



## **Resilience:**

Survivor Experiences and Expressions

# **Working Paper**

## **The Butterfly Longitudinal Research Project**

A Chab Dai study on (Re-)integration: Researching the lifecycle of sexual exploitation & trafficking in Cambodia

Working Paper December 2014

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## **1.0 Introduction**

This document is a working paper originating from the Thematic Paper on Resilience: Survivor Experiences and Expressions. It provides a summary of the findings from the thematic assessment of resilience. It also includes recommendations, based on the findings in the assessment, for anti-trafficking organizations in Cambodia and beyond that work with victim/survivors of sexual exploitation. The assessment methods, results, and conclusions are described in greater detail in the thematic paper.

### **1.1 Objective**

The Butterfly Longitudinal Research Project is the first longitudinal study to follow children and adult survivors of sexual exploitation and trafficking, starting from the time they are in aftercare programs through (re-) integration. The longitudinal study design addresses a significant limitation identified in cross sectional studies involving survivor (re-) integration (Derks et al. 2006; Reimer et al. 2007; Surtees 2013). The project follows a select group of individuals in Cambodia and has already collected a wide array of data between 2011 and 2014. The purpose of this study is to gain a long-term understanding of what the (re-) integration process involves for survivors, what they experience during this process, and how their lives evolve over time.

The purpose of the thematic paper is to build a broad understanding of resilience using the collective 'voices' of survivors of sexual exploitation and trafficking in Cambodia. Through disseminating their 'voice' and the research findings locally, regionally and globally, Chab Dai believes (re-) integration programming and policy will be informed and advanced, thereby directly improving the quality of life for survivors of sexual exploitation in Southeast Asia and around the world.

## **2.0 Methods**

The Butterfly Project began in 2010 and by December 2014, completes its fifth year. Details regarding the study methods, changes in methods from year to year, ethical standards followed, data collection tools and techniques, and strengths and weakness of the methodologies chosen are available in the project annual reports (see Miles and Miles 2010; Miles and Miles 2011; Miles et al. 2012; Miles et al. 2013).

At the midway point in the larger study, the team chose to conduct a baseline case study analysis on each participant. Four-plus years of quantitative and qualitative data were compiled and summarized to grasp what is known, contradictory, and missing from each participant's story. The case study analyses resulted in qualitative summary data from 86 participants and survey response data from 128 participants. These data form the starting pool of all available data for the thematic assessment.



The thematic assessment utilizes four consecutive years of data (2011 to 2014) compiled from 994 interviews involving 109 study participants. Relevant summary data as well as detailed responses are compiled and reviewed as they related to six basic themes within the overarching study. These themes include participants' responses, attitudes, perceptions and experiences related to 'trust', 'relationships', 'debt', 'stigma', 'discrimination', 'violence', and 'well-being'.

The participants are divided into four assessment groups based on gender and whether or not they lived in a shelter program for at least 4 months (Table 1). They include:

1. Female SP - females in shelter programs that have not yet (re-) integrated (N=32),
2. Female SP/RC - females that stayed in shelter programs and have already (re-) integrated (N=34),
3. Female RC - females that did not stay in shelter programs and have (re-) integrated (N=28), and
4. Male SP/RC - males that stayed in shelter programs and have already (re-) integrated (N=15).

Table 1: Statistics for Individuals Included in the Assessment, 2011-2014

Assessment Groups	Starting Ages		Total Number of Individuals	Total Number of individual Years Assessed	Count of Individuals by the Number of Years Included in Longitudinal Assessment									
	Range	Average			Shelter					Community				
					0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
Female SP	7-20	14.3	32	99	0	1	6	14	11	NA				
Female RC	16-36	24.6	28	84	NA					0	0	8	12	8
Female SP/RC	13-21	17	34	60 / 51	2	11	15	5	1	5	13	10	6	0
Male SP/RC	10-17	12.9	15	29 / 30	0	6	5	3	1	0	3	9	3	0

Notes: NA - Not Applicable  
 SP-Shelter Program  
 RC - Re-integrated into Community  
 SP/RC - Shelter Program then Re-integrated into Community

## 3.0 Results and Conclusions

Survivor expressions of resilience in many ways demonstrate their ability to adapt in challenging life circumstances. Survivors express feelings of well-being and at other times demonstrate perseverance during challenges and adversity.

### 3.1 Factors Important to Personal Well-Being

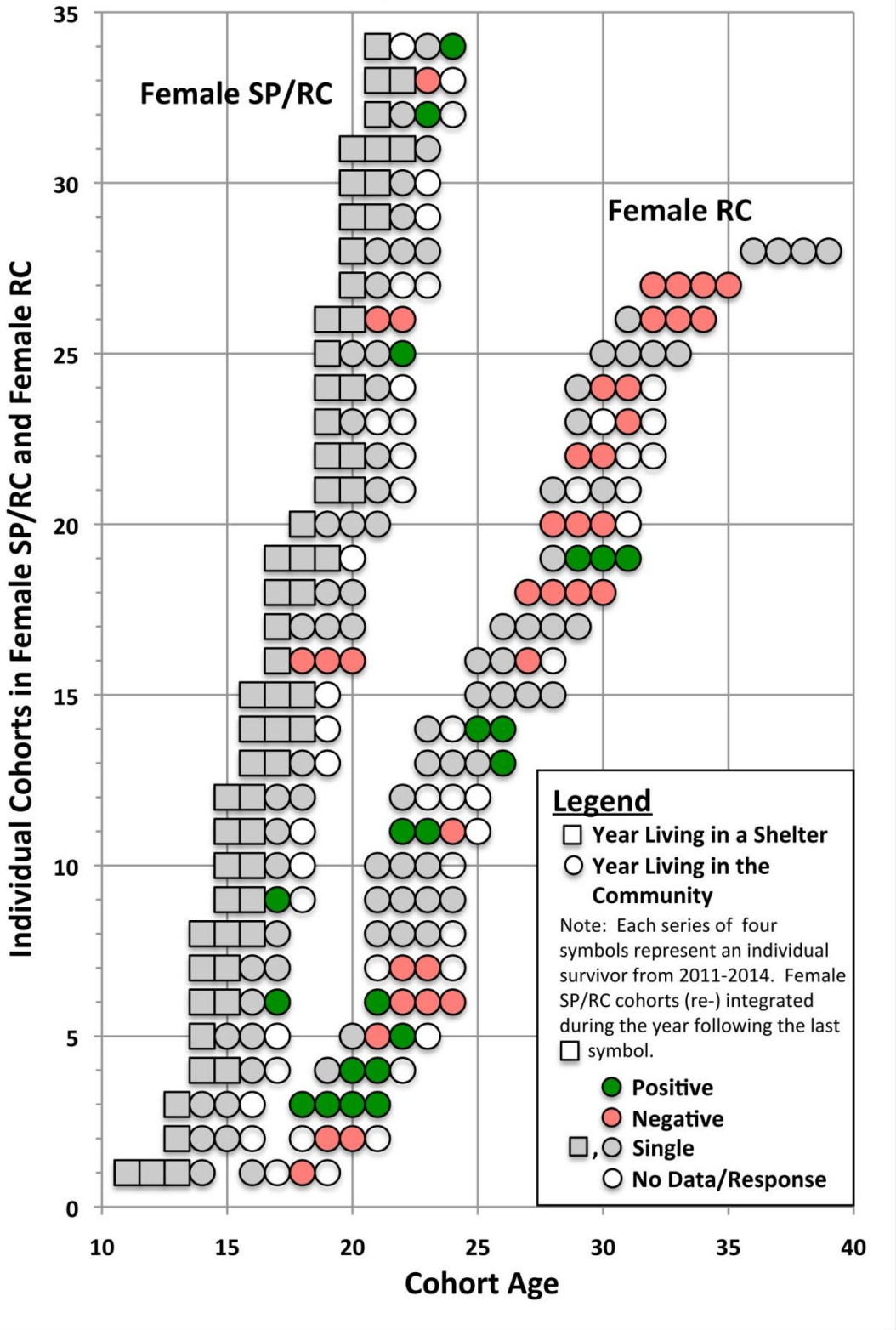
The assessment focuses on survivor experiences and their expressions of resilience through (re-) integration. Various factors and aspects of resilience are identified and discussed by listening to the collective 'voices' of survivors. It draws on the four years of longitudinal data collected in surveys and interviews with survivors throughout Cambodia. The assessment focuses on relationships, discrimination, and various life factors as they relate to well-being.

