



**A GUIDE TO EDUCATION  
ENTERPRISE ENGAGEMENT FOR VOCATIONAL  
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROVIDERS**





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# Foreword

On behalf of the Ministry of Education and Sports, I am pleased to endorse this manual on Education-Enterprise Engagement – ideal for building partnerships between vocational training providers and enterprises.

The business landscape is constantly evolving and vocational training providers must adapt to meet industry needs and ensure graduates meet labour market expectations.

This manual provides suggestions and guidelines for developing partnerships with local businesses along with a range of case studies. From easy-to-implement activities designed to support initial engagement, to more complex examples that require long standing relationships to be developed and, therefore, may take some time to implement. I hope that this manual will be beneficial to you and your institution. While focusing on the tourism and agricultural sectors, many of these case studies can be replicated and I encourage you to explore the opportunities for this.

Mr. Vilayphone PHOMMAHAXAY  
Acting Director General  
Department of Technical and Vocational Education  
Ministry of Education and Sports





# Introduction

Strategic partnerships between vocational skills development providers and private sector companies are essential in today's rapidly evolving job market. As industries constantly change and new technologies emerge, the skills required by the labour market also shift. By collaborating closely, training providers can gain valuable insights into the specific skills and competencies that employers seek, thereby ensuring that vocational training is aligned with real-world demands, providing students with relevant training and hands-on experience. As a result, graduates enter the workforce better prepared, increasing their chances of success in their chosen careers and addressing the skills gap that many industries face.

Internships are one of the most common partnerships and are covered in the separate 'Good Practice Guide to Internships'. This guide focuses on other forms of Education-Enterprise Engagement (EEE), demonstrating how collaborative efforts between vocational training institutions and industry partners can enhance the quality and relevance of educational programmes and enrich students' practical experiences.

Partnerships can take many forms and vary according to the location, size and diversity of local industries, and the size, capacity and needs of the vocational training providers involved. The primary aim of the partnerships should be to enhance graduates' employability by ensuring that young people possess the relevant skillsets needed by local employers.

The EEE partnerships profiled in this guide are varied and provide a range of examples of how such engagement takes place in Lao PDR. The case studies aim to be a source of inspiration for vocational training institutions and local businesses to develop and improve their own partnerships.

Examples include:

- Supporting advanced vocational training and upskilling of teachers.
- Securing industry sponsorships for technical facilities and equipment at schools.
- Engaging industry representatives as guest speakers.
- Hosting skills competitions with training and judging by the private sector.
- Facilitating study tours and site visits to improve understanding of industry operations.
- Hosting job fairs to maximise opportunities for graduates to secure employment.





While not every example may be application to all situations, the case studies provide practical and adaptable models as a starting point for implementation. In creating such partnerships, it is crucial to ensure they provide mutual benefits for students, training providers and enterprises alike.

## WHY DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS?

Well-structured partnerships can bring significant advantages to students, employers, and educational institutions. In striving to equip students with skills, knowledge, and professional attitudes required by the industry, the active involvement of enterprises in vocational education is crucial.

As illustrated by the case studies, such partnerships enhance the resources and expertise available to vocational training institutions, thereby increasing the labour market relevance of their training programmes.

Local businesses often possess specialised resources, both human and material, that can complement those available within educational institutions. For instance, industry partners may offer access to advanced equipment—such as specialised kitchen or laundry facilities—that can be utilised for student (or teacher) training, particularly during off-peak periods. Additionally, businesses can contribute specialised knowledge, enhancing the foundational education provided by vocational training institutions. Industry professionals, such as business managers, can offer invaluable insights into the realities of the workplace and highlight the qualities they seek when recruiting new employees.







# EDUCATION ENTERPRISE ENGAGEMENT



## Phase 1: Building Partnerships

### Identifying the Needs of Vocational Training Institutions

Effective EEE partnerships are driven by specific, clearly defined objectives. The first step in establishing such partnerships is to determine the needs of the vocational training institution. These needs might include enhancing teaching with up-to-date industry practices, gaining access to specialised equipment, upgrading teachers' practical skills, or even generating revenue through industry-related training. On the other side, private sector businesses are often motivated by the desire to hire better-trained graduates but may also want to support local education initiatives, fulfil Corporate Social Responsibility commitments, or upskill their current workforce. It's often best to start with simpler initiatives and build on them as relationships and trust develop over time.

