Employment Contract Survey Results
My contract was written in Thai, not Khmer. I was pressured to sign quickly with my fingerprint. When I signed, I didn’t understand the contract, and no one gave me a copy.
"On the boat before this one, I knew about my contract. But when I moved to this boat, no one explained the contract, and they forced me to sign to get my documents to change employers."

"I want to get paid the salary stated in my contract."

"It’s better if our employment contract is in our language."

"My salary is lower than what my contract says. I want to be paid the right amount."

"With my previous boat owner, I signed the employment contract. So, I know what it is. But with this current boat owner, I have never been asked to sign anything."

"I wanted someone to explain the full contract to me so I could understand before I signed, but no one would. They just made me sign."

"I just want to keep a copy of my contract written in my mother tongue."

"I want to hold my documents and a copy of my contract."
Impact on Working Conditions

1. **PAYMENT**
   - not as stated in contract, paid lower amount

2. **PERCENTAGE OF CATCH**
   - not as stated in contract, lack of clear guidelines or measures to verify

3. **MONTHLY E-PAYMENT**
   - not followed as stated in contract, fishers not paid monthly, account controlled

4. **FIRST AID KITS**
   - Limited to no access, poorly stocked, no training on medicine use

5. **WORKING HOURS**
   - not followed as stated in contract, dangerous conditions onboard

6. **CLEAN DRINKING WATER**
   - not provided
SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Responses were recorded digitally through an online form with an average survey length of 5-10 minutes.

Assumption: Many migrant fishers sign employment contracts without understanding all terms, do not possess a copy, and are vulnerable to exploitation by brokers, captains and vessel owners.

Surveys were conducted in-person by FRN Organizers in a safe and comfortable environment, free from management oversight.

Survey conducted in native language.

500+ Fishers

150+ Boats

Working Experience

- 0 – 5 Yr | 48%
- 5 – 10 Yr | 38%
- > 10 Yr | 14%

Survey conducted in Mid March to Mid June 2021.

Many migrant fishers sign employment contracts without understanding all terms, do not possess a copy, and are vulnerable to exploitation by brokers, captains and vessel owners.
1. How long have you been a fisher?
2. Please provide boat name or boat information/What is your boat name?
3. Do you know anything about your employment contract?
4. Do you remember signing a contract to become a fisher?
5. Did someone translate and/or explain the terms in your own language before you signed?
6. Do you fully understand the terms of your contract?
7. Do you have a copy of your employment contract in your possession?
8. Are your working conditions the same as the terms agreed upon in your contract?
9. Should fishers have the right to a written employment contract and understand the terms and conditions of their contract before signing and starting work?
10. Should fishers have the right to possess a copy of their employment contract, translated into their own language?
Employment Contract Recognition?

- Recognized Right Away: 10%
- Required Education: 90%

Recall Signing Contract

- Recalled: 68%
- Did not Recall: 32%

Someone Translated/Explained Contract

- Yes: 16%
- No: 84%

If Translated, by Who?

- Employer: 19%
- Translator: 44%
- Foreman: 24%
- Manager: 6%
- Other: 7%

Posses Copy of Contract?

- Yes: 13%
- No: 87%
How Much Do Fishers Understand Contract Terms?

- 96% Understood Completely
- 52% Understood Partially
- 44% Not Understand At All
- 3% Understood Completely
- 1% No Response

Working Conditions Same as Contract Terms?

- 99%
- 64% Do not know
- 33% No
- 3% Yes

All fishers want to understand the terms and conditions of their contract before signing, and want to possess a copy in their own language.
96% of fishers do not completely understand their contract

89% have not had their contract translated or explained in a language they can understand

33% of fishers who understood their contract stated that working conditions were not in accordance with contract terms

All fishers (99%) interviewed said they wanted to fully understand the terms and conditions of their contract before signing, and wanted a copy in their own language
Soh Kun
I need to understand my contract and its conditions properly so I’m not exploited, and I want to hold my working contract in Khmer, so that if I have a problem in the future, I can report it myself.

Kyaw Kyaw
Our working contract is in Thai which is hard for us to understand. I would like all documents to be in Burmese, and I want other fishers to have their contract in their own languages too.

La
I have been working as a fisher for 6 years, and I still don’t have a copy of my contract in my language. I want it so I can make sure I’m not being cheated.

Tra
I would like to understand my contract properly, so my rights are not violated, and I want a copy of my contract in Khmer. If there is any issue in the future, then we can negotiate as a group.

Aung San
I have been fishing for 9-10 years, but I knew nothing about my contract until now. I would like to hold my own contract, and I want the working conditions to be the same as what it says.

Aung Thein Htike
An employer and employee should agree on the contract together, but if the contract is only in Thai that can be bad for fishers.

Heng
My fisher brothers and I need our contracts in Khmer and Burmese.
We call on the RTG to effectively enforce C188 and ensure that all fishers have a copy of their contract in their own language.

All PIPO centers should allow fishers to review and verify the contract presented by the employer at inspection, and report violations in a safe and protected space.

Fishers demand that Thai authorities enforce employment contract provisions and protect migrant fisher rights.
THANK YOU