



Sovann Phoum Organization

Vocational Training Program Vocational Training Program



Supported by

Spanish Agency for International Cooperation

and Donors through



I. A Glance at the Program

1. Background of the Program

Vocational Training Program is one of the key components of SP's socio-economic program, which has been implemented since 2003, to help disadvantaged youths from poor families living in urban & sub-urban slum areas, to get vocational skills, adapted to current labour markets, job opportunities, and income for their families.

From March 2004 to February 2008, the project was supported by the EU and CCFD (Comité Catholique contre la Faim et pour le Développement). From March to May 2008, it was supported by Enfants & Développement (E&D), while awaiting financial supports from other donors. Since June 2008, it has been supported by Spanish Cooperation, Voix de l'Enfant, Direct Aid Program (12 months), and other small donors through E&D.

2. Target Group

The program supports disadvantaged and poor youths, including young adults (60% female) from target areas who demonstrate high motivation and commitment for skill training, jobs, and income generating opportunities. Some of the key selection criteria for candidates include:

- Aged between 16 and 30 years old;

- Those who are from extremely poor, very poor, and poor families, living in disadvantaged areas, including slum areas, squatter's areas, dumping areas, and re-settled areas of sub-urban and urban areas of Phnom Penh. Some of them have migrated from rural poverty-stricken areas;

- HIV/AIDS carriers and HIV/AIDS infected members;

- Sexually-abused victims and trafficked girls;

- Those who have the lowest level of education, and some of them cannot read and write, because of extreme poverty and of no support from others;

- Those who are unskilled, unemployed, having no opportunity for jobs, but demonstrating high motivation and commitment for skill learning and working.

3. Skill Training Approach

Sovann Phoum has implemented vocational training activities through individual placement of selected youths in private workshops or enterprises (individual and enterprise-based skill training). This approach is very flexible, and it enables trainees to learn, practise and develop skills directly at workplaces with employers and customers. It is fully adapted to the capacity and skills of the young beneficiaries (according to their physical, social, and educational background) and to the local labour market in the informal economy. This approach provides the best quality of skills trained, high percentage of job opportunities – either employed by employers or self-employed.

4. Main Activities

In addition to the need assessments in target areas and labour market search, the following activities are carried out throughout the program:

- Identification and referral;

- Assessment and recruitment;

- Sending trainees to training;

- Additional support;

- Follow-up activities;

- Counselling;

- Job placement;

- Networking;

a) Identification and Referral:

Normally, Sovann Phoum works in close partnership with both international and local NGOs, such as Enfants & Développement, Krousar Yoeung, Samatapheap Knhom, PSF, and some others in its intervention areas. Many of our trainees were identified/referred by our partners. This strategy—on the one hand—reduces the time spent on and cost of trainee recruitment and selection—and on the other hand—brings the really disadvantaged and motivated youths.

b) Assessment and Recruitment

Sovann Phoum has its own strict assessment and recruitment procedures which include such criteria as the candidate's background (including living conditions), education, skills and employment interests, and motivation. Information from local authorities and the applicant's neighbors is the critical input into the assessment.

c) Sending Trainees and Types of Training

The successful candidates, aged between 16 and 30, are sent to different training centers/workshops: private businesses and NGO workshops, depending on available courses, labor markets needed, and the trainee's preference. However, a contract needs to be signed between the trainer, the trainee, and Sovann Phoum, in which the trainee is required to contribute 10% of the training fee. There are a number of strict conditions placed on the trainee in the contract. This strategy is to raise the level of beneficiary's ownership and responsibilities for skills provided.

d) Additional Support:

Soft Skills training

All trainees come to Sovann Phoum's office two times per month to receive additional soft skill training, in such areas as health education, drug abuse, Cambodian ethical codes, workplace behaviours, and Cambodian work laws, etc...

Materials Support

Generally, trainees receive small monthly bursaries and lunch fee from Sovann Phoum, since they are from extremely poor families. Some of them receive training supplies during the training, while some receive a small capital to start up income generating activities after the training, depending upon their individual status and qualifications. The program also provides bicycles to those who live faraway from training centers and do not have access to means of transport. But it is compulsory for them to reimburse this special fund to the program.

e) Follow-up Activities

Follow-up activities are carried out both during and one year after the training. During the training, each trainee receives a weekly visit from the program team, aimed to investigate his/her learning ability, learning participation, skills gained, behaviors, and personal matters. Trainees in the same workshop also have a joint discussion on weekly basis in order to share their learning experiences. Each trainer is deeply interviewed in a separate place to find out accurate information and concrete results during the training. During this stage, information about the training and the trainee is flowed and exchanged between the trainee, the trainee's parents, the trainer, the future workplace, and Sovann Phoum.

f) Counselling

All trainees in training received counselling from the program staff, especially when they needed, or they had personal problems, or crisis in their families or others, all of which directly or indirectly affect their study as well as their mental and physical health. The counselling was provided to trainees in two types of individual and groups.

