



SKILLS FOR TOURISM PROJECT • LAO/029

IMPACT STORIES

PHRA



“I am particularly proud of supporting disadvantaged people to get career opportunities”

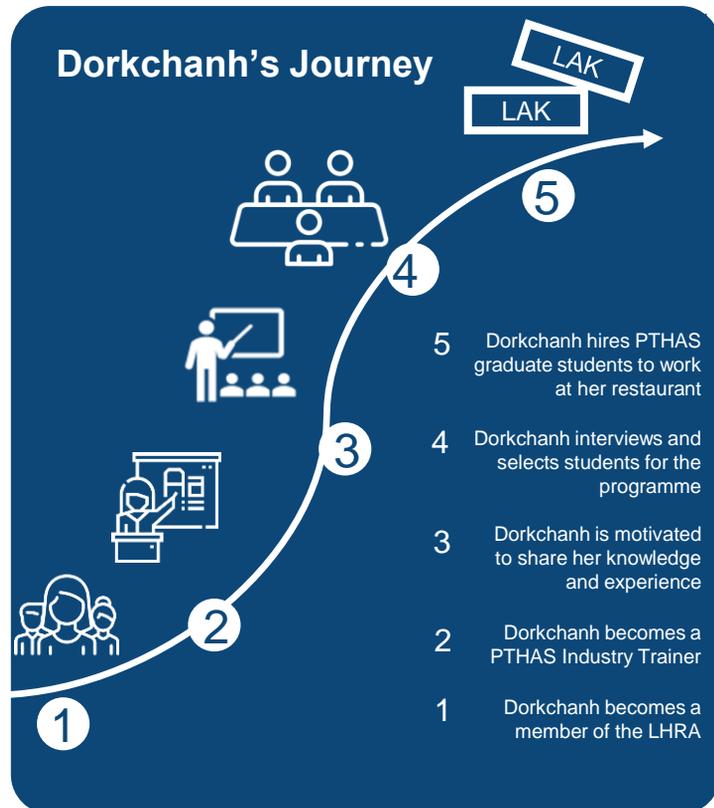
Images: Ms. Dorkchanh Thepphany above. Thepphany and students, next page.
Credit: Swisscontact

Ms. Dorkchanh Thepphany is a member of the Lao Hotel and Restaurant Association (LHRA) of Khammouane Province, and a dedicated Food and Beverage (F&B) Industry Trainer for the PTHAS Training Programme.

The PTHAS programme is very close to Thepphany’s heart as ‘Pheun Than Heng A Sip’ means creating opportunities for people with basic skills and supporting them in reskilling and improving their work capacity.

“I feel proud because this is my way of giving back, I want to share my knowledge, experience and lessons with other businesses”

The aim of the training programme is to help strengthen the potential of the growing tourism and hospitality sector.



"It's significant that the curriculum and methodology are credible and follow international standards," she explained.

The training programme has two components: Regular PTHAS, which works on upskilling and reskilling current tourism and hospitality staff; and Enhanced PTHAS, which provides training opportunities to disadvantaged people in the tourism and hospitality industry.

"I am very proud of helping disadvantaged people get career opportunities," Theppany said.

Theppany added that the programme has been a very good experience for her, as it also promotes trainers from different kinds of businesses and supports association members in building their capacities.

She explained that her motivation for becoming a trainer is to help restaurant services and other members of LHRA and their staff.

"My involvement in the programme extends beyond interviewing and selecting students to be admitted to the Khammouane Technical and Vocational College, I also provide employment opportunities at my restaurant to recent graduates."



Pheun Than Heng A Sip (PTHAS) Training Programme



RESULTS TO DATE: UPSKILLING OF MSME STAFF

 **896** staff from **312** tourism and hospitality enterprises have received up-skilling training*

 **147 Mio LAK** (EUR 13,000) private sector investment**

 **'Good'** impact on staff performance confirmed by employers (average of 4.0/5)***

 **98%** of employers are micro or small enterprises*

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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.

