



## IMPACT STORY

## ESS COACHES

*“I want people from disadvantaged groups to find a job.”*



Images: Keo Phongmany Credit: Swisscontact

Mr. Keo Phongmany works for the Learning for Development Association (LDA) in Oudomxay Province. He is passionate about community development, particularly for people with different disabilities.

With his extended experience in social work and community development, Keo was selected in 2020 to be one of the coaches for employment of the VTESS project. Coaches for employment play an essential role in supporting young disadvantaged people from the coaching cycle gain technical skills, soft skills and increase their employability in the labour market.

Keo expressed warmly about his relationship with the VTESS team. “I can contact the VTESS team for advice. With the Covid situation, we adapted and communicate mainly online. We also organize regular catch ups meetings with other ESS coaches and the VTESS team to update each other on our progress and exchange on the implementation of our activities. ”

2021 has been an exceptionally challenging year for Keo and the other ESS coaches. Aside from some activities’ delay due to the pandemic,

Images: Phongmany with students Credit: Swisscontact

**“I want to support unemployed people to have a job and secondly, I want to support people with disabilities to increase their employability”** explains Keo.

Keo ensured his group of participants was diverse and inclusive, with young people from various ethnic minorities. During the first group coaching sessions, the ESS participants learned how to work in small groups and exchange, increasing their team working and communication skills.



Keo applies his “peer to peer” approach to coach his participants more intensively for them to grasp knowledge better.

“I want them to see how beneficial the coaching cycle is for them as it will support them develop not only their technical skills but also soft skills.”

The pandemic pushed Keo and the other ESS coaches to explore alternative formats and approaches to their activities. “COVID-19 really impacted our activities.” says Keo. Some participants withdrew from the coaching cycle. Keo tried to prevent this by explaining the benefits of the programme to their parents and to find a solution,

Since the second Covid-19 outbreak in April 2021, the training of coaches was adapted to a blended format with a mix of online sessions and in-person working groups with coaches from the same province. Coaches could unfortunately not travel to Vientiane for training like during the first training of coaches.

Images: Keo Phongmany and Coaches Credit: Swisscontact



**Inception phase:** August 2019 - March 2020  
**Project duration:** (4 years) August 2019 - July 2023  
**Funded by:** Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation  
**Implementer:** Consortium Swisscontact / Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts



**Key implementing governmental partners:**

- Ministry of Education and Sports - MoES (Lead)
- Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare – MoLSW

**Target Groups:**

- Early school-leavers: young people (15-35 years of age) who have completed primary, but not lower secondary education, and are subjected to income poverty.
- Wider: Teachers from IVET schools, staff from job centres or similar institutions (career counsellors, job coaches, community or youth workers, village facilitators, social workers)



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