After the training, individual trainee is regularly followed up, first on monthly and then on quarterly basis until one year, to make sure that he/she has accessed the job market and got a full-time job, in line with the skill trained.

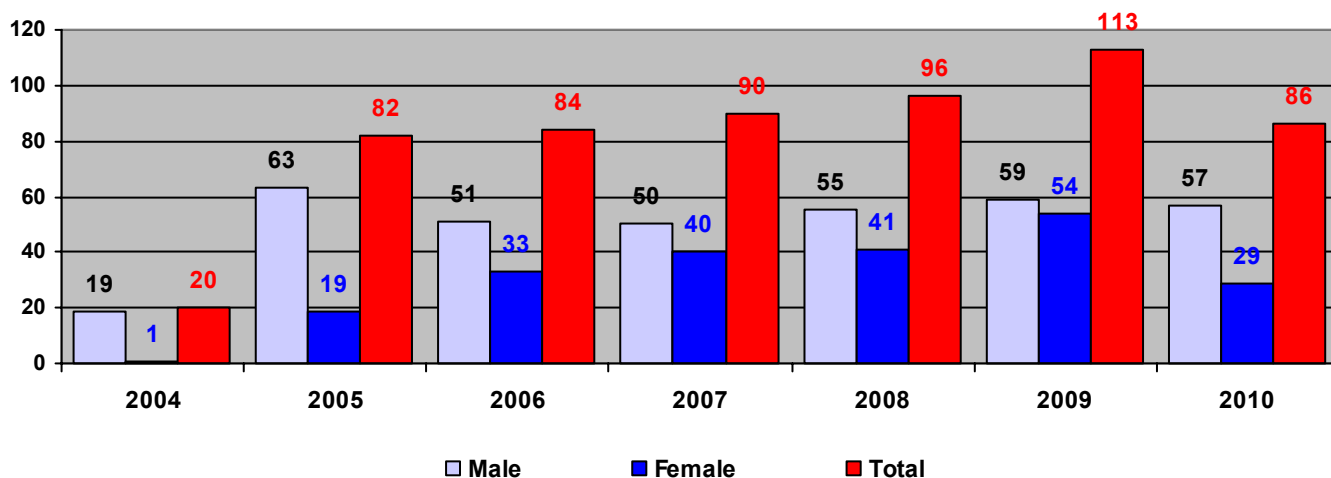
g) Job Placement

Immediately after the training, each trainee is placed in a full-time job, from which he/she can earn from USD40 to 200, depending on the skills and workplaces. Many of them were employed by the trainers/workshops, and 10% of them were running their own businesses, using the skills trained. Sovann Phoum has built closer relationships with increasing private sector.

II. Brief Results from the Program Implementation

1. Number of beneficiaries (youths supported)

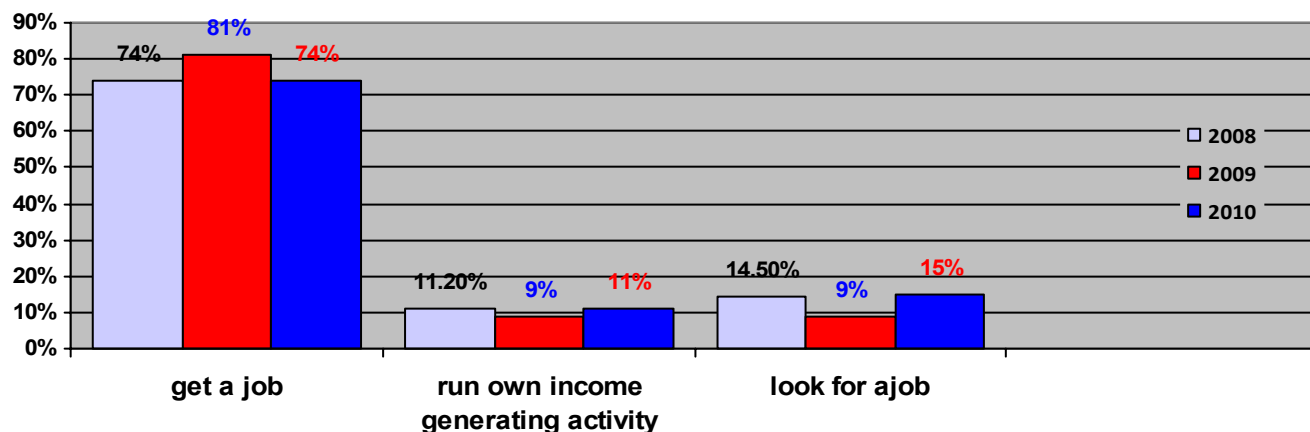
Chart 1: Figures of youths supported by the program in each year



