



## IMPACT STORY

## ESS COACHES

*“I am pleased and proud to be part of the VTESS project to help disadvantaged people gain vocational skills and knowledge.”*



Image: Souphab Sichalearn Credit: Swisscontact

Mrs. Souphab Sichalearn is a dedicated educator with 11 years of teaching experience. She is teaching English at the Integrated Vocational Education Training (IVET) School in Xayaboury Province.

Mrs. Souphab decided to apply to become an Employment Support Services (ESS) coach because she was interested in further developing herself. But since it was the first time that Mrs. Souphab had been a coach, she admits she found it challenging. “Most of the beneficiaries were shy, did not dare to speak out, and some of their families did not support them. So, at first, they were not opening up and did not talk to me,” said Mrs. Souphab.

But after third training sessions, Mrs. Souphab thinks she has developed a lot. She believes she has improved in her ability to better reach out to the beneficiaries, their families, communities and even within her own family. She was also able to improve her coaching abilities through the skills she gained from the ESS trainings.

For Mrs. Souphab, the ESS coach is a mentor who is considered as part of the family and different from a teacher. The teacher must teach following the school’s curricula, while a coach will also provide further support and advice to the participants.



Image: Souphab is organizing group activities with participants on the topic of group formation Credit: Swisscontact

“In my opinion, once the beneficiaries are part of our project, I am going to work closely with them to gain their trust. In doing so, they will build their courage to express themselves and increase their skills,” Mrs. Souphab said. However, she also explained that because some parents did not understand the purpose and length of time needed for the training, some students had to drop in middle of training because their parents needed them to work for the family.

Due to the strict lockdown in Mrs. Souphab’s province from outbreaks of COVID-19 a lot of the planned activities were postponed. However, she has adapted her approach so that the trainees don’t need to leave the confines of

their homes. The important thing is that they understand what they have learned.

Coaching is a continuous learning process, especially when the trainees have different learning paces. The most challenging part is that many businesses closed during the pandemic, and it discouraged many of the students to continue their training.

**“I am pleased and proud to be part of the VTESS project to help disadvantaged people gain vocational skills and knowledge in order to be able to run small businesses that generate income for their families and make their lives better”.**

*Image: ESS participants showing their guidebook  
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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