#### 3.1.1 Relationships

The majority of married participants in this study are struggling in their relationships with spouses and their spouses' parents. Within the oldest assessment grouping, 15 of the 19 participants married or involved in long-term relationships describe a negative relationship with their boyfriend or spouse and/or his parents over their last year interviewed (Figure 1). Nine of these 15 participants recount negative conditions for two or more consecutive years. The majority describe living with their in laws at some point after marriage and spoke of the difficulty adjusting to their new family unit. Unfortunately many participants describe enduring years of alcohol related physical violence, emotional abuse, physical threats, infidelity, drug addiction, and abandonment by their husbands or boyfriends and the family in law. Although there are few married participants in other assessment groups, they also faced similar challenges in developing supportive and encouraging marriages. Survivors describe their experiences in their own words:

- ⇒ *I was deceived again and again by men. I did not want to have another relationship with a man because all of these love experiences make me broken hearted and my heart aches very much. -Female Survivor, Age 23, 2013*
- ⇒ *Every night I cannot sleep unless I drink alcohol because I feel depressed with my husband, as he often does not come home and when he does he is violent toward me. -Female Survivor, Age 33, 2012*

**Figure 1: Female Cohort Relationships with Partners and Spouses, 2011-2014**

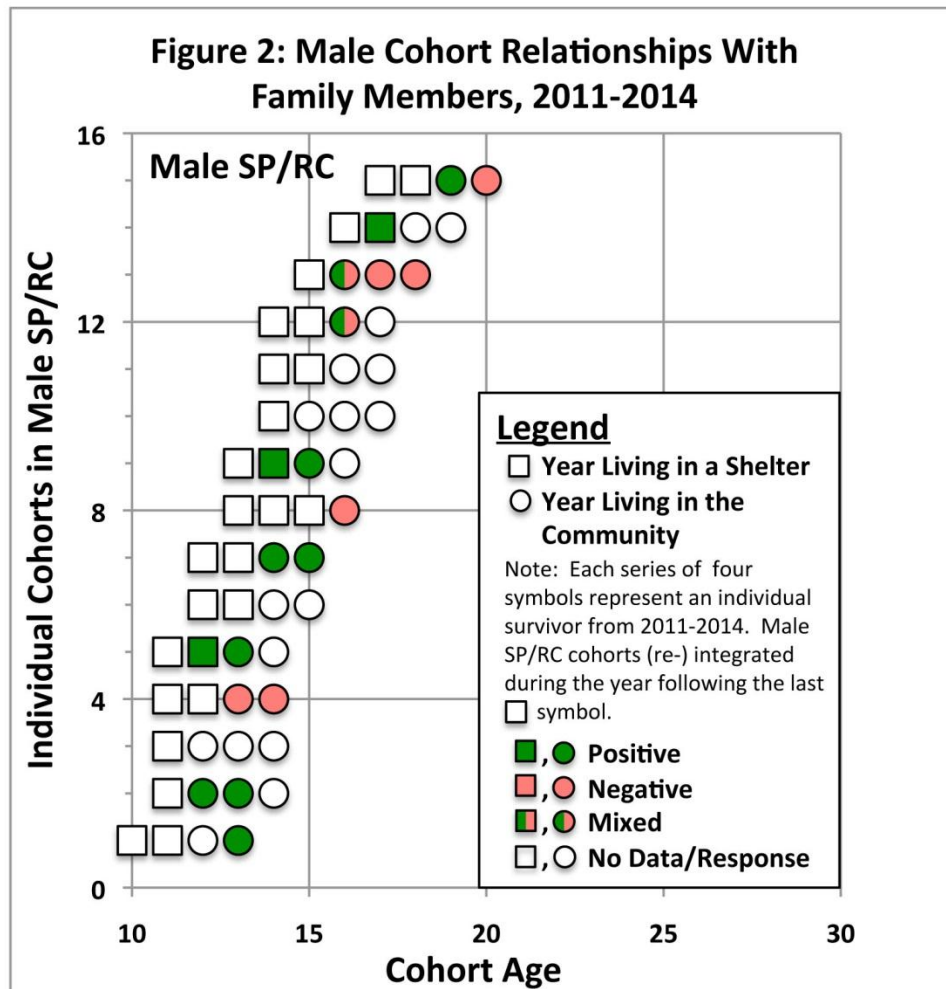




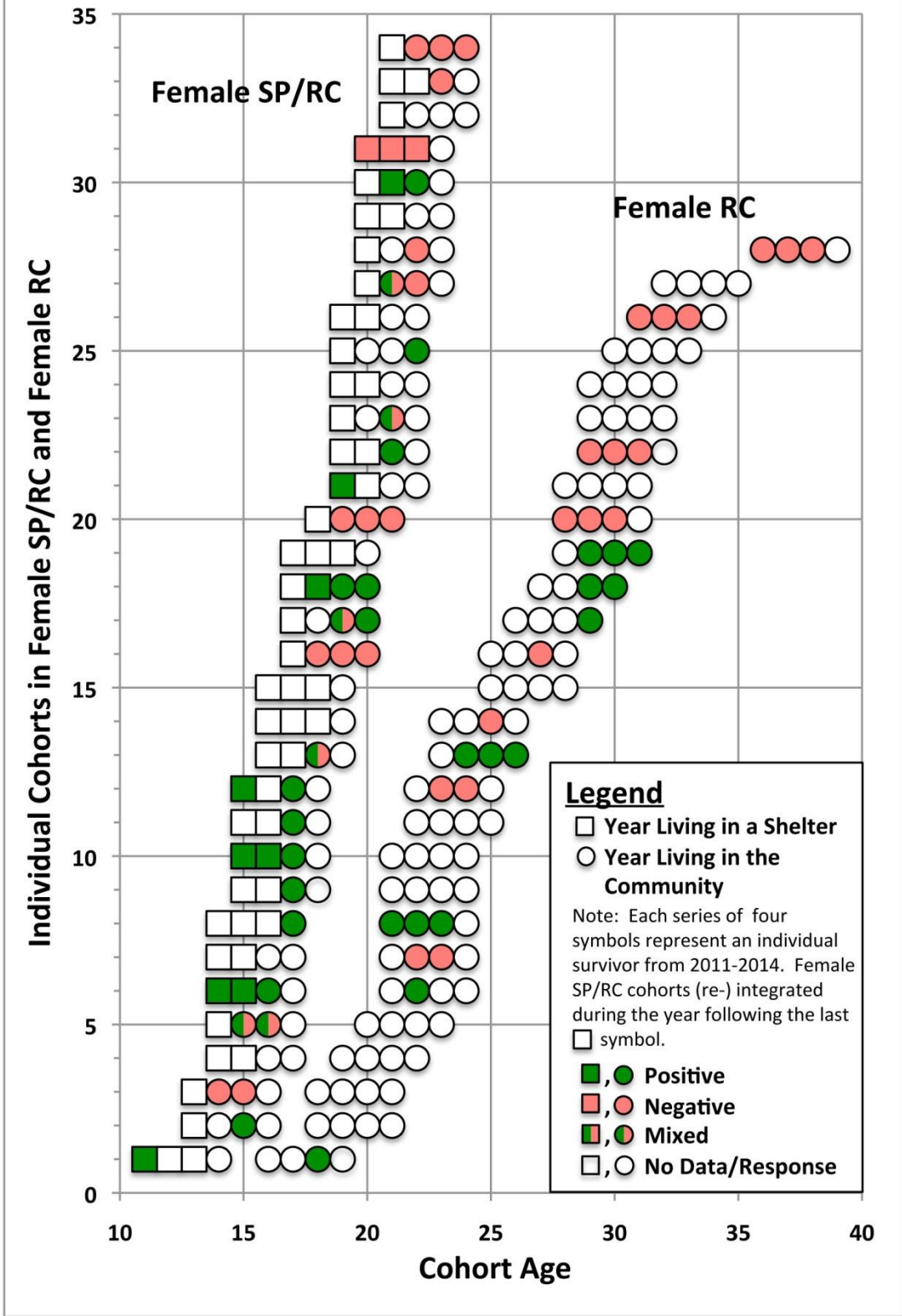
Relationships with mothers are the most important family relationship identified by younger participants living in shelter programs and the community. Positive relationships between mothers and young survivors may significantly influence resiliency in their lives, helping them, as they become young adults. Some individuals speak about this:

- ⇒ *Although my family is poor, we are living together without arguments. -Female Survivor, Age 19, 2013*
- ⇒ *Every time I have a problem my mother always comforts me. I trust my parents the most. -Female Survivor, Age 16, 2013*