The number of female youths supported was smaller compared to that of males, because some skills are not accessible by women in Cambodian context, such as electronic repairing, air-con repairing, motorcycle/car repairing, painting, sculpture, cooking, glass work, and soldering.

2. Jobs placement

Chart 2: Figures of trainees who got a job immediately after training completion



3. Income earned by supported youths

a. Employed youth:

- Minimum salary: USD 30 per month (this is net income, excluding food, accommodation, and transport)
- Average salary: USD 50 per month
- Maximum salary: USD 80 per month

Trainees get a low- or high-salary job after their training, depending upon their qualifications. These are also associated with good interpersonal skills, motivation, and honesty.

b. Self-employed

- Minimum income: USD 70 per month (net income but re-invested in the IGAs for progress)
- Average income: USD 120 per month (represents the majority)
- Maximum income: USD 200 per month (represents a small number)

4. Trainee Alumni Association

Those who have completed skill training are linked together with regular meetings and events through a Trainee Alumni Association established in early 2010. The Alumni, which has total members of 400, was formed with the aims to:

- Exchange lessons learned between trainees in previous and current generations about skills and jobs;
- Provide support to youths in younger generation through skills training and job opportunities by Alumni members who have run their own income generating activities, or enterprises.

5. Number of training places

In mid-November 2010, the program has a total of 86 trainees being trained in workshops/enterprises across Phnom Penh. In total, the program is working in close collaboration with 34 training places, where the vast majority of them is private workshops/shops/enterprises, since there is only one training centre which is run by an NGO partner. Those 34 shops/workshops are listed as follows:

Tailoring	: 10 workshops
Hairdressing	: 5 workshops
Haircut	: 2 workshops and 1 NGO partner
Motor repairing	: 5 workshops
Car repairing	: 4 workshops
Hand phone repairing	: 4 workshops
Cooking	: 1 workshops
VT repairing	: 1 workshop
Drawing	: 1 workshop

III. Findings from External Evaluation in 2009

With financial support from CCFD, an evaluation was undertaken by external evaluators in mid 2009. The external evaluation presented considerable satisfactory results of the program, “thanks to its:

- Strong economic impact through employment opportunity generation;
- Good relevance, effectiveness and efficiency”.

In addition, the program “succeeds to fit the needs of people, especially young targeted people in a context of economic recession in which employment is a way to reduce social precariousness, i.e. health issue, family solidarity”. Essentially, “impacts are fairly produced in terms of job placement, even though stable and durable employment is a real challenge due to rapid mutation of the labour market”¹. However, the external evaluation gave some recommendations in order to best improve the quality and performance of the program, as follows:

- The program should follow-up the post-training as long as possible in a context of economic recession;
- The program should do analytical assessment on impact at the household level;
- The program should build strongly transversal linkage between existing programs leading to maximization of resources;

Followings are pictures of each training skill:



Hairdressing



Tailoring (man)



Tailoring (woman)

¹ Leang Pichara (2009). Final report on external evaluation on VT program, Sovann Phoum.



Cooking



TV Repairing



Motor Repairing



Hair Cut



Sculpture



Air Conditioning



Air Conditioning



Glass work



Hand Phone Repairing



Drawing



Soldering



Sewing for garment factory



Sewing machine repairing

IV- Annex: Situational analysis and related statistics

1. General situation about youths

Cambodia, 35% of its population lives below the poverty line², and the illiteracy rate (adults aged 15 years old and above) reaches 23.7%³. Youths aged 18-24 accounts for 15.03%⁴ of the total population, and represents 32% of the total workforce. 80.19% of the children aged 6-14 years attend schools/educational institution (50.1% female), while only 51.83% (46% female)⁵ of the 15-19 year old are enrolled. The education attainment of the youth population is low for both male and female, with less than 5% completing secondary education⁶.

