

SKILLS FOR TOURISM PROJECT • LAO/029

IMPACT STORIES

NEW ENTRANTS

“Honestly, if I didn’t have the help or support to find a job after graduation, I probably would have had to go back home”



Image: Ms. Soukpachan Soutwongkamchan. Credit: Swisscontact

When Soukpachan Soutwongkamchan attended an interview at MP Café in Pakse, she was very nervous, “I felt like everything was coming together. I knew I could do this, but the pressure made me so nervous!”. After a short interview, Soukpachan was hired for the position of Chef’s Assistant.

“I have a passion for cooking, and I thought it would be a good way to turn that passion into a career”

Soukpachan heard about the Enhanced PTHAS Training Programme through Kangkhong village authorities in Champasak Province. “I have a passion for cooking, and I thought this would be a good way to turn my passion into a career”. She attended the selection interview and was accepted as part of a 20-student cohort at the Champasak Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College.

Soukpachan happily mentions, “I really enjoyed the classes and my internship at the Tad Fane Resort. I felt like I was well-prepared to get a job”.

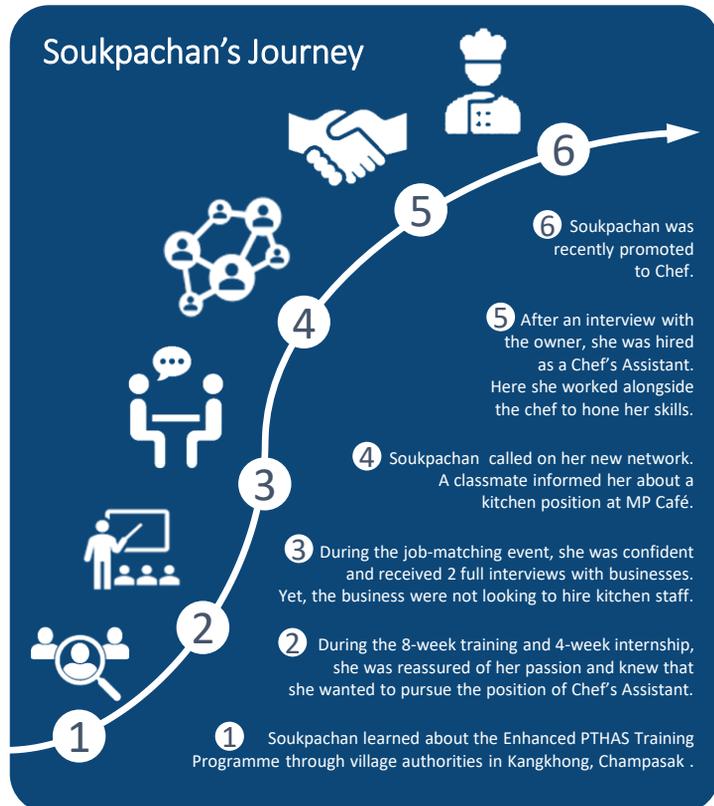




Image: Class photo from Champasak TVET College. Soukpachan is pictured on the front row, third from the right. Credit: Swisscontact

As part of the PTHAS Training Programme, a job-matching workshop is conducted to connect students to local businesses. Soukpachan was beaming as she said, “During the job-matching workshop, I received two follow-up interviews and was incredibly proud of myself”. However, much to her dismay, they were not hiring kitchen staff.

“...I received two interviews and was incredibly proud of myself”

She mobilised her resources – teachers, classmates, and programme coordinators - and asked them to keep an eye out for any kitchen positions. After a few weeks of searching, one of her classmates informed her that MP Café had a vacancy for a chef’s assistant position.

She admits, “...honestly, If I didn’t have the help or support to find a job after graduation, I probably would have had to go back home”.

At MP Café, she worked closely with the chef, who is also the owner of the café, to learn more about the job. She thrived, and after some time the chef trusted her to take over many of the responsibilities of running the kitchen. With a radiating smile she states, “I started as a Chef’s Assistant but now I’ve been promoted to Chef!”



Image: Recruitment interview for the Enhanced PTHAS Programme. Credit: Swisscontact

Pheun Than Heng A Sip (PTHAS) Training Programme



RESULTS TO DATE: LABOUR MARKET INSERTION*

 **536** graduates, out of which **83%** female

 **76%** participants have a job or had one since graduation

 **79%** work in the Tourism and Hospitality sector

 **85%** receive monthly salaries above minimum wage**

In collaboration with the Skills for Tourism Project (LAO/029), Swisscontact implements the Pheun Than Heng A Sip (PTHAS) Training Programme.

PTHAS seeks to upgrade hospitality skills amongst 500 MSME staff (upskilling) and support 500 more people from disadvantaged backgrounds to enter the tourism and hospitality sector (labour market insertion) in selected southern and central provinces.

The Skills for Tourism Project (LAO/029) is co-financed by the Governments of Lao PDR, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and Switzerland, and is implemented by the Ministry of Education and Sports of Lao PDR and LuxDev, the Luxembourg Development Cooperation Agency.

* Tracer studies conducted with 485 respondents by Lao Social Research from 2018 - 2021
 **Including benefits such as accommodation and meals