Unfortunately, family problems and troubled relationships are all too common and often a consistent theme year to year with (re-) integrating participants (Figures 2 and 3). At home, female participants often describe conflicts with their family stemming from disagreements over relationships with boyfriends / partners and arranged marriages. In some instances, survivors place themselves at risk of family related violence because of their choices to continue personal and intimate relationships without their family's approval (either their own family or their boyfriend's family).



**Figure 3: Female Cohort Relationships With Family Members Other Than Spouses, 2011-2014**



### 3.1.2 Discrimination

Discrimination following (re-) integration is a serious concern exposed by almost half of the female survivors at least once during the assessment. Throughout the four years included in this assessment, participants describe a range of people involved in discriminating against them because of their past experiences, from husbands, long-term partners, and family members to peers and people in the wider society, such as teachers and neighbors. Neighbors, fellow students, and family in laws also discriminate and stigmatize some participants for being poor or coming from poor families. Participants in school specifically report discrimination and stereotyping of “shelter girls” from classmates (this occurred with participants in shelter programs and following (re-) integration). One female student describes her experience in school this way:

⇒ *Friends at school made me feel unhappy because they mocked me and say bad words about me. I felt they were discriminating against me because they know that I used to live in a shelter. They say that shelter children were sexually exploited and raped until they got pregnant without a husband. -Female Survivor, Age 13, 2012*

Interestingly male survivors did not express being discriminated against by family or the community. The majority of male participants describe positive experiences with neighbors and co-workers in the community after (re-) integration. Some describe conflicts with supervisors and fights with neighbors as well (Figure 4), but they do not attribute these conflicts to stigma or discrimination. This assessment is limited to a small sample size (15 individuals) and further study will be needed to determine the extent of discrimination against male survivors in the community.

