

Impact Story

“Attending the program provided me with not only work skills, but to also know my individual rights and to have more confidence in myself.”

- Xeng Lor



Image: Xeng Lor Credit: Swisscontact

Xeng Lor, a young woman from Xayaburi Province, was struggling to support her family as she relied solely on a small income from farming. Lor heard about the Vocational Training and Employment Support Services (VTESS) project through teachers from the local Integrated Vocational Education and Training (IVET) school in Xayaburi who promoted it in her village. She joined the Enterprise Based Training (EBT) program and received seed money to start her own tailoring business.

“I focused on tailoring from the coaching cycle courses because I love creating and designing clothes,” she said.

During the program, Lor acquired valuable knowledge and techniques as well as much-needed social skills. She also found that studying directly at a tailor shop was essential for gaining important on-the-job skills. In the past, Lor was shy and would cry alone when feeling put down. Improving her social skills helped Lor feel more confident in conversations and to understand the demand for working in the fashion industry. She said, “Attending the program provided me with not only work skills but also to know my individual rights and to have more confidence in myself.”

After receiving the seed money, Lor bought tailoring equipment and made a plan to make traditional hats and clothes for the Hmong ethnic group, whose traditional clothing style is unique. She designed the clothes and made a brochure to advertise her shop.

Beneficiary

Recognizing the importance of networking and social skills, Lor was able to utilize the knowledge acquired from the EBT trainings to connect with other clothing shops in Luangprabang, creating more opportunities for collaborations for her business.



Image: Xeng Lor tailoring a shirt for a customer in her shop.
Credit: Swisscontact

Although she initially faced challenges tailoring clothes for men and customers with large body sizes - as this was not part of her studies - her newfound confidence increased her desire to keep learning her craft.

“I plan to improve my tailoring skills to make fashionable dresses and keep up with the latest trends,” she said.

Lor knows she will need to add to her tailoring portfolio as Hmong dresses come in many modern styles. She plans to learn from people with expert skills and by watching YouTube channels.

Lor added that she isn't worried about competition from the two other tailoring shops in her village because they target different customer groups.

Her income averages between 2-3 million kip per month. Looking back, and comparing her previous income and struggles, she is thankful that this new career has helped her have a better life and support her children's education.

*Image: Xeng Lor busy at her sewing machine.
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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