



## IMPACT STORY

## ESS COACHES

*“I learned a lot about how the labour market works.”*



Image: Saykham Phetpanya Credit: Swisscontact

Mrs. Saykham Phetpanya and her family have often helped children and the poor. And in the past, she has also organized activities to support disadvantaged children and women. So, when she learned that the VTESS project provides disadvantaged people with employment opportunities she was excited to become involved and applied to become an Employment Support Services (ESS) coach in late 2020.

Phetpanya works at the Provincial Women's Union of Xayaboury Province. Although she graduated from the Luangprabang Teachers' College and is a skilled teacher, she believes that with progressing training as an ESS coach that her skills of speaking and communicating have improved. “I also learned a lot about how the labour market works,” she added.

She explained the steps to select the target beneficiaries require interested applicants to first complete the application form and submit it to the coach. Then the coach will select eligible applicants based on initial information and make an appointment for an interview. Some of the interviews happen on the phone and others are face-to-face.



Image: IVET students processing threads Credit: Swisscontact

“Being a coach is mostly listening to the person,” Phetpanya said. “As coaches, we are not the ones that fix all the problems, but we are there to help a person to learn possible ways to solve their problems and to encourage them to make decisions.” She explained that coaches also need to be respectful. “Because as a good mentor, we must gain the confidence of the person we want to support,” she emphasised.

The project’s planned approach for the implementation has faced many obstacles, such as: the agenda not being followed correctly, trainees changing their short-term internship placements, and a bulk of the challenges are

because of the current pandemic. COVID-19 has impacted every activity we planned so far.

Phetpanya said she adapted her approach based on discussions with other coaches and she also managed to apply her new skills to her duties at the Women’s Union Office.

After that, Phetpanya observed that a lot of trainees changed their perspective in a positive way; especially, when they are given the chance to voice their opinion.

*Image: IVET trainees at Xayaboury province  
Credit: Swisscontact*



**Inception phase:** August 2019 - March 2020

**Project duration:** (4 years) August 2019 - July 2023

**Funded by:** Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

**Implementer:** Consortium Swisscontact / Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts

**Key implementing governmental partners:**

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

**Target Groups:**

- Early school-leavers: young people (15-35 years of age) who have completed primary, but not lower secondary education, and are subjected to income poverty.
- Wider: Teachers from IVET schools, staff from job centres or similar institutions (career counsellors, job coaches, community or youth workers, village facilitators, social workers)



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