When Dao Boualavong was asked about his motivation to join the Enhanced PTHAS Training Programme, he responded that, “It sounded too good to be true”. The young man from Salavanh Province heard about the training at the provincial Integrated Vocational Education and Training (IVET) School – but didn’t think that he would ever get the chance to participate.

“I had an interview and a few conversations with hotel owners. I felt confident and I knew that I had the knowledge and skills to get the job”

The Salavanh IVET School organised a ‘road show’ to encourage potential students from disadvantaged backgrounds to enroll in the PTHAS Training Programme. Part of the selection process included an interview with a representative of the local hotel and restaurant association.

Now, as a Chef’s Assistant in a popular restaurant in Salavanh Province, he laughs as he reminisces, “I was very excited and a little bit nervous because there were around 35 other individuals waiting to be interviewed”.

“IT SOUNDED TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE”

Dao’s Journey

1. Dao heard about the PTHAS Training Programme through local village authorities. He attended a screening interview and was accepted.
2. He enjoyed the PTHAS course content and interacting with his peers during the 8-week long programme.
3. Dao completed a 4-week internship at Pakse Hotel as part of the PTHAS Training.
4. He truly started believing in the programme during the job-matching workshop where he interviewed with local businesses.
5. Dao received a job offer during the job-matching workshop and began working two weeks after graduation.
Dao was selected and started an intensive 12-week training and internship experience at Salavanh IVET School. “I was excited to go back to school. Interacting with my peers in the school was very interesting. We learned things we would be using in the workplace, so we were very attentive”.

When asked about his favourite modules, he responded, “Life skills for sure! We learned things like how to work together and how to negotiate. Where else could I have learned that?”

“We learned things we would be using in the workplace, so we were very attentive”

After 8 weeks of vocational training, Dao started a 4-week internship at the Pakse Hotel. At his new workplace, he learned about good kitchen practices, housekeeping, food and beverage service, and serving at the front office.

Steadily, Dao began to build his confidence and strengthen his belief that he could work in tourism and hospitality.

A key moment came after graduation when he participated in a job-matching workshop where businesses conduct mini-interviews with the students as potential employees.

He proudly says, “I had interviews with a few hotel owners. During the conversations, I felt confident, and I knew that I had the knowledge and skills to get the job.”

Dao established a connection with a restaurant back in Salavanh Province through the workshop and began working within two weeks of graduation. “I’ve been working here for a few months and I’m definitely a believer now.”

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**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**

*Tracer studies conducted with 485 respondents by Lao Social Research from 2018 - 2021

**Including benefits such as accommodation and meals**

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.