

# Enhanced Pheun Than Heng A Sip (PTHAS) Training Programme

## Labour market insertion for people from disadvantaged backgrounds

In collaboration with Skills for Tourism (Project LAO/029) Swisscontact implemented the Pheun Than Heng A Sip Training Programme from 2017 to 2021.

536 students (83% female) graduated from the enhanced PTHAS training programme out of which 76% found employment within 3 months after graduation.

The Enhanced PTHAS programme has been officially endorsed by the Ministry of Education and Sports in July 2021 as a short training course that can be implemented by any interested TVET institution in the Lao PDR.

Additional information on the PTHAS training programme is available on the Swisscontact website at <https://www.swisscontact.org/en/projects/pthas> and LuxDev website at <https://vientiane.luxdev.lu/en/activities/project/LAO/029>

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.

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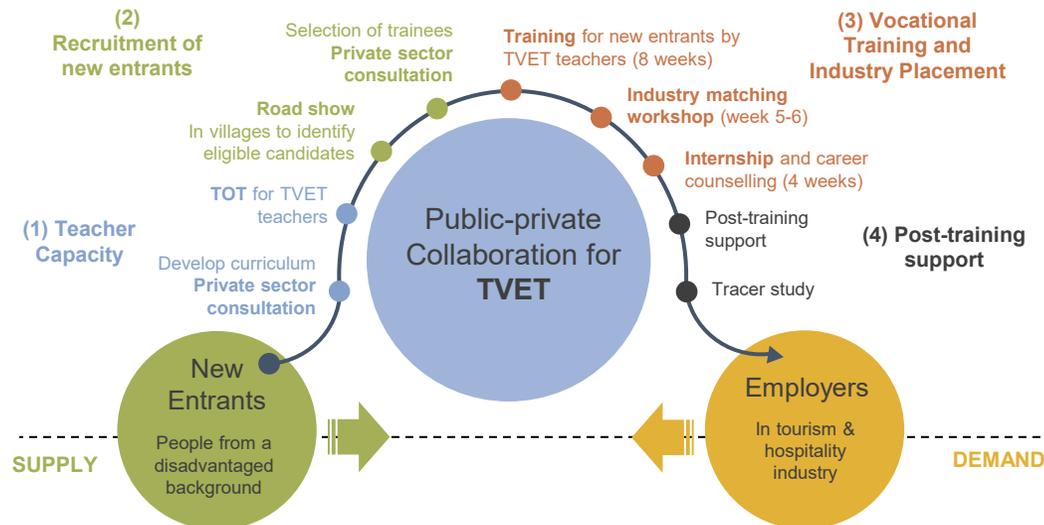
# The Pheun Than Heng A Sip (PTHAS) Labour market insertion Programme

Under the Skills for Tourism Project (LAO/029), the enhanced PTHAS training programme has been implemented by Swisscontact from 2017 until 2021 in six provinces in the Lao PDR, namely Champasack, Saravane, Khammuane, Savannakhet, Vientiane Capital and Vientiane Province.

## Implementation Model

The pilot initiative supported people from disadvantaged backgrounds to access employment opportunities in the tourism and hospitality sector. This included the development of a 12-week training, the training of teachers from participating TVET institutions, recruitment of trainees and facilitation of training implementation including industry days and internships, post-training support activities (e.g., interview coaching, job-matching) and providing quality assurance support.

## Process model Enhanced PTHAS Training Programme



## Employer Satisfaction:

*“81% of employers stated good or very good overall satisfaction with the hired graduates stating that they have been well prepared to work in the hospitality and tourism industry.”*

## Employer satisfaction



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 firsthand 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.

