. They are the stories of the people and should be used to inform policies for navigating the current situation.

¹ The World Bank (2021), Cambodia Economic Update, Dec 2020: Cambodian Economy Hit Hard by Pandemic but Projected to Recover in 2021, December 15, 2020 available at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/cambodia/publication/cambodia-economic-update-dec-2020-cambodian-economy-hit-hard-by-pandemic-but-projected-to-recover-in-2021>

3. NON-STANDARD FORMS OF EMPLOYMENT (NSE)

“Non-standard forms of employment (NSE) are those types of work which are not contracted or full-time employment, including temporary work, involuntary part-time work, zero-hour contracts, on-call work, casual work, agency work, digital platform work and disguised/dependent self-employment.² Generally informal workers share some common attributes like:

- Lack of a union, but not always;
- Not employees of an organization or company;
- Self-employed;
- Usually from a lower socio-economic background;
- No contract, or short-term contracts, or seasonal contracts.

Some examples of NSEWs are tuk-tuk drivers, waste collectors, market sellers, or housemaids. In contrast, doctors, police, teachers, CINTRI workers, and bank employees are **not** NSEWs.



In this research, persons from the following groups of NSEWs were interviewed:

² ILO (2016) Non-standard employment around the world: Understanding challenges, shaping prospects.

Table 1. NSEWs occupation groupings

NSEWs Category	Number
Motor Bike or Tuktuk driver	30
Taxi Driver (car)	2
Street Vendor and Market Cart Vendor	19
Domestic Worker	21
Waste collector	7
Construction worker	17
Total	96

4. KEY FINDINGS

Reduction in income

Nearly all NSEWs reported a reduction in income during COVID-19. Most reported a reduction of more than 60% of their income during COVID-19.