### Researching and Identifying Potential Industry Partners

The business sector in Lao PDR is broad and diverse, comprising businesses of varying sizes and structures—from small family-run establishments to international chains. Building partnerships with these businesses involves cultivating relationships, both with existing connections and by reaching out to new potential partners who can help meet the identified needs. Vocational training institutions should take a proactive approach in reaching out to businesses. Some strategies using Tourism and Hospitality as an

example include:

- Connecting with local organisations such as the Provincial Hotel and Restaurant Association, the Department of Information, Culture, and Tourism, or the Provincial Chamber of Commerce.
- Exploring online websites such as TripAdvisor ([www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com)), Agoda ([www.agoda.com](http://www.agoda.com)), or Booking.com ([www.booking.com](http://www.booking.com)), where customer reviews can reveal key insights into the strengths and weaknesses of each business.
- Leveraging connections within the school, such as asking students and colleagues if they have contacts in the local tourism and hospitality industry.
- Being a tourist for the day—where do tourists eat, stay, and explore? This can provide valuable insights into the local industry.



## Initiating Conversations and Building Relationships

The next step involves reaching out to potential partners, which can be done through various methods such as sending introductory emails, making phone calls, or visiting businesses in person. The best approach will depend upon your specific context, but a combination of these methods tends to work well. Once connections are established and interest is shown, hosting an Open-House Event can be a highly effective way to introduce the school, its students, and faculty to multiple businesses at once. More details on organising such events, along with useful templates, can be found in the Good Practice Guide to Internships.

## Formalising Partnerships with Industry Partners

For any partnership to be successful, it's important to clearly define and understand the objectives from the very beginning. While informal collaborations can be effective, they often work best when formalised through an agreement that outlines the roles and responsibilities of each partner. The most common way to do this is by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

## Phase 2: Implementing Partnerships

After establishing the framework of a partnership, attention should shift to the execution of targeted activities that address the needs identified earlier. The case studies section offers a variety of inspiring examples and practical advice on how to replicate and implement these activities effectively.



## Phase 3: Evaluating Partnerships

It is crucial to regularly review and assess the partnerships to evaluate what is working well and what might need improvement. Areas for improvement could include better communication, refining the planning and execution of activities, setting more realistic goals based on past experiences, and sharing lessons learnt.

For key strategic partners, one-on-one meetings might be the most effective way to conduct these evaluations. In such cases, it is important that both parties come well-prepared, with an agenda or discussion points agreed upon in advance.

In other situations, a collective review session with multiple industry partners might be more practical. These sessions typically occur at the end of an academic year or during the preparatory phase of the upcoming year or semester. Such meetings provide a valuable opportunity to assess whether the partnership's goals were met, share individual experiences, and learn from the challenges and successes encountered.



## Phase 4: Maintaining and Enhancing Partnerships

Establishing, implementing, and evaluating partnerships, as outlined in Phases 1-3, requires significant effort and dedication. It is equally important to maintain, nurture, and, whenever possible, enhance these partnerships to maximise the benefits of the investments made thus far (see Case Study 1 for ideas).

Many of the diverse partnerships highlighted in the case studies were not developed overnight but evolved over several years. This involved building relationships, overcoming initial challenges, fostering trust, and gradually achieving and expanding on the original objectives.



## Building Partnerships Over Time

### The Balcony Training Centre, Luang Prabang Technical and Vocational College



#### OVERVIEW & PARTNERSHIP DETAILS

The Balcony Training Centre has made a notable impact in the integration of private sector involvement into its Certificate Level 1 (C1) programme, which focuses on Food & Beverage Services, Food Production, and Housekeeping. Since 2017, the centre has strategically nurtured partnerships with local businesses, significantly enhancing the practical and theoretical aspects of its curricula.

Initially, the centre embarked on this collaborative journey by hosting an open house event in 2017, inviting industry stakeholders to tour the facilities, learn about the C1 programmes, and witness student skill demonstrations. This event marked the beginning of a series of proactive measures to forge stronger connections with the private sector. By creating opportunities for industry professionals to engage directly with students, the centre was able to incorporate a range of activities that bridged the gap between academic learning and real-world application.