* 47% are micro (5 or less employees) and 51% are small (50 or less employees) enterprises.

** Includes both fees paid by enterprises for upskilling training (LAK 80,680,000) and in-kind contributions (LAK 66,805,000) leveraged from business associations and their members (2018-2021 data)

***MSME satisfaction survey conducted by Swisscontact from 2018 - 2021 using a five-point Likert scale: 1=Very Poor, 2=Poor, 3=Fair, 4=Good, 5=Very Good



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TVET TEACHERS



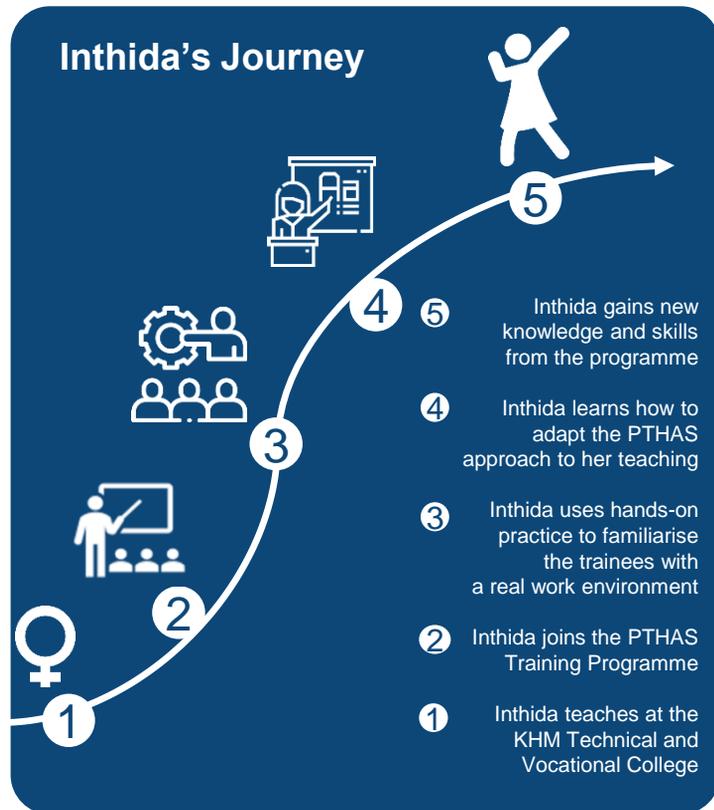
“Students who have graduated from the project have sufficient skills to be able to work in a business setting”

Images: Ms. Inthida Vongchaleun, above, and her students in class, next page.
Credit: Swisscontact

Ms. Inthida Vongchaleun is an enthusiastic instructor at the Khammuane Technical and Vocational College in the field of hospitality and tourism. She teaches vocational and service skills as well as housekeeping.

Vongchaleun has seen first-hand how the PTHAS Training Programme encourages coordination between business sectors and technical colleges. She believes this has led to the two sectors in her province increasing cooperation with the focus on knowledge sharing and creating opportunities for graduates and disadvantaged groups.

Vongchaleun particularly likes that the PTHAS Training Programme’s classroom learning is combined with extensive hands-on practice in order to familiarise the trainees with a real work environment.



“I know that many institutions are interested in hiring students from the programme to work with them”

Vongchaleun applied what she learned about the PTHAS teaching approach at her college. She observed that the students understand the lessons better, and they are generally more interested in learning.

“Students who have graduated from the training have sufficient skills to be able to work in a business setting,” she explained.

According to local businesses, most of the regular student work-force have yet to understand how to reach the modern work standards because they lack basic skills and knowledge.

Because of PTHAS, many businesses now look here when they want to hire new staff.

One business owner in Khammuane also commented that he thought the training programme was very good because it helps the disadvantaged find jobs.

In addition, the programme has aided with bettering teaching materials which made teaching more convenient, Vongchaleun added.