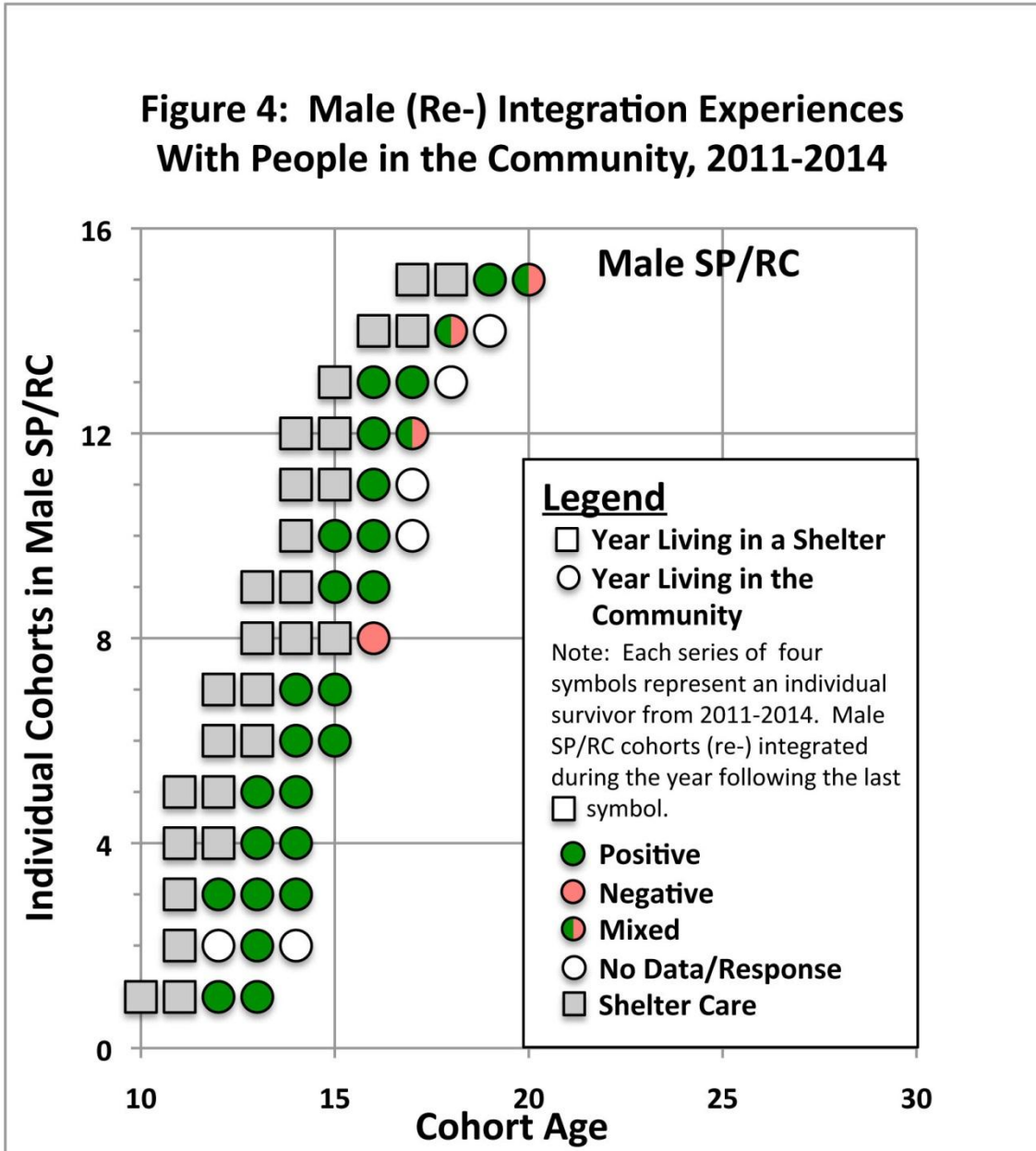
Female survivors express positive and negative experiences in the community with neighbors, friends, and co-workers (Figure 5). Following (re-) integration some survivors speak about the time it took for them to develop friends and supportive relationships in the community. Others describe kind landlords and support from the head of their commune. At the same time, a considerable number of participants indicate that they keep their past a secret from co-workers, neighbors, and even from husbands and family members. Older participants talk about conflict and discrimination in their community from neighbors and co-workers over multiple years. Moving locations and changing jobs does not always make the situation positive with some participants seemingly caught in cycles of conflict with their neighbors and co-workers wherever they went. An older survivor shares her experience with discrimination by co-workers in the community in this way:

⇒ *They begin to stop talking to me when they know my past. They misjudge me and no longer consider me a good person. They share my story with a new person who just came to work with us. -Female Survivor, Age 27, 2012*

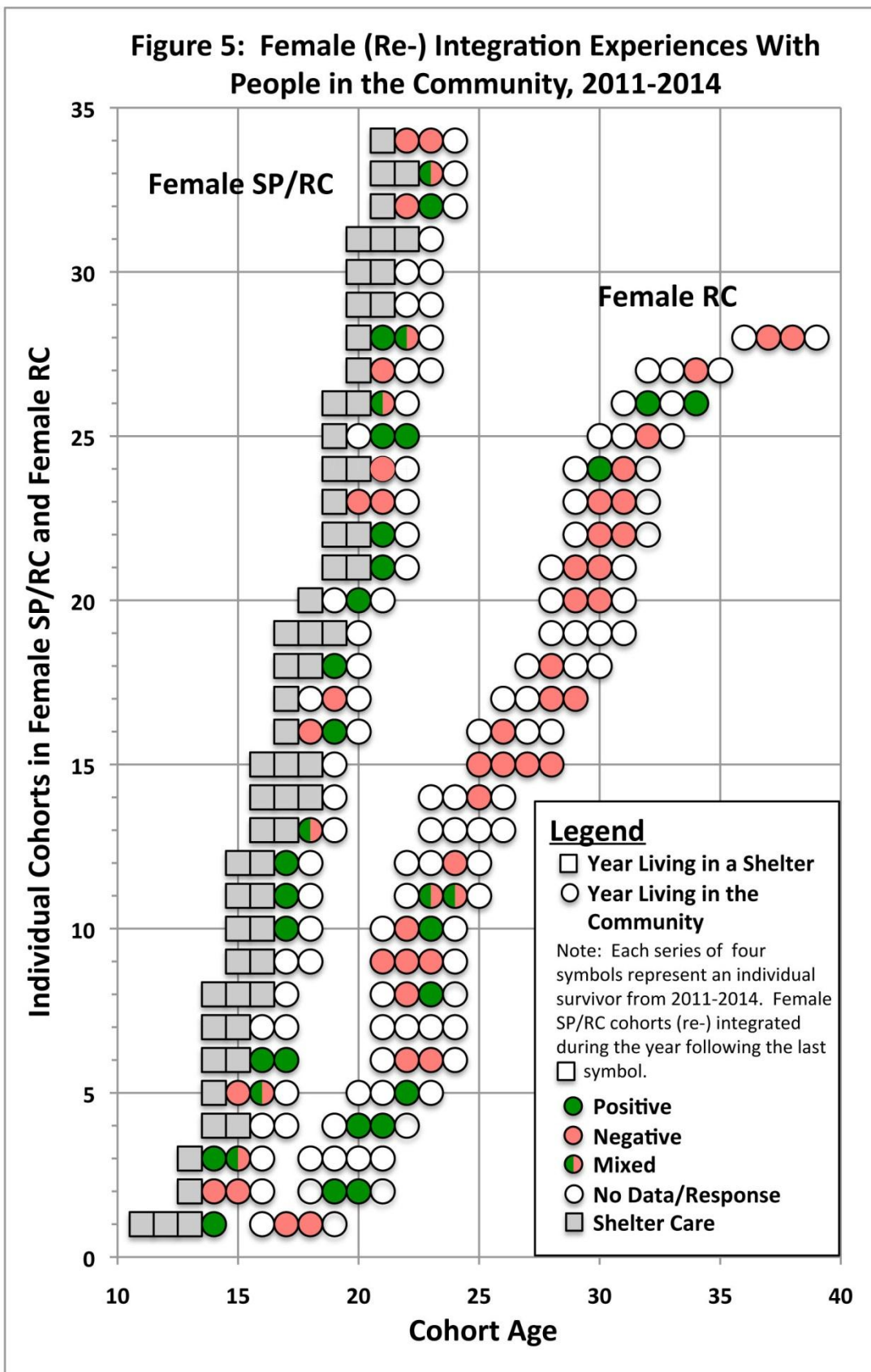
Numerous studies report on the importance of an accepting community environment for survivors (re-) integrating into society (Crawford and Kaufman 2008; Yntiso et al. 2009; Surtees 2012; Muco 2013). While many participants in this study describe being

discriminated against, others do not. At the same time, a considerable number of participants indicate that they keep the past a secret from co-workers, neighbors, and even from husbands and family members (particularly in the Female RC group). The degree to which neighbors and family members do or don't know a participant's past history and the corresponding levels of support and acceptance a participant received is beyond the scope of this assessment.

