



Myanmar

Self-Reliance Groups

Self-Reliance Groups



About Self-Reliance Groups

With the assistance of UNDP, Self-Reliance Groups (SRGs) began forming in 2004 in some of the poorest villages in the Ayeyarwady Delta, the Dry Zone, and Shan State. The groups consist of 10-15 women from the poorest households in the village. UNDP assistance nurtures the groups to build consensus and promote equal representation. All members participate in group decision-making, and are trained to manage their own savings and to carry out income-generating activities.

Once group members are able to establish small revolving loans from a common fund, the UNDP project provides modest grants to the group in response to micro-project proposals by members. These grants are used for livelihoods, health and education activities and the proceeds are repaid into the common fund, with interest. The repayment period and interest rates are determined collectively by the group members, who balance the need to expand the fund with the ability of individual members to repay the loan.

SRGs in the Cyclone-hit delta

As of 30 September 2009, newly formed 1,292 groups are functioning in the worst hit areas of the delta, with over 19,239 members and common funds, totalling US\$ 1.57 million. This amount included the personal savings of members, their loan repayments to the common funds as well as interest paid on those loans, in addition to the original UNDP inputs.

The cyclone took the lives of 859 members of these groups. Approximately 70 per cent of the common resources of the members were lost, in the form of livestock, shops, and agricultural investments by members, as well as cash.

UNDP has not only restored existing groups' funds of over \$ 1.5 million, but also expand this initiative to provide additional small grants to the worst-hit groups, enabling communities to jump-start income-generating activities. Emergency loans were provided to 643 revived groups in the Ayeyarwady delta, to cope with immediate loss and restart their livelihood activities. The newly formed groups are being trained on the basic concepts of SRGs after which livelihood grants will be provided to the members. So far, nearly 12,178 new members received livelihood grants totalling \$0.948 million.

Objectives

To re-establish Self-Reliance Groups affected by Cyclone Nargis; to restore savings to existing group members; to write off outstanding debts to encourage local income-generating activities; and to establish 1,000 new groups.

Beneficiaries: More than 1,300 Self-Reliance Groups with approximately 21,750 members.

Donors: UK/DFID, Australia, Norway, New Zealand, Switzerland, Zayed Bin Foundation (UAE), OCHA, BCPR/UNDP