“I have benefitted from the materials provided by the programme, especially the textbooks. I gained new knowledge and skills that I can apply to my teaching”



Pheun Than Heng A Sip (PTHAS) Training Programme



RESULTS TO DATE: TEACHER CAPACITY BUILDING

 **27** TVET teachers trained (23 female) from 6 provinces

 **73%** approval rating from teachers (3.85/5)*

 **55** private sector partnerships for TVET schools

 **‘Very Good’** rating of training by graduates (4.4/5)**

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*From TVET teacher feedback data collected by Swisscontact 2018-2020 with 73% stating to be satisfied or highly satisfied on a 5-point Likert scale

** From enhanced graduates feedback data collected by Swisscontact 2018-2020 using a five-point Likert scale: 1=poor 2=fair, 3=satisfactory, 4=good, 5=very good



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TVET TEACHERS



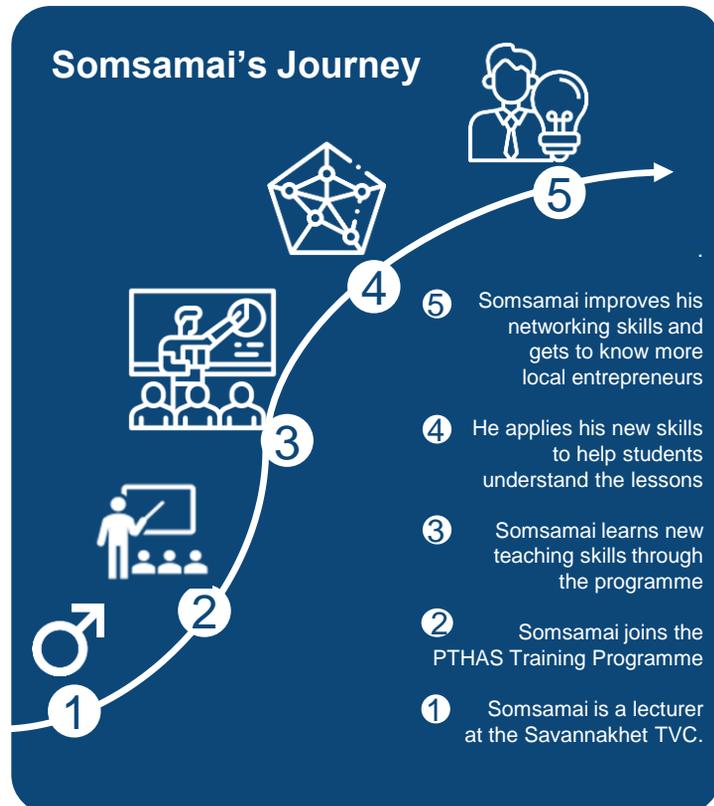
“The commitment not only of students and teachers, but also local entrepreneurs has made all the difference in making this programme work”

Images: Mr. Soumphonphakdee in his office, above and with a student, next page.
Credit: Swisscontact

Professor Somsamai Soumphonphakdee is a devoted lecturer at the Savannakhet Technical and Vocational College. His focus is on Food and Beverage Production and Service Training. Along with professional skills, knowledge and standards, the training also helps build students' interpersonal skills and work ethic.

“I used a variety of teaching materials and techniques to keep students interested in learning and to help them from getting bored.”

After following the progress of the PTHAS Training Programme, the Savannakhet Technical and Vocational College saw the importance of cultivating professional relationships with local entrepreneurs, especially with regards to the coordination of student internships through the training programme.



In addition, regular exchanges take place between college professors and entrepreneurs in the food and beverage services, housekeeping services and other hospitality areas.

"I got to know more local entrepreneurs through this programme. I also learned how to work more effectively, collect data, and learned new teaching techniques that can be adapted to my current work," he explained.

Soumphonphakdee believes this programme is beneficial for not only students but for teachers as well. "We all build our capacity at the same time," he emphasized.

He also knows his teaching skills have improved through PTHAS Training Programme. "I observed that students are more engaged and participative.

They are now able to visualise the lessons, which gives them the confidence to speak up because they understand the lessons better," he said.