**Figure 4: Male (Re-) Integration Experiences With People in the Community, 2011-2014**



**Figure 5: Female (Re-) Integration Experiences With People in the Community, 2011-2014**





### 3.1.3 Push and Pull Factors<sup>1</sup>

In the assessment push and pull factors are assessed as they related to survivor decisions making and life experiences involving starting and stopping job training programs, starting and leaving various jobs, moving within Cambodia and migrating to other countries for perceived better employment opportunities, and forming and re-forming family units. Participants often talk about multiple decisions and in many cases multiple moves (in and/or location) during a given year. Survivors express thirteen common themes that act as push and pull factors in their lives. Participants talk most often about debt, insufficient earnings, and obligations to financially support family members. Participants in shelter programs rarely mention five themes that became important to many participants following (re-) integration (unemployment, family health, pregnancy, community stigma, and perceived better employment opportunity).

### 3.1.4 Employment Opportunities and Family Earnings

The pursuit of improved economic opportunities is both an important push factor and constant concern for survivors and their families. The assessment suggests most families of participants struggle to earn enough money to survive. (Figure 6) Several families have migrated to Thailand looking for work. Many male survivors worry about money and others speak about the feelings of loneliness and abandonment in having their mothers leave them to go and find work in Thailand (Figure 7). One survivor states:

⇒ *If you don't bring me to Thailand with you (mother), I will not eat and stop going to school. I will just ride my bike around and try and get into trouble. I want to live with my mother. -Male Survivor, Age 14, 2014*

There are several survivors that speak about improving financial situations. Most survivors that have sufficient earnings in their family, do so because more than one member of the family is contributing money. Many participants that indicate they are earning enough money to meet their family needs are employed by NGOs. Cleaning services in the hospitality industry and supervisors in the garment industry are two positions in private industry where survivors are working successfully and earning a sufficient income for their families. One participant describes her work in the garment industry in 2013 and 2014:

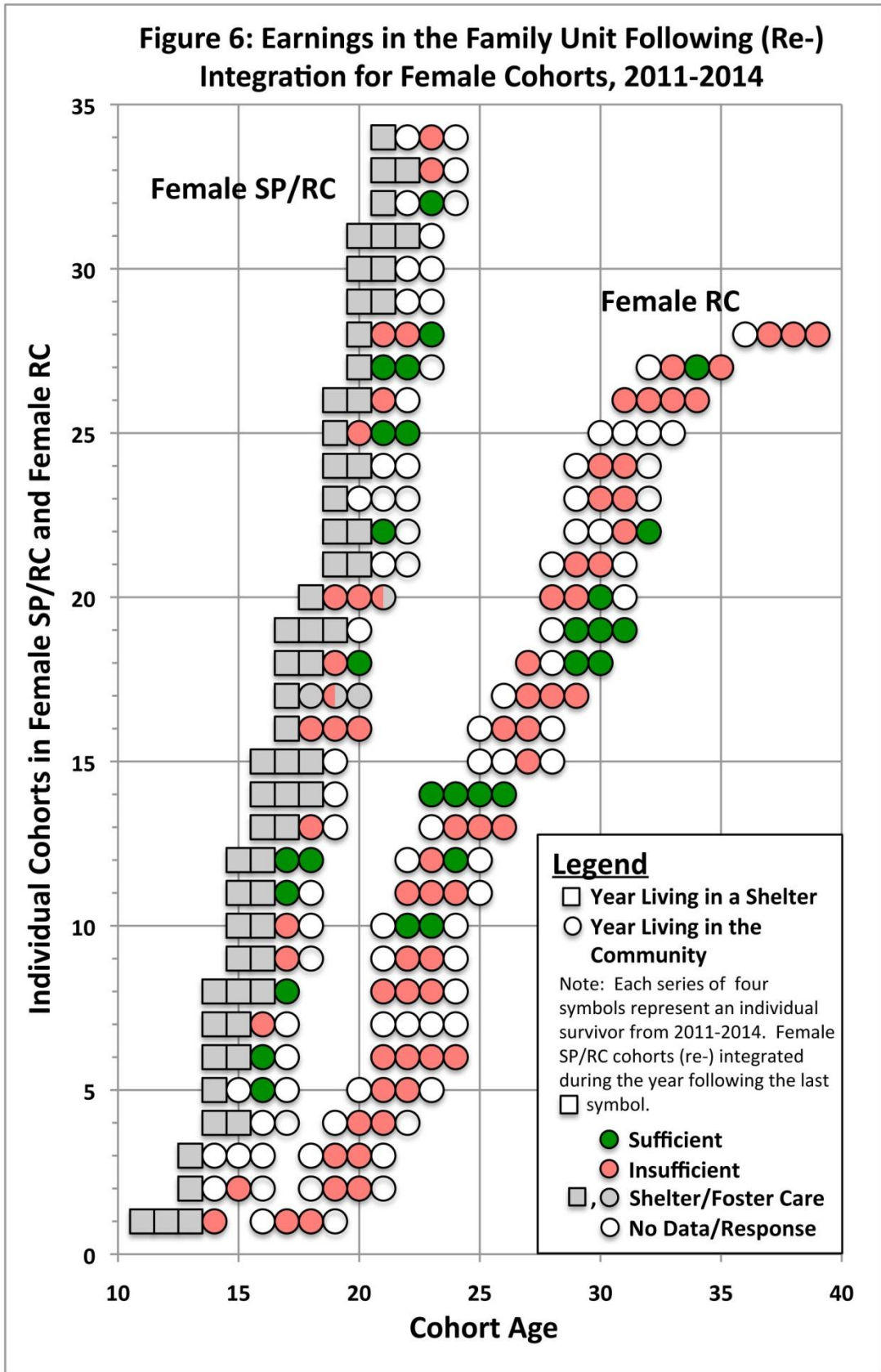
⇒ *I have been working in a garment factory for 6 months. My salary is \$130 per month and I think my salary is enough for my daily spending. -Female Survivor, Age 21, 2013*

