



Impact Story

Beneficiary

“While studying, I found many subjects interesting, but the most useful one was social skills, which helped me to communicate better with customers and make a good impression.”
- Sengaloun Symy



Image: Sengaloun Symy Credit: Swisscontact

Sengaloun Symy is a passionate small beauty salon owner in Xayaburi Province. She had always dreamt of running her own salon and took to YouTube to learn more about the beauty industry. However, due to a lack of training and financial resources, she was initially unable to fulfill her dream of opening her own shop.

When Swisscontact announced their ESS coaching cycle courses through their Vocational Training and Employment Support Services program in 2021, Symy didn't hesitate to apply. She saw it as an amazing opportunity to gain the necessary knowledge and skills she needed. Applying what she learned during the coaching cycle, she was then able to join the Entrepreneurship-Based Training program and secure seed money for her business. This support allowed her to turn her dream into a reality.

“While studying, I found many subjects interesting, but the most useful one was social skills, which helped me to communicate better with customers and make a good impression,” she said. Symy also learned how to find customers and manage her finances effectively. When she received seed money, she purchased salon equipment such as hairdryers, straighteners, and hair-wash bed from both Xayaburi and Vientiane. Her cousin helped her to build the salon shop, which opened in August 2022.

In October of the same year, Symy volunteered to do makeup at the Broad Reaching festival in Xayaburi and her performance caught the attention of many people.

Ultimately, this even brought more customers to her salon. While there are many salon shops in the village, each one has a different style. **“My customers like my head massages and makeup style because it looks natural. And my fees are not too high,” she said.**

At her salon, hair washing starts at 15,000 kip, makeup is 100,000 kip, and bridal makeup starts at 350,000 kip.



Image: Outside signage at Sengaloun Symy's salon shop in Xayaburi. Credit: Swisscontact

Although thrilled with all her new business, Symy initially faced the challenge of having many customers come at the same time. However, now when she gets busy she asks her sister for help. She also has a FaceBook group where she can communicate with customers about her services.

Symy's monthly income averages around 4 million kip, which she uses to support her parents.

Next year, she plans to study eyebrow tattooing at a shop in town. The course takes a week and costs around 7 million kip, but she believes it will be worth it because the market rate for eyebrow tattooing service starts at around 500,000 kip per person.

Symy is grateful to Swisscontact and the VTESS project for helping her achieve her goal and allowing her to expand her knowledge.

*Image: Sengaloun Symy washing a customer's hair in her salon.
Credit: Swisscontact*



Inception phase: August 2019 - March 2020

Project duration: August 2019 - November 2023 (4 years)

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:

- Main: Early school-leavers - young people (15-35 years of age) who have completed primary school only and are deprived socially and economically.
- Wider: Teachers from IVET schools, staff from job centres or similar institutions (career counsellors, job coaches, community or youth workers, village facilitators and social workers).



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