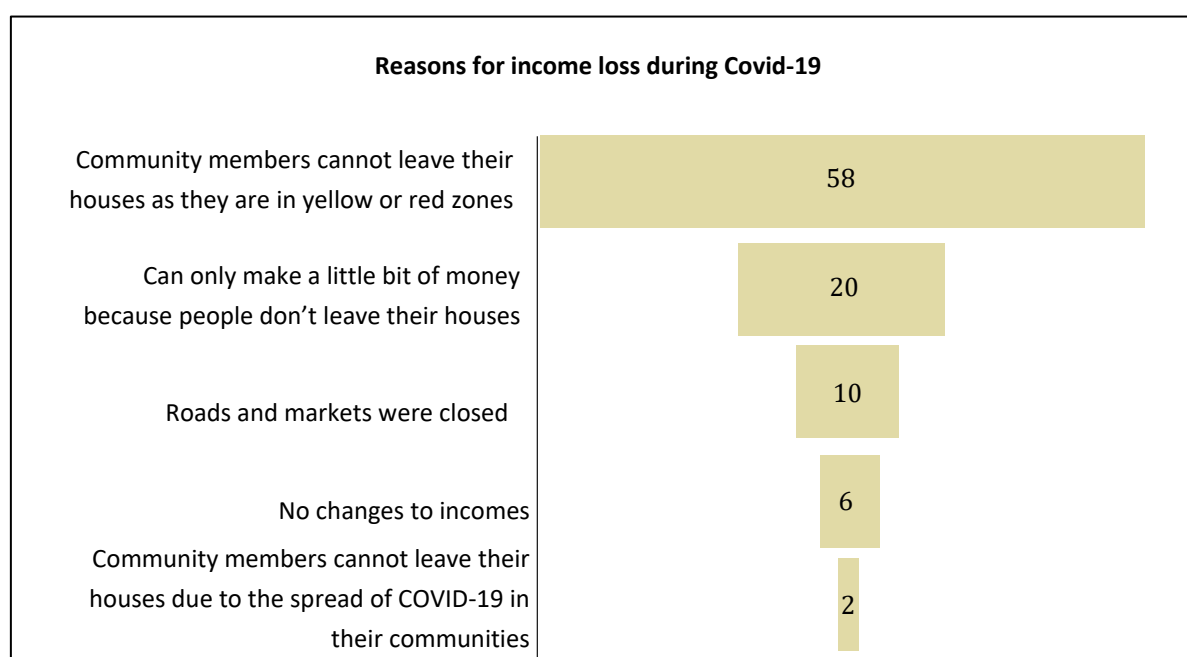


Table 2. Income variance during COVID-19

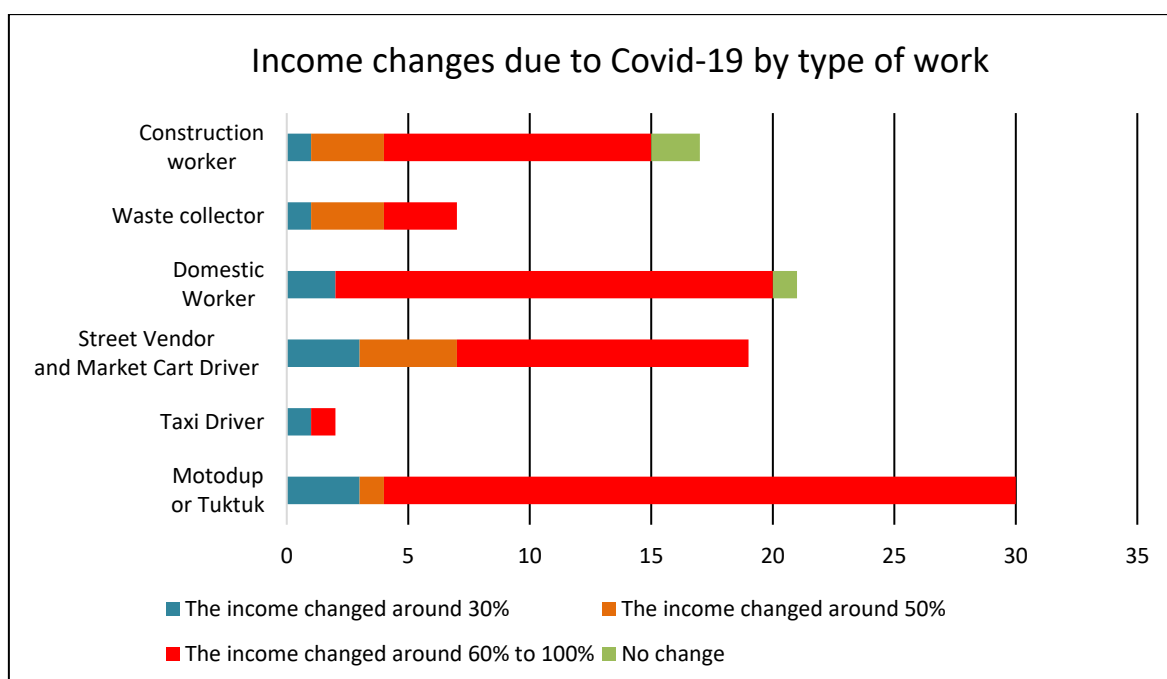
Changes to income during COVID-19	Motodup or Tuktuk	Taxi Driver	Street Vendor and Market Cart Driver	Domestic Worker	Waste collector	Construction worker	Total
The income decreased around 30%	3	1	3	2	1	1	11
The income decreased around 50%	1	0	4	0	3	3	11
The income decreased around 60% to 100%	26	1	12	18	3	11	71
No change or positive change	0	0	0	1	0	2	3
Total	30	2	19	21	7	17	96

There are a variety of reasons that informal workers provided for why their income changed during COVID-19. The graphs below cover these reasons:

Graph 1: Reasons for income loss during Covid-19



Graph 2: Income changes due to Covid-19 by type of work



NSEWs are not being included in national social protection schemes like ID Poor or the National Social Security Fund (NSSF)

Most NSEWs are not included in the NSSF. The NSSF is a government program that provides funds for workers in the event of old age, invalidity, fatality, worker injury, and miscellaneous accidents. It can provide health care among other payouts and is essential for ensuring workers are able to make it through periods of not being able to work during sickness or injury.

Equally concerning, more than 60% of NSEWs surveyed do not have an ID Poor card. The NSEWs surveyed in this report likely qualify for an ID Poor card as a result of their socio-economic situation. ID Poor is a government program that provides benefits to poor citizens, such as free health care.

Table 3. NSSF or ID Poor benefits

Did you receive or are you a member of?	NSSF	ID Poor
Yes	11	36
No	75	60
Total	96	96

60 of the surveyed NSEWs had received little to no information about the ID Poor process.

