EXPANDED INCOME RESTORATION PROGRAM

The Expanded Income Restoration Program provides vocational training to help people whose livelihoods were impacted by the railway rehabilitation project. This support is provided in the form of vocational training, project-related employment, and subsistence allowances.

In addition, the Community Development Fund (CDF) offers loans to support livelihood activities and small businesses. For example, once people have been trained in animal rearing, they can ask for a loan to buy piglets to start pig farming.

The Social Safety Net Fund (SSNF), meanwhile, offers grants to support vulnerable households in cases of crisis or emergency, such as the financial impact of a serious illness or accident.

Self Help Groups (SHGs) established at each of the resettlement sites help manage these funds and programs. The SHGs are an innovative mechanism to support communities in organizing themselves, creating a platform in which people can discuss and solve issues and come to consensus on decisions which benefit the community.

Self Help Groups are free to formulate their own bylaws, regulating the implementation of the available support programs. This includes self-regulation on the conditions for repayment of loans provided through the CDF. They receive technical support from ADB and two field agencies, SBK and Envisioning.

So far 14 SHGs have established, with at least one at each relocation site. The 14 SHGs cover 455 households. Each SHG is provided with starting capital, depending on the number of group members.

As of 31 September 2013, 339 households have received CDF Funds ($164,660) and 171 have received SSNF funds ($10,941). In addition, 62 AHs accessed SSNF funds for household health insurance in Phnom Penh.

The EIRP is funded by a $960,000 grant from the Australian Aid Program and $40,000 from the Government of Cambodia.

In July 2011, Mom Cheang, 48, borrowed funds from the Income Restoration Program to establish a mushroom growing farm at the project relocation site in Pursat. Meanwhile the money has been paid back, and his family business is thriving. “I feel like a thorn has been drawn from our chest,” said Mom Cheang.