In 2018, the centre expanded its efforts by introducing a Guest Speaker programme, which featured Human Resource managers, General Managers, and successful alumni from the tourism and hospitality sector. These industry leaders provided valuable insights into career opportunities and trends, enriching the students' understanding of the sector. Additionally, the centre began hosting Luang Prabang's monthly General Manager Meetings, utilising its facilities to showcase students' skills in a professional setting. This initiative not only provided practical experience for students but also strengthened the centre's reputation among local businesses.

2019 saw further advancement in these partnerships with the introduction of co-teaching modules involving private sector professionals. This approach allowed students to learn specific technical skills from experienced practitioners in areas such as housekeeping and cooking. Furthermore, the centre arranged for occasional, remunerated service work for students at special events hosted by local businesses, offering hands-on experience in real-world settings. These collaborative efforts extended to the use of private sector facilities for practical training sessions, further integrating industry standards into the training.







## RESOURCES & CHALLENGES

Building and maintaining these industry relationships required consistent effort and a commitment to understanding and adapting to the needs of the private sector. The Balcony Training Centre dedicated significant time to developing these partnerships, which necessitated frequent communication, visits, and collaboration. The success of these relationships was largely dependent on the mutual recognition of the benefits, such as improved training quality and better-prepared graduates.



## BENEFITS

This case study highlights the significant advantages of establishing strong industry connections through networking. For the students, building a network with industry professionals offers them invaluable access to mentorship, potential internships, and future job opportunities. Schools benefit by expanding their network of industry partners, which can lead to more collaboration opportunities, while it allows to influence the development of industry-ready graduates, ensuring a better-aligned workforce with current market needs.



## KEY INSIGHTS & REPLICATION

The success of the Balcony Training Centre underscores the importance of consistent engagement with the private sector. By starting small and gradually expanding collaboration, schools can build meaningful partnerships that benefit students and industry partners.

The Centre's approach highlights the willingness to adapt to industry needs. Other schools looking to replicate this model should focus on establishing long-term relationships with local businesses, leveraging the expertise and resources available within the industry to enhance their training programmes.

The key takeaway is that such partnerships, built on mutual respect and shared goals, can significantly improve the alignment of vocational training with labour market demands.





## Annual Meetings with The Private Sector Dongkhamxang Agriculture Technical College



### OVERVIEW & PARTNERSHIP DETAILS

The Dongkhamxang Agriculture Technical College has made a significant improvement in vocational education by prioritising annual meetings with industry partners. During these meetings, the college invites existing partners and new businesses to engage in discussions on critical topics, with a focus on aligning the college's educational offerings with the evolving needs of the industry.

Convened once a year, these meetings also allow for the formation of sub-groups focused on specific areas, where teachers and industry experts collaborate closely. The event is not just about discussion; it includes a tour of the school's facilities to showcase the college's capabilities and encourage further partnership opportunities.

The agenda usually covers:

- Field trips/site visits planning
- Curricula review
- Guest speakers planning
- Internships review and planning



### RESOURCES & CHALLENGES

Organising and hosting these annual meetings require a significant investment of time and effort from the college staff. The logistics of bringing together stakeholders, coordinating the agenda and ensuring meaningful participation from all parties requires careful planning. One of the primary challenges is maintaining clear communication and follow-up with participants after the meeting to ensure that agreed-upon actions are implemented effectively. Additionally, allocating sufficient time to align the goals of both the college and the private sector can be challenging but is crucial for the success of the meeting and its subsequent activities. For colleges located away from major business hubs, providing transportation, such as a shuttle bus, may be necessary to facilitate attendance by industry partners.





## BENEFITS

The annual meeting offers a valuable opportunity for Dongkhamxang Agriculture Technical College and industry partners to harmonise plans and strengthen their collaboration. By involving the private sector in curricula review and planning, the college ensures that its programmes remain relevant and aligned with industry needs. This collaboration also helps

in pre-arranging internships and site visits, thereby enhancing the practical experience students gain during their studies. The ongoing communication and relationship-building efforts fostered through these meetings ultimately contribute to better educational outcomes and improved employability for students.



