When Dao Boualavong was asked about his motivation to join the Enhanced PTHAS Training Programme, he responded that “I didn’t think the opportunity could be true”. The young man from Salavanh Province heard about the training at the provincial IVET school – but didn’t think that he would ever get the chance to participate.

“I didn’t think this opportunity could be true”

The Salavanh IVET School organized a ‘road show’ to encourage potential students from disadvantaged backgrounds to enroll in the PTHAS Training Programme. Part of the selection process includes an interview with a representative of the local hotel and restaurant association.

Now, as a Chef’s Assistant in a popular restaurant in Salavanh Province, he laughs as he reminisces, “I was very excited and a little bit nervous because there were around 35 other individuals waiting to be interviewed”.

“I had an interview and a few conversations with hotel owners. I felt confident and I knew that I had the knowledge and skills to get the job.”
Dao was selected and started an intensive 12-week training and internship experience in Salavan Province IVET college. “I was excited to go back to school. Interacting with my peers in the college was very interesting. We learned things we would be using in the workplace, so we were very attentive”.

When asked about which modules were his favourite, he responded, “Life skills for sure! We learned things like how to work together and how to negotiate. Where else could I have learned that?”

“...we learned things we would be using in the workplace, so we were very attentive”

After 8 weeks of vocational training, Dao started a 4-week internship at the Pakse Hotel. At his new workplace, he learned about good kitchen practices, housekeeping, food and beverage service, and front office.

Steadily, Dao began to build his confidence and strengthen his belief that he could work in tourism and hospitality.

A key moment came after graduation when he participated in a job-matching workshop where businesses conduct mini-interviews with the students as potential employees.

He proudly says, “I had interviews with a few hotel owners. During the conversations, I felt confident and I knew that I had the knowledge and skills to get the job.”

Dao established a connection with a restaurant back in Salavan Province through the workshop and began working within two weeks of graduation. “I’ve been working here for a few months and I’m definitely a believer now.”

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Pheun Than Heng A Sip (PTHAS) Training Programme

RESULTS TO DATE: LABOUR MARKET INSERTION*

- 84% female participation**
- 87% approval rating from graduates
- 4/5 participants have a job or had one since graduation
- 82% work in the Tourism and Hospitality sector
- 90% receive monthly salaries above minimum wage***

In collaboration with Skills for Tourism (Project LAO/029), Swisscontact implements the Pheun Than Heng A Sip Training Programme.

This seeks to upgrade hospitality skills amongst 500 MSME staff (upskilling) and support 500 more people from disadvantaged backgrounds to enter the tourism and hospitality sector (labour market insertion) in selected southern and central provinces.

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 the Luxembourg Development Cooperation Agency (LuxDev).

*Tracer study conducted with 114 respondents by Lao Social Research May 2019
**All participants were from disadvantaged backgrounds: 88% were registered as poor, 12% disadvantaged through other criteria
***Including benefits such as housing and meals