

Impact Story

Beneficiary

“My life has changed significantly. I only had an irregular income before attending the VTESS program. With my own greenhouse, I can grow a variety of crops and can expect a more stable daily income.”

Lone



Image: Lone Credit: Swisscontact

At the outskirts of Oudomxay, 19-year-old Lone grows organic vegetables on her family’s farm.

Lone first learned about the Coaching Cycle during an awareness campaign in her village. She decided to apply for the 12-month long program in the hope of developing her farming and business skills.

After joining several group coaching sessions with her coach for employment from the Lao Youth Union, during which she learned various soft skills such as working in a team and making presentations, she decided to attend also a 3-month technical training at the renowned Lao China Agriculture Training Center where she learned about various topics including growing crops in greenhouses. When asking Lone what she enjoyed most during her training she responded: **“My two favorite topics were learning about the benefits of using organic fertilizer and growing crops in greenhouses.”**

Upon graduation from the Coaching Cycle in September 2023, Lone was determined to apply on her family’s farm what she had learned. Further, she also registered for the self-employment program of the VTESS project consisting of a short training in basic entrepreneurship followed by the opportunity to apply for Seed Money to start a business.

Her business idea was to install a greenhouse on her family’s farm so that she could grow vegetables despite difficult weather conditions. **“I was so excited to present my business idea that I could barely sleep the night before”**, she shared.



Image: Lone was watering plants in the greenhouse
Credit: Swisscontact

Lone's business idea received high marks and she was awarded the Seed Money. During 6 months of her business startup Lone also received regular business mentoring from Mr. Phattana Keonorlasouk, her business mentor from the IVET school. ***"With the support of my business mentor, I learned how to market my organic vegetables to get more customers"***, she explained. Business mentoring was done in the form of individual and group sessions where Lone would share experiences with others who also started their own business with the support of the VTESS project.

By using organic fertilizer and growing vegetables in the greenhouse, Lone can now grow a variety of crops including corn, pumpkin and lettuce.

She also experiences less damage and loss due to insects. ***"The greenhouse not only helps protect the vegetables I grow from the rain but also from the sun and insects"***, she shared.

In the future Lone would like to increase her sales by expanding the variety of vegetables she grows to save money for another greenhouse. She also wants people in her village to have access to healthy and organic food.

*Image: Lone's farm and greenhouse
Credit: Swisscontact*



Project duration: Phase 1: Aug 2019 to November 2023; Phase 2: December 2023 to November 2027
Funded by: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Implementer: Consortium Swisscontact / Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (HSLU)

Key government partners:

- Ministry of Education and Sports - MoES (Lead)
- Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare - MoLSW

Target Groups:

- Main target: people of 15-35 years' of age who have completed primary and/ or lower secondary education and are subjected to income poverty
- Wider: Teachers, coaches and other key staff from project implementation partners in the provinces and in Vientiane such as IVET schools, Women & Youth Unions, Non Profit Associations (NPAs), Enterprises and others



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