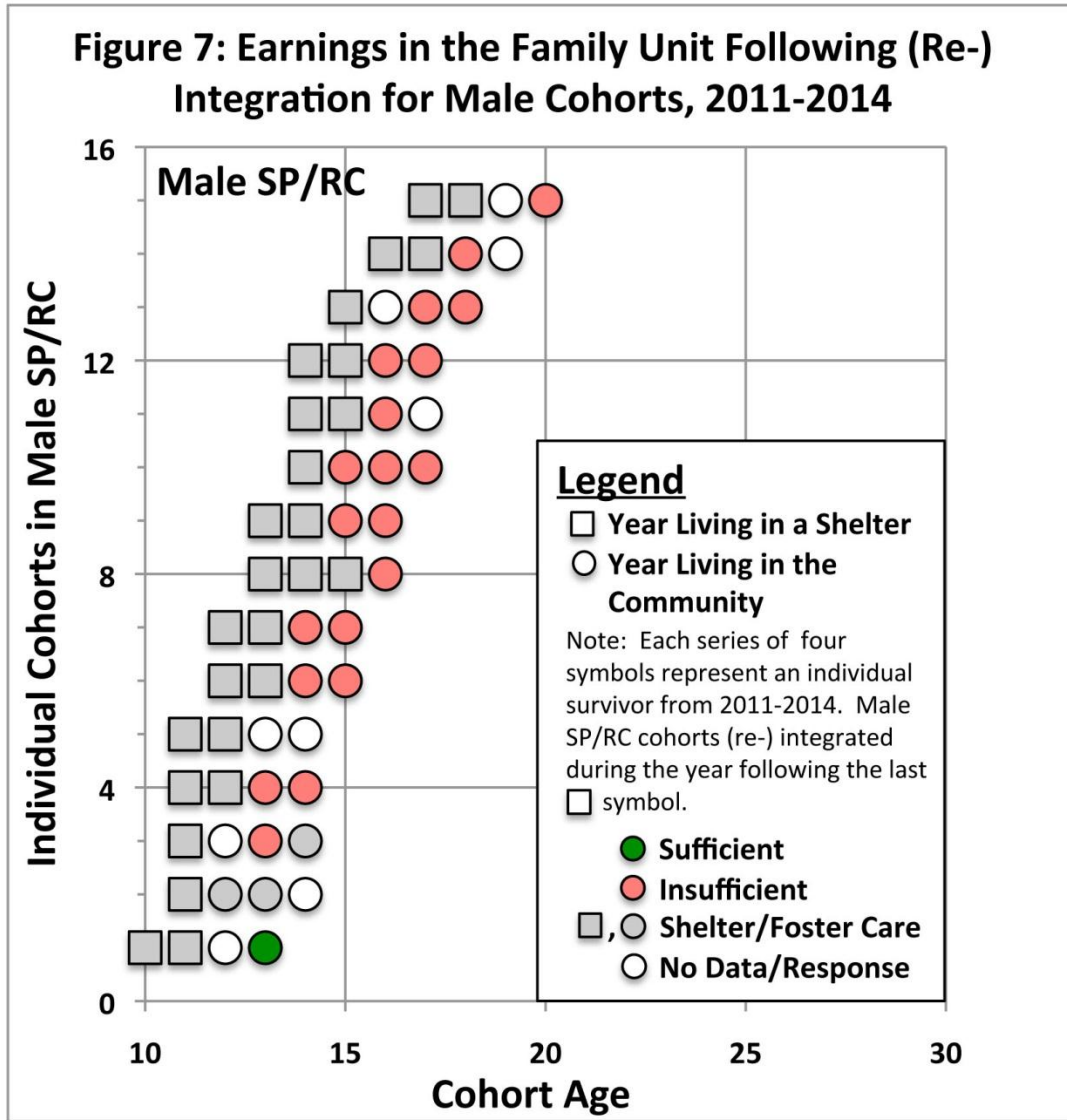
⇒ *At my workplace they promoted me to be a team leader. My salary has increased. -Female Survivor, Age 22, 2014*

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<sup>1</sup> Push and Pull factors are a set of common themes or things that act to drive people away from (push) residences and/or employment and draw people toward (pull) a new residence and/or place of employment (see Section 4.4 of the Thematic Paper for additional detail).

**Figure 6: Earnings in the Family Unit Following (Re-) Integration for Female Cohorts, 2011-2014**





A detailed assessment of the issues and challenges surrounding survivor debt, employment, and training/education is not part of the scope of this thematic paper. However, this study does reveal some of these challenges that survivors face as they (re-) integrate into the community. Employment opportunities and sufficient earnings are important factors within the family and a constant worry for many survivors and their families. Debt increases stress for most participants, particularly if they are the only family members earning money to support the family unit. Many participants in this study have exited job training programs to support their family. Instead of attending school, some underage survivors looked for jobs to contribute to the family earnings in a meaningful way. Most (re-) integration programs seek to address these concerns and issues through school assistance, job placement, micro businesses, social enterprises, and other follow-up services. Given the various NGO programs and the breadth of data involved in the Butterfly Project, further assessment of these data is recommended in order to specifically address the strengths, challenges and issues surrounding survivor debt, employment, and training/education.

### 3.1.5 Expressions of Well-Being

Both groups (in the shelter programs and (re-) integrated) express feeling satisfied and happy with various aspects of life. Participants express worry about life while in shelter programs and after (re-) integration in the community. Worries in the shelter include concerns over family members who are sick or hungry at home, concerns regarding (re-) integration and the anticipated difficulties they may face back home, concerns about studies / school, and concerns over court cases, particularly if they involve family members. Those that have already (re-) integrated tend to worry more about issues of sickness, debt, earning enough to survive, earning no money while in school/training, unemployment, and children. Many of the participants express that the life in the shelter programs is good for them, particularly the youngest group Female SP. Many note the love they receive from staff and shelter moms, as well as the stability and security the home provides (food, medical care, and a good place to live). After (re-) integration many survivors indicate that life is more difficult outside the shelter.

The assessment cross-references three select themes, insufficient earnings, negative family relationship only (with no positive family relationship identified), and community discrimination with survivors' expressions of happiness and satisfaction in the community. The analysis includes 77 individuals already (re-) integrated in the community ranging from one to four years. The results identify only two instances where participants express feelings of well-being along with insufficient earnings and four instances where participants identify feelings of well-being along with community discrimination. No participant describes feeling satisfied and happy when there is only a negative family relationship in his or her life. One survivor spoke of the difficulties she faces with an abusive husband and no other positive family relationships in her life for three years:

⇒ *I have never experienced happiness since I married my husband. He never takes care of me. He never gives me any money to support our family. I have to find food to eat by picking vegetables from around the house.... I want to separate from my husband and take my child with me but my husband and family in law have said I can go but I must leave our child with them. -Female Survivor, Age 20, 2014*

The results suggest these three themes play an important role in determining feelings of satisfaction and happiness among survivors in the community.

