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**CAF** Charities Aid  
Foundation

## Village Savings and Loans Group Changes their Lives

In Thouk Village, Rompea Commune, Borsedth District of Kompong Speu Province many of the villagers were struggling to support themselves and their families through rice farming in the wet season and working as laborers in the dry season. Often times there weren't not enough labor jobs available in the local area, so a number of community members needed to migrate closer to Phnom Penh in order to find work. The migration and low income meant that the families' children were unable to attend school on a regular basis.



Some of the members of the VSLG group and their children. Mr Ek Oul (seated), Mrs Sun Thida (back), Mrs Nouch Now (3<sup>rd</sup> from the left) and Mrs Chhun Nary (2<sup>nd</sup> from the left).

In November 2005, a group of 27 people (10 males and 17 females) from the village formed a Village and Savings Group (VSLG) with the support of the FLD's Sustainable Livelihood Development Project which was financed by Canadian International Development Agency. Through the VSLG the members have been able to save 23 million Riel (approx. USD5,750) as of March 2015.

In 2010, the group's income generation and ability to save was further improved when members received training from the Young Women Entrepreneur Development project, supported by Charities Aid Foundation, Australia. Group members received training in chicken, pig and fish rearing, vegetable growing, sewing, food processing, and literacy skills. Of these skills the group is still generating income successfully through chicken and pig rearing, sewing and food processing, particularly of banana chips.

Of the savings that the VSLG has generated, 22 million Riel (approx. USD5,500) has been loaned out to members to use for business improvement. The loans are typically used to purchase chickens, pigs or fish which help to increase their income. All the VSLG members have been able to pay back their loans with interest, allowing for increased savings.

The members of the VSLG plan to continue saving money and using their skills to generate a reliable income. Further to this the group has been accepting a number of the members' children and grandchildren as new members. This is allowing skills learned from training sessions and previous experiences to be passed on to the next generations of villagers.