



Estimating the Number and Characteristics of Homeless Children Across Seven Cities in Cambodia

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Presentation Outline

1. Background
2. Methods
3. Findings
4. Discussion



Background

An Invisible Population

- The homeless, in institutions, migrant laborers
- Household surveys may overlook up to a quarter of the poorest wealth quintile (Carr-Hill, 2013).



Cambodian context

- In 2014, Cambodia was selected as the first demonstration country for a multi-year initiative called 'Family Care First,' supported by funding from USAID and other sources.
- The goal of the initiative is to measurably increase the number of children living in supportive family environments.
- Cambodia's existing data sources on the number and characteristics of children outside of households were incomplete.

Partners

National Institute of Statistics,
Ministry of Planning

Columbia University
(USA)

Friends International +
Cambodian Street Child Network

MLT Consulting

MoSVY

UNICEF

Ministry of Interior

Ministry of Labor

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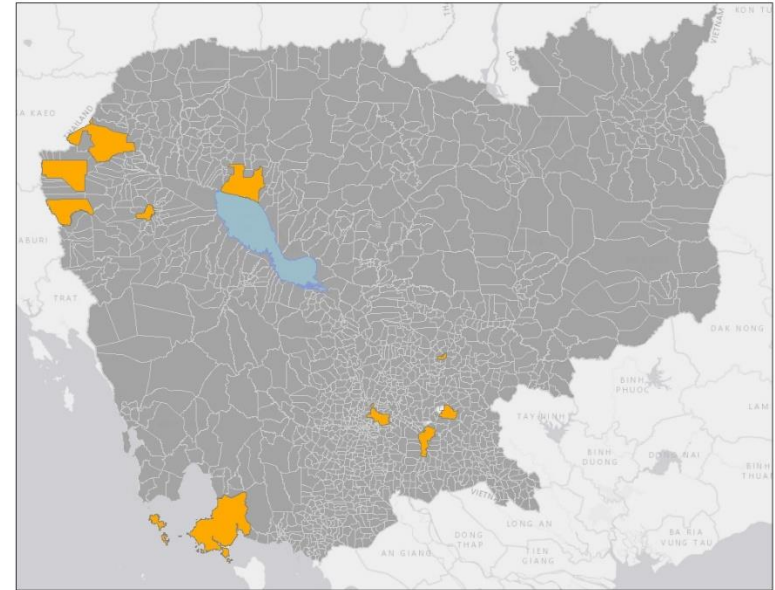
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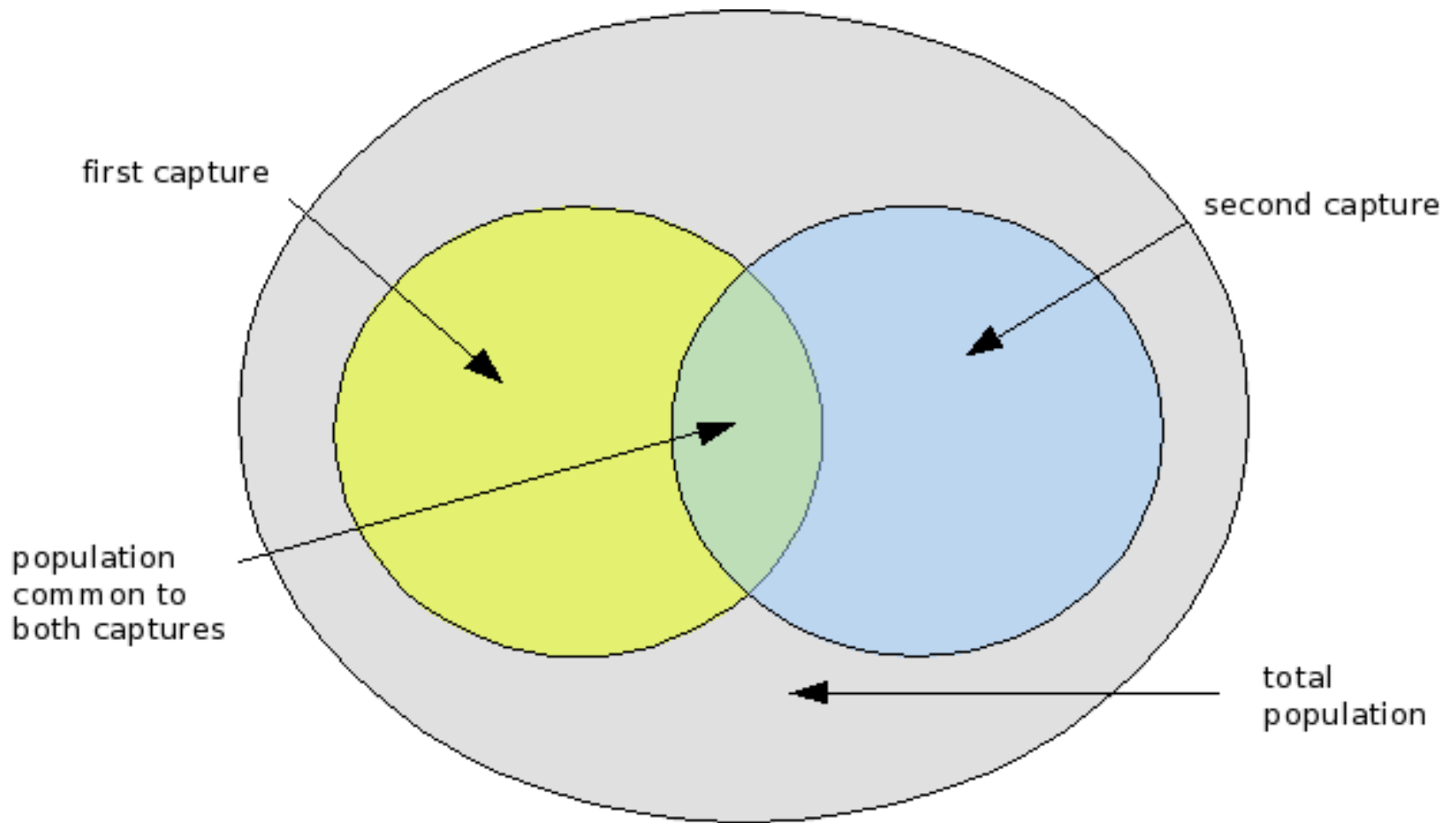
Methods