## 3.2 Longitudinal Assessment

The longitudinal assessment follows participants through several important milestones and transitions<sup>2</sup>. While the data in this assessment spans only the first four years, almost all the participants will reach young adulthood over the ten-year study time frame. There are other transitions happening as well. A total of 49 participants (re-) integrate into the community

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<sup>2</sup> Major life milestones include events such as getting married, graduating from school or job training, or having a child. Transitions include important life changes for a person such as reaching young adulthood and (re-) integration for survivors (see Section 4.1 of the Thematic Paper for additional detail).

from shelter programs and transition homes during the assessment time frame. Survivors' re-enter schools or start job training programs and left/graduate from schools and various NGO work and training programs to find employment in the community. Maturing, making decisions regarding life directions and relationships, and learning to live independently are all topics survivors discuss as they moved through transitions.

Marriage is an important societal milestone that most participants have not reached yet. There are many single participants in this study, perhaps as many as 90 individuals out of 109 in 2014. During initial interviews, almost all female survivors express the desire to be married to an honest and supportive husband and start a family. This transition, however, will be difficult for most survivors to navigate; they will have to confront cultural stigmas, meet family expectations, and merge differing generational viewpoints that often add to the complexity of the situation. The degree to which these survivors can foster supportive and encouraging relationships with spouses will likely determine for many whether this milestone becomes a major positive or negative turning point in their lives going forward.

### **3.2.1 Positive and Negative Turning Points**

Werner (1993) discusses the significance of "major turning points" that occur in the lives of young adults impacting resilience. The author discusses the role of education and active participation in church or a religious community in linking high-risk children / now young-adults with positive life changing opportunities such as high paying jobs and supportive relationships. Similarly, this assessment identifies several positive and negative turning points in the lives of (re-) integrated survivors.

Literature clearly demonstrates that encouraging and supportive relationships have perhaps the greatest potential to positively influence resilience among survivors (Nowak-Carter 2012; Noltemeyer and Bush 2013). When asked, almost all female survivors in this study express the desire to be married to an honest and supportive husband and start a family. However, many of the participants in this study are single, perhaps as many as 90 out of 109 individuals. Based on the full year assessment in 2013, 50% (14 individuals) of the Female RC group are married or in long-term partnerships. However, among the Female SP/RC group, only 15% (5 individuals) are married or with partners and no Male SP/RC participants are married or with partners. The degree to which these survivors can foster supportive and encouraging relationships with spouses will likely determine for many whether this milestone becomes a major positive or negative turning point in their lives.

As discussed previously, survivor relationships with long-term partners and spouses appear, for the most part, to be a negative turning point in survivors' lives. This conclusion is based primarily on the oldest assessment group. However, participants in this group did not stay in shelters and many were already young adults and adults. For almost all participants in the Female RC group, (re-) integration involved enrolling in NGO assistance training and work programs (many provide health care, counseling, and social working support). It remains to be seen if participants that have spent time in shelters programs have a greater ability to develop supportive and encouraging marriages over time. Most



survivors in these groups (Male and Female SP/RC) are younger and single or newly married. As the Butterfly Research Project is ongoing, more data will be needed to evaluate differences, if they exist, between these assessment groups.

The assessment identifies other positive and negative turning points in survivors' lives. Survivors discuss hope for the future including employment with sufficient earnings to support their families. Many of these jobs are with NGOs, but two survivors discuss jobs in private businesses as well. Six survivors also discuss re-enrolling in NGO job training programs that may, over time, link them to well-paying jobs in the community. Others discuss the positive role foster parents have played in creating opportunities in education and financial stability. Survivors also discuss the difficulties that pregnancy can bring, particularly if participants are not married and they know their family would not approve. Participants who became pregnant often report quitting stable supportive jobs, relocating to live with family, greater debt, and/or additional worries about the health of their new child. These positive and negative turning points are, for the most part, a direct result of survivors' decision making.

### **3.2.2 Decision Making in the Community**

Parental relationships, either positive or negative, are likely to impact decision making and relationship building for a substantial group of participants in this study as they grow into young adults. Studies show that parental practices, specifically responsiveness and supportive behaviors play an important role in a child's ability to develop secure attachment relationships, an important protective factor for a child's resilience throughout their lives (Noltmeyer and Bush 2013). In general, children that learn to develop secure attachment relationships have the ability, as young adults, to foster trusting and lasting relationships, high self-esteem, the ability to express and share feelings with partners, and the ability to seek out supportive friendships when needed.

Once survivors (re-) integrate, decision-making and the structures or parental figures that help guide these processes shift from shelters back to families and/or the individuals themselves. Some of the younger participants already (re-) integrated (Male and Female SP/RC) describe parental figures participating in this process by allowing them more or less personal freedoms. Generally among the SP/RC groups, more male participants struggle to make good decisions regarding drugs/alcohol while more female participants struggle with choices in relationships and domestic violence. Participants in the Female RC group describe making high-risk decisions regarding relationships with men (e.g. marrying a man they inadvertently called on the phone while drunk), to cope with difficult situations (e.g. alcohol use to cope with domestic violence), and to support themselves and their families (e.g. returning to sex work or migrating to find employment in Thailand).

The longitudinal assessment provides the opportunity to better understand push and pull factors at work in the lives of survivors. Study participants frequently identify thirteen push and pull factors related to decisions making for changing employment and/or residence. Participants talk most often about debt, insufficient earnings, and obligations to financially

support family members. This assessment shows that decision making among survivors is complex and not just related to financial earnings. Over the four years evaluated, (re-) integrated participants identify every one of thirteen factors, at one time or another, as the important decision making factor for changing employment and/or residence. Many times these factors converge together as survivors describe their decisions and the resulting life changes. In her own words, one survivor describes these factors at work in her life from 2013 to 2014:

**Female Survivor, Age 28.29**

**(2013)** - *I changed my job to work as house helper. I now get \$140 per month. But working here is not like the place I use to work. At my old place, I had good relationship with my friends who worked with me. However, working here, my co-workers are rude and make me feel unhappy.*

*They begin to stop talking to me when they know my past. They misjudge me and no longer consider me a good person. They share my story with a new person who just came to work with us.*

*My mother is very old now and no one looks after her. I have to send money home every month and sometime I have to help my nephew who is working in Thailand as well. I feel sad.*

*My family is in debt and I have to send money home to pay all the debt including the interest because my parents are old and cannot work.*

*My health is not good. I often get sick as well. My parents are sick.*

**(2014)** - *I have had some difficulty dealing with my boss.*

*I stopped working now because I have an argument with my boss and my health was not good as well. I have come to stay with my parents in the province while I am sick. I have spent all of my money on my medical treatment. Now I want to look for another job.*

**Push and Pull Factors - 2013**

Perceived better employment opportunity

Job related conflicts  
Feeling unhappy

Community stigma

Family obligation  
Feeling unhappy

Debt  
Family obligation

Personal health  
Family health

**Push and Pull Factors - 2014**

Job related conflicts

Personal health  
Unemployment  
Insufficient earnings

### 3.2.3 Expressions of Resilience

Survivor expressions of resilience in many ways demonstrate their ability to adapt in challenging life circumstances. Survivors express feelings of well-being and at other times demonstrate perseverance during challenges and adversity. Ten themes surrounding resilience are identified based on the expressions and responses of participants. These themes are generally similar to seven themes reported by Gray (2012). Survivor expressions of adaptability are identified the fewest number of times by participants in the assessment.