*“Students who have graduated from the project have sufficient skills to be able to work in a business setting,”* she explained and continued: *“I know that many institutions are interested in hiring students from the programme to work with them.”*

## Teacher’s Feedback

Teacher feedback was largely positive, and no major difficulties were expressed regarding the teaching methods, assessment process, and industry days. Teachers overall expressed high satisfaction with the internships and particularly highlighted the *‘strong cooperation with MSMEs’* even though there were also occasional challenges such as time constraints for teachers to monitor the internships in addition to their regular teaching hours.

## Curricula



The curriculum took the form of an 8-week training course covering soft and employability skills in the first three weeks followed by technical skills in Kitchen Practice, Food and Beverage Service, Bar Operations, Housekeeping, and Reception. A 4-week industry internship followed where students completed the remainder of their training in a local business. The internship is structured to contain real-life experience in kitchen, restaurant, housekeeping, and restaurant practice. Guidance was provided to internship hosts in the form of a workshop led by the TVET teachers to help them prepare internships.

### Overview of the Enhanced PTHAS Training Programme

8 weeks at TVET school/college								
Day	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Mon	Life Skills	Employment Skills	Communication	Good Kitchen Practice	Food and Beverage Service	Bar Operations	Housekeeping	Reception
Tue	Life Skills	Employment Skills	Communication	Good Kitchen Practice	Food and Beverage Service	Bar Operations	Housekeeping	Reception
Wed	Life Skills	Employment Skills	Service Excellence	Good Kitchen Practice	Food and Beverage Service	Bar Operations	Housekeeping	Reception
Thu	Life Skills	Employment Skills	Service Excellence	Good Kitchen Practice	Food and Beverage Service	Bar Operations	Housekeeping	Reception
Fri	Life Skills	Employment Skills	Industry Day	Industry Day	Industry Day	Industry Day	Industry Day	Industry Day

↓

4 weeks internship				
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
	Kitchen Practice	Restaurant Practice	Housekeeping Practice	Reception Practice



*“I am very happy. I’m the second of my six siblings to get a job. It has helped my family a lot”*

- Phiala

For Phiala, a young woman from a farming family in the rural village of Somsavath, thirty kilometers outside of Vangvieng, the idea of being employed by a hotel seemed far-fetched when she first heard of the PTHAS training programme. “I didn’t have any idea about the hospitality industry before,” she says. Phiala’s nervous feelings were misplaced because she was selected and successfully completed the 12-week programme provided by the hospitality department of the Technical College of Vientiane Province in Vangvieng.

The 4-week industry placement was Phiala’s favourite part: “I got to see how working in the industry looks like and to practice what I learned in the classroom”. It was during that time that she impressed the owner of the hotel with her attitude and work ethic which eventually led to a job offer from the host business owner. For Phiala this was transformational, as now she could contribute to her family’s finances including her sister’s education.



### Statements from other trainees:

*“The training programme made me aware of international service and hygiene standards and taught me how to apply them in the hospitality sector.”*

*“The service experience at the hotel was the highlight of the training for me, convincing me that I found my true vocation in tourism and hospitality.”*

## Achievements

12-week  
training course  
developed

27 teachers  
trained in 6  
TVET schools

55  
partnerships  
with SMEs for  
4-week  
internships

536 graduates  
(83% female)  
out of 559  
enrolled  
trainees

76% found  
employment  
within 3  
months after  
graduation



## Lessons Learnt

- *Teachers highlighted that they acquired new teaching skills that focus on collaborative, interactive and practical learning and even apply these skills in their regular courses at the TVET institutions.*
- *Involving industry representatives in the recruitment process contributed to a targeted selection and this early involvement led to a strong cooperation between teachers and partner MSMEs from the outset.*
- *The general nature of the training programme matched with the needs of especially smaller MSMEs that work with few staff and look for “generalists” that can do housekeeping but also support in the kitchen, serve food and beverages to guests and even help out at the reception.*
- *Post-training support in the form of CV preparation, interview coaching and job-matching is crucial to facilitate the employment of graduates and responding to the demand of MSMEs for skilled labour with the early established cooperation between teachers and MSMEs being a success factor.*