NSEWs are receiving support, but it may not be enough

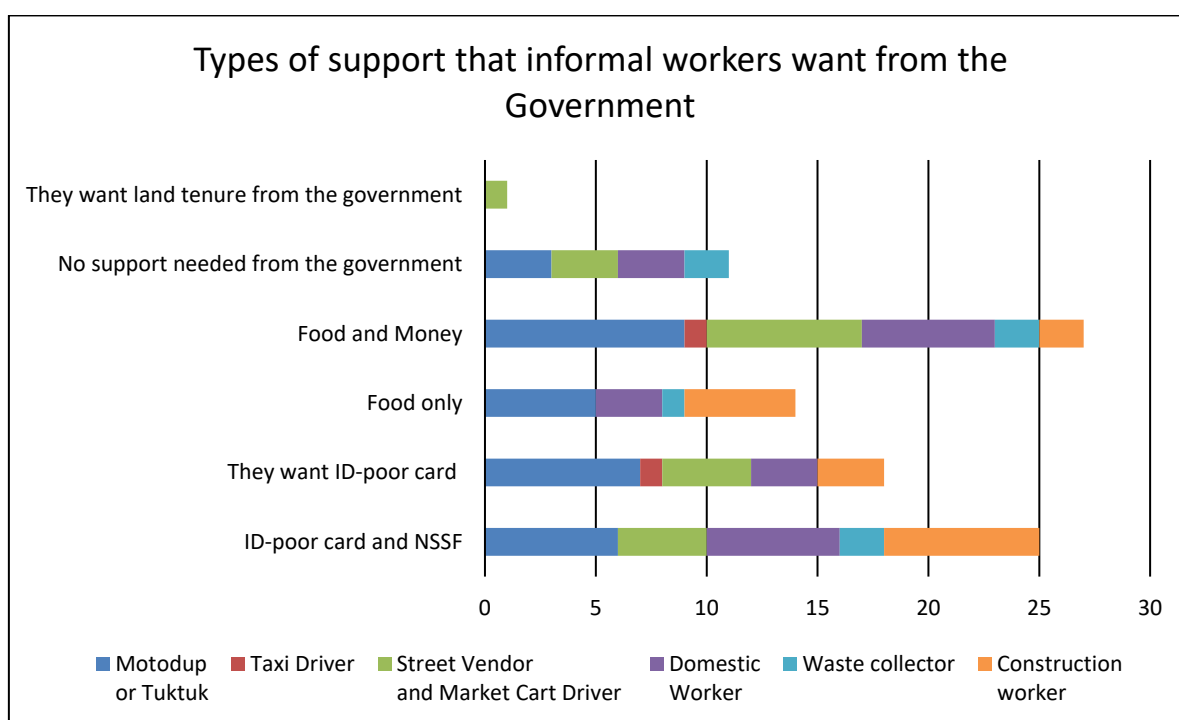
Nearly 90% of NSEWs reported receiving some type of support from the Cambodian Government or civil society organizations (CSOs). But many are still falling through the cracks. More than 12% of NSEWs received no support, despite more than 90% reporting a reduction in income because of COVID-19.

Table 4. Support received during COVID-19

Did you receive support from the Government or civil society organizations during COVID-19?	Number
Yes	84
No	12
Total	96

The graph below shows the major types of support that NSEWs are seeking:

Graph 3: Types of support that informal workers want from the Government



5. RECOMMENDATIONS

More social protections are needed for NSEWs. The Royal Cambodian Government and civil society organizations are providing some relief to affected persons. But, this facts and figures show that more help is needed.

Many people are suffering from COVID-19 pandemic and among them, NSEWs is the hardest hit group; however, there are remedies to help them through this difficult time.

In April of 2020, representatives from at-risk communities from around the country submitted requests to the Government asking them to provide help during COVID-19.³ Many of the members of these communities are member of NSEWs. In addition, the respondents in this survey also provided feedback on what types of support they need to make it through COVID-19. The following recommendations are made in line with these requests.

1. Provide supplement payments and further food handouts

NSEWs require help to make it through this global pandemic. Almost all respondents reported having lost a significant amount of their income. Two respondents reported not having enough food to eat. The Government must work with CSOs to ensure that NSEWs, and everyone in need of support, receives relief from the effects of COVID-19 by providing temporary payments and food handouts to affected groups.

2. Roll-out the ID Poor program and register as many NSEWs as possible

The Royal Government of Cambodia must continue to roll out the ID Poor program and focus on enrolling in as many families as possible. Without an adequate ID Poor program, the people who most need help will not receive it.

3. Include NSEWs into the NSSF program

Similarly, the NSSF must do more to include NSE into its scope. Currently, the safety provided by the NSSF is not reaching enough NSEWs. The Royal Government of Cambodia should work with CSOs to ensure the NSSF can complete its goal to provide security to serve workers with an employment injury and safety scheme.

³ <https://vodenglish.news/petitioners-held-questioned-after-requesting-debt-relief-face-masks/>.



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