

Impact Story

Beneficiary



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- Buangern Vongsi

Image: Buangern Vongsi Credit: Swisscontact

Buangern Vongsi is hardworking young woman who lives in Xayaburi Town with her family. After graduating from primary school, she helped her parents with their agricultural work.

Although she had a strong desire to start her own cultivation business, she did not have enough knowledge, skills, or the funds to invest in this complicated yet lucrative venture.

In 2021, VTESS project's ESS coaching cycle had been promoted in her village and she decided to apply. Buangern was thrilled when she was accepted to study in the mushroom cultivation section. Unfortunately, she was not selected to receive seed money from the VTESS project. In spite of this, Buangern said she learned valuable lessons that helped her feel more confident and get a job at a local Chinese BBQ restaurant. "The ESS program helped me learn about mushroom cultivation, communication methods, and other skills that gave me the confidence to apply for my current job," she said.

Buangern works long hours at the restaurant - from 9:30 AM to 7:00 PM - but she is willing to work long hours to earn a better salary. Her responsibilities include cleaning the restaurant, slicing meat, preparing menu ingredients, serving food, and taking care of the shop owner's child. Her current salary, including overtime, is 1.6 million kip per month.

The restaurant, which is in Xayabuly, is open every day and does not offer annual leave to its staff. If an employee takes leave, their salary will be deducted. This poses a problem for Buangern since she has thalassemia - a blood disorder that can lead to anemia that can make her feel tired, weak, or short of breath.



Image: Buangern Vongsi preparing menu ingredients at the restaurant. Credit: Swisscontact

Despite these challenges, she is determined to build her own business and saves money every month to buy materials for mushroom cultivation. She has purchased a tank, plastic covers, plastic bags, gypsum, pumice and effective microorganisms (EM). She plans to start mushroom cultivation in April 2023.

Buangern intends to continue working at the restaurant while her mother takes care of the mushroom cultivation at home. This way, they can have multiple sources of income, because only Buangern and her sister are the only permanent job holders in the family.

"However, if the mushroom business goes well, I will stop working at the restaurant and focus solely on my own business," she said.

Buangern is thankful for the training she received, she will use the knowledge she gained to create opportunities for herself.

*Image: Buangern Vongsi arranging Chinese BBQ in the restaurant's showcase.
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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