This programme also creates opportunities and offers employment assistance to the disadvantaged people in rural areas. Those who have never learned basic skills or sufficient work experience have made amazing improvements after participating in the programme—not only in the knowledge they gained, but also in the newly found confidence in themselves.

"I believe the combined commitment from students, teachers, and local entrepreneurs has made a substantial difference in this programme being an ongoing success."



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NEW ENTRANT



“I have been given the opportunity to continue my education and to gain new skills. Now, I have a job that I enjoy and can support my family”

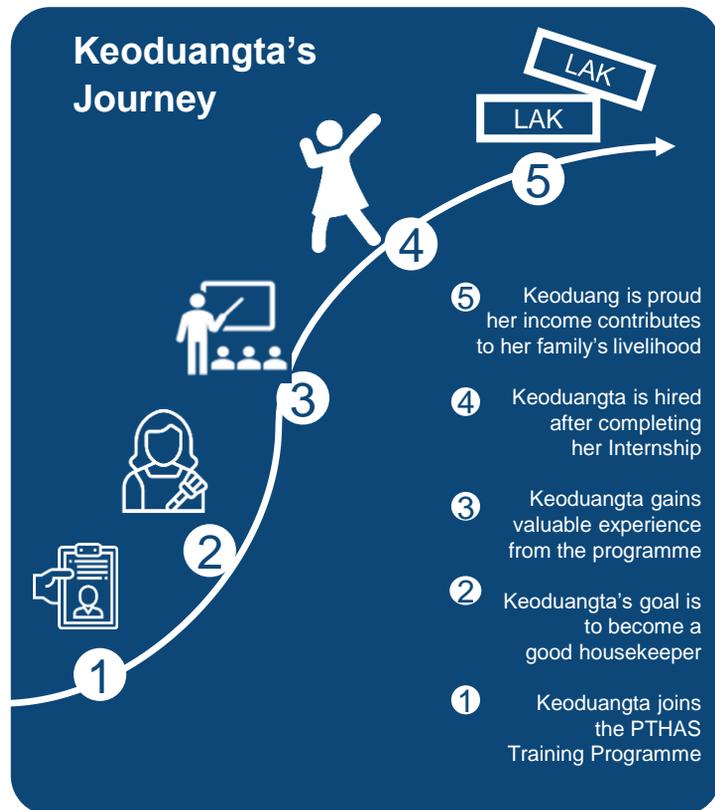
Images: Ms. Keoduangta Xaypanya at work, above. Xaypanya and classmates at the college.
Credit: Swisscontact

Ms. Keoduangta Xaypanya always wanted to continue her education, so when the PTHAS Training Programme was promoted in her village she was extremely interested and eager to participate.

Soon after applying, Xaypanya went on to become a trainee at the Savanakheth Technical and Vocational College to complete the Enhanced PTHAS Training Program. She graduated in 2019 and was keen to get a job in the service industry.

“I am passionate about the service profession, and I want to be a good housekeeper”

Currently, Xaypanya is in her second year working as a housekeeper at the Fundee Guesthouse at Savannakhet Province.



Xaypanya said she gained a lot of experience from the programme, not just the usual tourism and hospitality skills needed for her job, but she also improved her cooking skills, which was a welcome surprise to her family.

When asked about her internship experience and the challenges she faced, Xaypanya said, "The experience from the internship has imprinted the lessons on me that I learned in the classroom. It helps me remember the lectures when I get to practice them. I am determined to learn and train myself to improve everyday."

Xaypanya also praised her support system in this programme - starting with her classmates who were very friendly and helpful, and how her teachers were good mentors and examples for Xaypanya and her classmates. She also said she was impressed that the programme staff also helped find her a job after graduation.

"The overall atmosphere is conducive to learning"

Xaypanya hopes that the standards of hotel services in Laos will improve in the future to reach international standards.

