

KEY FACTS ABOUT WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS FROM CAMBODIA, LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC AND MYANMAR IN THAILAND



Most women migrant workers from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar are employed in occupations that are low paid and classified as “3D work”, which refers to dirty, dangerous and demeaning. Although they are in high demand among employers in many sectors, many face exploitative and discriminatory work conditions.



Women migrant workers make on average about 13 per cent less than their male colleagues per month.



During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, skills development becomes more necessary. **There is a need for coordinated actions to assist women migrant workers in reskilling/upskilling** while ensuring their access to social protection as well as reducing the burden of unpaid care work borne by women. This will contribute to the community as a whole to build back together more equal and inclusive.



Thailand’s labour protection law protects gender equality, wages and work contracts, but the scope of protection is limited. The law does not cover many sectors, including agriculture, domestic work, transport and fishery.



Gender equality in the development and recognition of skills is fundamental to closing the gender wage gap and ensuring all women benefit from safe migration for decent work. Skills development is key to women’s economic empowerment and chances to improve their lives in Thailand and their countries of origin.



Gender norms and biases contribute to women’s labour market segregation and to their exclusion from employment and skills development programme. This is also the case for women migrants from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar working in Thailand.

KEY FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS' ACCESS SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN THAILAND



Self-perception of competence – Women tend to perceive themselves as less qualified or competent resulting in lacking confidence in their abilities which limit them in pursuing skills development/training.



The burden of unpaid care work borne by women - About half of women migrant workers having children surveyed find it is difficult for them to have time or energy to further develop skills at work or participate in external training programme during their free time as they need to take care of their children and household chores.



Compensation for participation in the skills training – women migrant workers are afraid of losing full amount of wages if they leave work to attend skills training.



Inconsistencies between type of work that women migrant workers obtain and available skills training programmes – skills mismatch occurs and available skills training opportunities do not respond to the demand of the labour market.



About 40 per cent of women migrant workers participating in this research express that they are afraid to participate in a training session without friends - Territorial sexism and language and culture barriers can distort the opportunities for women migrant workers to participate in skill training as they feel they have no control of a common space as a way to claim and maintain power.



Lack of information and access to training centre - Distance to training centre and inability to communicate in local language highly impact the way women migrant workers decide to participate in skills training.



Undervalued jobs in certain sectors result in limited skills training opportunities - Employment sectors which women migrant workers are concentrated on are often undervalued such as domestic work. This results in fewer skills training available for them and this can negatively impact their job choices and advancement.

Source: the Research on Barriers and Opportunities to Improving Outcomes for Women Migrant Workers through Skills Development in Thailand commissioned under the Poverty Reduction through Safe Migration, Skills Development and Enhanced Job Placement in Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand (PROMISE) programme which UN Women worked in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) with the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

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