Methods

- Purposeful selection of seven cities known by key informants to have homeless children
- Detailed mapping of “hotspots” in selected cities by local NGO outreach workers
- Single count of children under 13 years of age
- Two independent counts of 13-17 year olds, including collection of identifying information (capture-recapture)
- Individual interviews with 13-17 year olds



Capture-recapture description



Matched on:

Family name

Given name

Nickname

Sex

Age

Parents' names

Province of origin



Avoiding duplication



Inclusion criteria

- Under 18 years of age
- Always or sometimes lives on the street, in emergency shelters or in public places, including construction sites (during the week preceding data collection)
- Daily rent
- Less than 3.5 sq. meters of covered space per person
- Insufficient protection from the elements (= two or more walls made out of plastic sheeting)









Findings

Capture-recapture results

Children 13-17 years of age

Province	District	Count 1	Count 2	Matches	Adjustment factor	Total estimate
Banteay Meanchey	Krong Paoy Paet	55	48	5	11.56	636
Battambang	Battambang	19	16	2	9.95	189
	Komrieng	11	20	3	9.73	107
Kampong Cham	Kampong Cham	22	19	4	6.82	150
Phnom Penh	Chamkar Mon	19	9	5	3.53	67
	Chbar Ampov	52	39	10	5.85	304
	Doun Penh	31	20	4	6.77	210
Preah Sihanouk	Preah Sihanouk	49	25	4	7.84	384
Siem Reap	Siem Reap	24	25	1	27.08	650
All areas		282	221	38	---	2,697

Child characteristics from Count 1

$n=1,766$ children <18 years of age

	All	Male	Female	p-value
Sex	---	56.40%	43.60%	<0.0001
Age				
<5 years	27.54%	25.10%	30.69%	<0.0001
5 to <9 years	27.60%	26.31%	29.26%	
9 to <13 years	23.74%	23.49%	24.06%	
13 to <18 years	21.12%	25.10%	15.99%	
missing=5 children				
Mean age, years (SD)	7.98 (4.57)	8.43 (4.72)	7.39 (4.31)	<0.0001
missing=5 children				

Child characteristics from interviews

n=569 children, 13-17 years of age

- Nearly all children are cared for by parents ($\approx 85\%$) or other family members ($\approx 10\%$).
- Low levels of school attendance ($\approx 50\%$)
- Low levels of literacy ($\approx 33\%$)
- High levels of labor ($\approx 30\%$ worked 5+ hours/day, 5+ days/week).
- High levels of illness ($\approx 30\%$) and injury ($\approx 15\%$)
- Low levels of safety and trust ($\approx 10\%$ no safety, no trust in adults, $\approx 50\%$ some safety and trust)



Discussion

Summary

1. Methods could be feasibly carried out by NGO workers in a resource-limited setting.
2. Final estimate significantly higher than previous approaches.
3. Certain categories of children, such as children living on construction sites, were largely unrecognized by NGOs.
4. There is a gender gap, esp. for older children.
5. Most homeless children live with family members and still face many hardships.

Strengths

- First study to employ robust methods and collect data in all major urban areas in a country
- Clear inclusion criteria
- NGO workers as enumerators

Limitations

- Some assumptions of capture-recapture were likely violated
- Simple count on children <13
- NGO workers as enumerators

Applications

- Findings have been widely disseminated in Cambodia through the Family Care First Initiative.
- Increased outreach to children living on construction sites.
- Emphasis on family-based services.
- Discussions about counting homeless children in Cambodia's next national census.

If we miss our chance to help the children of Cambodia, we're missing a chance to help the entire country of Cambodia.

Sean Callahan
Acting Mission Director
USAID Cambodia

Acknowledgements

- Lindsay Stark
- Sok Kosal
- H.E. Hang Lina
- Kimchoeun Pak
- Sopheap Hoeung
- Bruce Grant
- Chhaya Plong
- Oum Sophannara
- Sebastien Marot
- Neil Boothby
- Les Roberts
- Jamie Gow
- Rick Rinehart
- Rosemary Taing
- Saeed Rahman
- Anjoli Anand
- David Whitford
- Gary Yu

Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Training	Training	Field practice	Mapping	Capture	Recapture	