Young people working in low-paid sectors of Cambodian industry were finding it hard to find a new job after losing their jobs of the global financial crisis. Cambodia unemployment rate may be higher than what they have expected to reach 13.1% by the end of the year 2010⁷.

50% of garment factories workers lost their job in 2008 and 2009. Some of them are taking risk working in entertainment places (Karaoke parlours, night clubs and massage shops)⁸ because they do not have a particular skill. Others went back home, helping their families grow rice crop during rainy season and do some paid casual work for other farmers in their own and nearby areas. The government has targeted these workers, giving some of them a chance to attend skill training at its provincial training centres, through the Prime Minister's scholarships. However, that program could support a small number of them.

Youth migration to other countries and different areas of Cambodia for job opportunities has increasingly become a problem across Cambodia, as many of them were exploited. Approximately "200,000 to 300,000 youths go abroad to look for jobs" every year⁹, because of the lack of proper training and job opportunities in Cambodia. This migration resulted from the lack of access to education, skill training, and capital to start income generating activities, and the lack of local investment/economic activities.

2- Impacts of the financial Crisis in Cambodia

Labour Market

Although the crisis has affected the key sectors, the reaction at the labour market level differs. Workers in manufacturing (textiles and clothing, construction) have been hit hard, while those in service business (hotel and restaurants, real estate...) remain fairly stable.

Changes in employment due to the crisis:

Sector	2008	2009
Textile and clothing	27,000 jobs lost	19,000 jobs lost
Construction	36,500 jobs lost	25,600 jobs lost
Tourism	16,614, jobs absorbed	12,698 jobs absorbed
Agriculture	650,000 jobs absorbed	203,200 jobs absorbed

Source : Projected by CIDS based on government statistics.

Laid-off workers

a) What kinds of jobs would retrenched workers accept?

Job that accept workers in group rather than on an individual-basis, (Specific for females)

Job with lower wages but flexible working conditions, rather than a high paid job with strict working condition, (Specific for females)

Accept lower wages than return to village

Willing to try non-paying apprenticeship

² Index Mundi (2010). Population living below the poverty line.

³ UNDP (2009). Human development report 2009.

⁴ World Food Program (2009). Population by age group (Cambodia).

⁵ National Institute of Statistics (2009). General population census of Cambodia 2008.

⁶ National Institute of Statistics (2006). Statistical year book, Cambodia

⁷ Tun Sophorn (ILO:2010). Youth employment failing (Phnom Penh, Cambodia).

⁸ Radio Free Asia (2009). Female garment workers and risks during job loss in the city.

⁹ Yim Sovann (SRP: 2010). Youth employment failing (Phnom Penh, Cambodia).

b) Challenges in job seeking

- Little skills and knowledge on other sectors
- Low social capital
- No foreign language skills
- Limited money to finance job seeking: Female, enough for 1 month; Male for 1 week
- Little asset to finance job or new skills training

c) If unable to find job

- Return to hometown to help with subsistence economy
- Those with no land or opportunities in village may resort to work in informal economy, trafficking and prostitution.

Source : Rapid assessment of the impact of the financial crisis in Cambodia (ILO 2009)

V- Conclusion

In conclusion, Sovann Phoum, thanks to financial support from its donors, has made great and increasing contributions to the extreme poverty alleviation of Cambodians in its target areas through one of its three main programs: Vocational Training program, which supports disadvantaged youths in both soft and hard skill training, job placement, and income generating activities. The number of underprivileged youths supported increases from year to year. The skills provided were perfectly adaptable to the conditions of individual youths and to the current labour markets' needs. In the view of practical and adaptable skills provided, job offered, and income received, both youths and their parents have greatly appreciated the inputs and values brought by the program.

In a broader context, the lack of access to higher education, vocational training and job opportunity remains a big challenge to many other disadvantaged Cambodian youths in provinces, as the above-mentioned services and support have not yet been sufficiently provided to the increasing number of poor, out-of-school, unskilled, and unemployed youths across the country. Addressing this issue is considered as one of the priorities, set in the objectives of Sovann Phoum's Vocational Training Program, 2011 – 2014.

Prioritizing this issue is entirely consistent with and directly responding to the Cambodian National Strategic Plan and policies. The Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT) strategically focuses on four main areas: (1) job creation; (2) improved working conditions; (3) implementation of social safety nets in conjunction with the labour law; and (4) human resource development (MoLVT2008a).