



SKILLS FOR TOURISM PROJECT • LAO/029

IMPACT STORIES

NEW ENTRANT



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

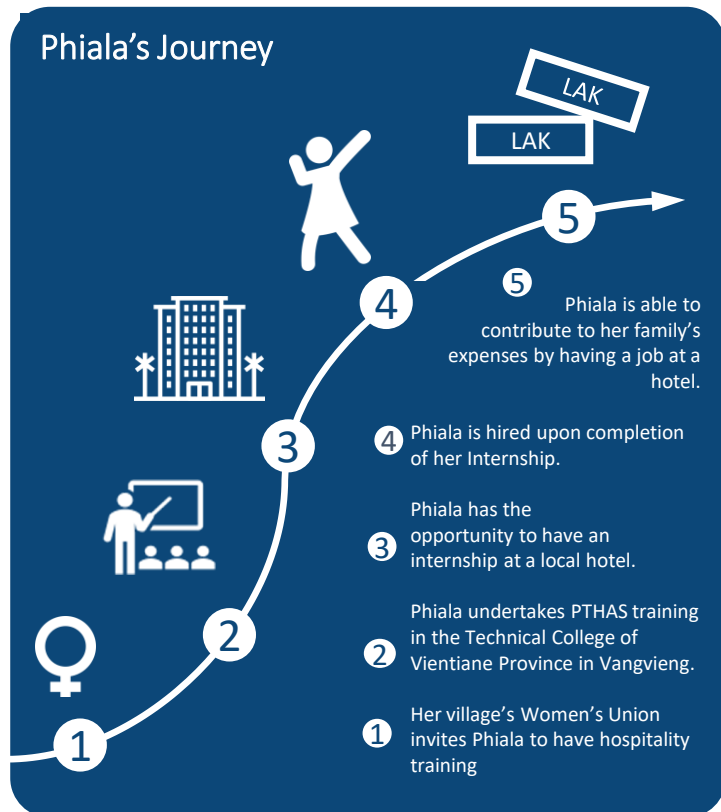
Phiala Shaecao – A graduate of the PTHAS training programme in Vangvieng.
Image Credit: Bart Verweij

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. “I didn’t have any idea about the hospitality industry before,” she says. In fact, she didn’t even know anyone who had worked in hospitality before.

The opportunity came to her from the local Women’s Union in her village, who had been requested to identify eligible candidates. “They asked if we were interested to have training in hospitality, it was the first time I heard about something like that. Of course, I signed up together with some of my friends,” she said.

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“I wasn’t sure if I would get selected because I didn’t know anything about the hospitality industry, and I was the first to be interviewed.” Phiala was interviewed by an industry representative from the Hotel and Guesthouse Group in Vangvieng to assess her suitability to enter the hospitality industry.



Phiala's nervous feelings were misplaced because she was selected and enrolled in the 12-week *Pheun Than Heng A Sip* (PTHAS) Training 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. It was during that time that she impressed the owner of the hotel with her attitude and work ethic. "The teachers during the training coached us well. I learned a lot from them, and I was able to apply it in my internship."

"I got to see how working in the industry looks like and to practice what I learned in the classroom."

This 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. "I am very happy. I'm the second of my six siblings to get a job. It has helped my family a lot", she elaborates.



Phiala serves a customer in Vangvieng. Credit: Bart Verweij

When asked about her future plans, Phiala says, "I want to save up to open my own clothing store - I never dreamt that I could do that." For now she is working hard, serving customers, staffing the front desk, as well as many other duties in the hotel in which she works.

Below: PTHAS students during an activity. Credit: Bart Verweij



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

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

PTHAS 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 LuxDev, the Luxembourg Development Cooperation Agency.

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