A common theme in resilience among study participants is the ability to work hard and even reflect a sense of struggle in hard work to accomplish a goal or fulfill a family obligation. Other studies of resilience in Cambodia identify hard work as an important part of resilience for survivors of the Khmer Rouge (Overland 2012). In some ways a willingness to work hard demonstrates a motivation needed to succeed, an important trait for survivors (re-) integrating into the community (Muco 2013). While in shelter programs, several participants indicated that their parents or shelter staff encouraged them to work hard and study. Many survivors describe their ability to work hard in a variety of situations including becoming the primary care giver after the death of a mother, working and struggling as a migrant laborer in another country (e.g. Thailand), working to fulfill family obligations, studying hard, and working hard to start a business. Even if other life situations are negative, often participants derived a sense of satisfaction based on their hard work and contribution to the family unit.

Many participants find it difficult to adapt and balance work and other important life obligations. Some participants who became pregnant report quitting stable supportive jobs indicating they could not identify a way to care for their baby and continue working. In order to handle financial stress, family obligations, and debt, some student participants describe quitting school in search of employment to help support the family. Most young participants are not able to balance school and find a job that contributed in a meaningful way to family earnings. Only two young participants talk about attending school and contributing to their families' income by selling lottery tickets. No participants found a way to work and attend training programs if these programs provide limited or no financial assistance.

No participant describes connecting to a church/religious community apart from NGO assistance. This part of the community, when present, is an important connection point for survivors and a potentially important factor in building resilience among children/teenagers and young adults (Werner 1993; Hawkins et al. 2009; Nowak-Carter 2012; Murco 2013). There are survivors that discuss being a part of church communities following (re-) integration but most describe this connection as their home as well, facilitated by an NGO follow-up program. Unfortunately this trend is not likely to change as increasing numbers of survivors complete the (re-) integration process and lose perhaps the most significant connection they had to support structures outside their local community (i.e. the NGO follow-up staff).

## 4.0 Findings and Recommendations

The Butterfly project is the result of a collaborative response by predominantly Chab Dai anti-trafficking agencies in Cambodia who have been working with victim/survivors of sexual exploitation for nearly two decades (Delaney and Scarff 2010; Derks et al. 2006). Over the years, these agencies and assistance programs have expressed their desire to learn about the strengths and weaknesses of their programs, particularly in terms of their clients' long-term (re-) integration experiences. The purpose of the thematic paper is to provide a broad understanding of resilience using the collective 'voices' of survivors of sexual exploitation and trafficking in Cambodia following (re-) integration. Throughout this study survivors have expressed resilience in many ways, demonstrating their hope for the future and at the same time their ability to persevere and adapt in often difficult life circumstances and adversity. By disseminating these 'voices' and research findings, Chab Dai believes (re-) integration programming and policy will be informed and advanced, providing hope for the future and improving the quality of life for survivors of sexual exploitation in Southeast Asia and around the world.

The following recommendations are based on the findings of this assessment.

- 1. Finding:** The degree to which survivors can foster supportive and encouraging relationships with spouses will likely determine for many whether this milestone becomes a major positive or negative turning point in their lives going forward.

**Recommendation:** Providing marriage and relationship training for survivors in residential programs, transition homes, and work assistance programs is the single most important recommendation this study has to offer. Marriage decisions are difficult and complex for survivors and most participants in this study are struggling with this decision. Training about aspects of relationship building and decision making is highly recommended.
- 2. Finding:** Positive parental relationships have a significant influence on resiliency in youth. Positive parental relationships with young survivors will also have a significant influence on resiliency in their lives, preparing them to become young adults.

**Recommendation:** Residential programs and even transition homes should consider developing a plan that facilitates close family relationships and at the same time builds resilience in survivors before they (re-) integrate. Fostering close healthy family relationships between at least one adult family member and survivors (when safe conditions are met) in residential programs can have a significant positive impact on a child's resilience in years to come.
- 3. Finding:** Once survivors (re-) integrate, decision-making and parental guidance shift from residential programs back to families and/or the individuals themselves.

**Recommendation:** NGOs should consider collaborating on a project to develop forward thinking curriculum that targets the teenage to young adult transition (ages 16-20). Resources are needed that increase survivor awareness and understanding

of the impact of various push and pull factors following (re-) integration (e.g. topics such as pregnancy or how to approach decisions regarding employment when there is perceived better employment opportunities in another location, etc.).

4. **Finding:** In many instances NGO programs are helpful in connecting survivors with religious institutions and even other NGOs in the local community. Based on the assessment most survivors themselves are not knowledgeable enough or skilled enough to develop their own networks. No participant describes connecting to a church/religious community apart from NGO assistance. Unfortunately this trend in our assessment is not likely to change as increasing numbers of survivors complete the (re-) integration process (and exit NGO programs).

**Recommendation:** Educating and raising up leaders and networks within church/religious communities to provide a greater role in supporting and reaching out to survivors will provide survivors more opportunities to connect into healthy and supportive communities. Fostering survivors' abilities to better identify community support structures, such as religious institutions and other NGOs, will provide them with greater independence and mastery in their community.

5. **Finding:** The assessment suggests most families of participants struggle to earn enough money to survive. Many participants that indicate they are earning enough money to meet their family needs are employed by NGOs. Cleaning services in the hospitality industry and supervisors in the garment industry are two positions in private industry where survivors are working successfully and earning a sufficient income for their families.

**Recommendation:** (Re-) integration programs and survivors would benefit from increased partnerships with mainstream businesses that are willing to employ survivors of human trafficking and/or their family members. The development of partnerships should carefully consider the education and training needs for participants and businesses as well as the level of discretion needed to avoid stigma and stereotyping of newly hired participants by co-workers.

6. **Finding:** Hard work / perseverance is a teachable resilience factor. It is important in the lives of survivors as they (re-) integrate into challenging situations and environments. Moreover, several participants suggest the level of hard work expected from them once they (re-) integrated is more difficult when compared to the level of work they are expected to do while living in the shelter program.

**Recommendation:** Teaching survivors in residential programs the value of hard work and perseverance will provide survivors with an important skill set to use as they face difficult and challenging experiences later on in the community.

7. **Finding:** The majority of married participants in this study are struggling in their relationships with spouses. Programs that reach out to men in these marriages need to be carefully considered and developed to compliment outreach and training for women.



**Recommendation:** Outreach programs are needed that work with boyfriends and husbands of survivors (discretely if necessary, depending on how much information survivors want shared). Mentoring and teaching resources are needed that empower men to participate in building supportive and encouraging relationships with their spouses. These types of programs should be carefully considered and developed to compliment outreach and training for women.

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