"I am so proud of myself because I have been given the opportunity to continue my education and to gain new skills. Now, I have a job that I enjoy and can support my family"



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**
-  **81%** of employers are satisfied with the hired graduates

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



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NEW ENTRANT



“In the future, I want to open my own restaurant and apply the skills I learned through PTHAS in my own business”

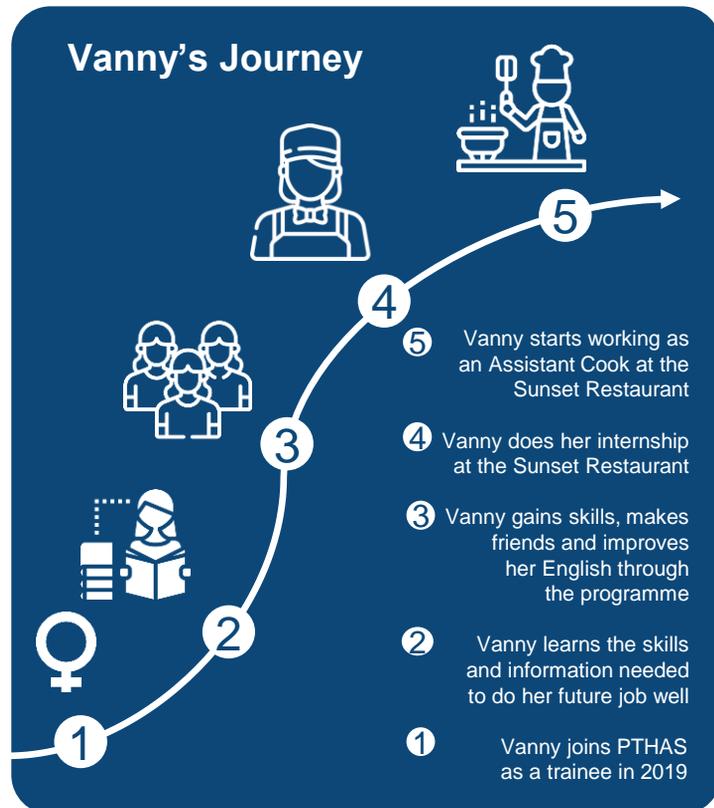
Images: Ms. Keoduangta Xaypanya at work, above, and with classmates, next page.
Credit: Swisscontact

Ms. Vanny Khamphanasouk graduated from the Enhanced PTHAS course at the Khammuane Technical and Vocational College in 2020.

She learned about the Training Programme when it was promoted in her village and the Village Chief asked the residents if they were interested in enrolling. She thought the programme was a good opportunity not just for herself, but also for people in her village.

After submitting her application, Khamphanasouk nervously waited for a response, after a week she was contacted for an appointment and after the interview she was selected.

“I was not expecting it, but at the same time I was so happy!”



Khamphanasouk studied 4 core subjects in the programme: Serving, reception, housekeeping and kitchen. "I also learned about hygiene, safety and service standards, and I felt that I learned all the necessary skills and information to do my future job well," she explained.

"I felt that I learned all the necessary skills and information to do my future job well."

Khamphanasouk said that all of her classmates were very good and supportive. And that she could count on their help when she was sick or if having trouble understanding the lessons. "They helped me because everyone comes from countryside and during the course of the programme we are far from our own families, she said. "So we became each other's families."

Khamphanasouk found the teachers very attentive to the students, and they made sure that the students really understood the lessons.

"I will forever cherish the good friendships that I gained through this programme. I learned so much, and even my English improved. Now, I feel more confident to express my opinions"

After graduating, Khamphanasouk got a job, something that she wasn't expecting since she had only studied until the 5th grade.

"I got a job at the same restaurant where I did my internship," she said. I am very fortunate because right now, it is very difficult to find a job because of the Covid-19 Pandemic." Khamphanasouk is now working as an Assistant Cook at the Sunset Restaurant in Khammuane Province.

"I am very happy that the programme provided an opportunity for women like me to continue my education and to be able to work in the tourism and hospitality sector"



Pheun Than Heng A Sip (PTHAS) Training Programme


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