

Restoring sustainable livelihoods

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Introduction

Best practice requires companies to improve, or at least restore, the livelihoods and standards of living of displaced persons. A livelihood is defined as a means of securing the necessities of life. Many projects in the past used to consider the resettlement process complete when the impacted households were given replacement houses or paid cash compensation. However, in the majority of cases where cash compensation is given, resettled households struggle to attain their former standard of living.

Currently, there is increasing recognition that livelihood restoration requires a focus beyond just income, and that other social factors such as education, health and social cohesion serve to sustain living standards over time. Despite this recognition and the development of social performance standards, livelihood restoration is often not being properly planned and fails to restore or improve livelihoods sustainably.

Where this occurs, it can lead to significant community dissatisfaction and threaten the project's social licence to operate. The role of women in contributing to the livelihood of the household is also not always given sufficient consideration, which may result in women losing access to land and common property resources, lowering income and status.