## KEY INSIGHTS & REPLICATION

Challenges include allocating sufficient time for goal-setting and logistics, as well as maintaining ongoing communication with participants after the meeting. Ensuring that both the school and private sector partners achieve their objectives through the meeting requires careful planning and follow-up. However, the Dongkhamxang Agriculture Technical College's approach demonstrates the effectiveness of regular, structured communication with industry partners. By establishing an annual meeting, the college ensures ongoing dialogue and collaboration, which is critical for adapting to industry changes and maintaining strong relationships.

Partnering with local business associations or government departments, such as the provincial Hotel and Restaurant Association or Department of Information, Culture and Tourism, can help attract participants, and potential partners. A typical agenda might include:

- Welcoming notes and introductions
- A school's facilities tour
- Updates on curricula and internships, industry feedback, and planning for future collaboration

A key takeaway is that while the process requires time and effort, it does not necessitate significant financial resources, making it a viable option for many institutions. Foreseen expenses may include refreshments, materials, and potentially transportation if the college is situated away from the main business areas.







## Study Tours and Site Visits

Integrated Technical and Vocational College of Xiengkhouang, Integrated Technical Vocational School of Nambak, Technical - Vocational School of Bokeo Province



### OVERVIEW & PARTNERSHIP DETAILS

The management at the Integrated Technical and Vocational College of Xiengkhouang have long recognised the value of immersing students in real-world environments to complement their academic learning. To this end, the college has established ongoing partnerships with local businesses, particularly in the fields of agriculture and auto-mechanics to facilitate this through study tours and site visits.

Other schools and colleges across Lao PDR also organise similar tours and site visits, during which students have the opportunity to observe and participate in the day-to-day operations of these businesses, and apply what they have learned in the classroom to real-world scenarios. As a result, students are better prepared for internships and employment, and the businesses benefit from the opportunity to engage with potential future employees.

The Integrated Technical and Vocational College of Xiengkhouang coordinates at least one field visit per academic year, aligning it with the students' curricula and stage of learning, in the areas of agriculture and auto-mechanics. Following the visits, and in partnership with industry professionals, outcomes are reviewed back in the classroom. The college has recently extended this model to other courses, such as tourism and hospitality.

The Integrated Technical-Vocational School of Nambak arranges annual student field trips to hotels in Luang Prabang town such as Victoria Xiengthong Palace. During these trips, students participate in demonstrations by professionals and engage in hands-on learning experiences. For example, students learnt about hotel-standard table setting through a demonstration by hotel staff and then had the opportunity to practise themselves.

The Technical - Vocational School of Bokeo Province organised a study tour to Luang Prabang View Hotel. The tour included professional demonstrations of bed-making and table-setting, followed by student practice sessions under the guidance of hotel staff.







## RESOURCES & CHALLENGES

Industry partners usually provide support by hosting these visits at no cost for the school. However, logistical challenges may arise, particularly if the businesses are not in close proximity. Additionally, if the region has a limited industrial base in any particular sector, extended trips to other parts of the country may be required, further escalating costs.



## BENEFITS

These study tours offer substantial benefits to both students and industry partners. While partner staff, being trainers of the day, have the opportunity to showcase their expertise, students gain practical exposure to industry operations and access to equipment and technology they might not have encountered in the classroom before.



## KEY INSIGHTS & REPLICATION

This case study highlights the importance of integrating practical experiences into the educational experience. Schools looking to replicate this model should focus on planning these tours to complement classroom learning effectively. Planning multiple visits throughout the academic year, at different stages of learning, can maximise the educational impact.

Schools should also consider partnering with businesses that are open to hosting students and offering insight into their operations without charging fees, while budgeting for any necessary transport and accommodation, or negotiating with the industry partners to subsidise these costs.



## Guest Speaker Programmes Pakpasak Technical College



### OVERVIEW & PARTNERSHIP DETAILS

Pakpasak Technical College has established a robust Guest Speaker Programme in collaboration with hotels, restaurants, and travel agencies. Recognising the need for students to gain real-world insights, the college invites industry professionals to deliver specialised talks to students enrolled in the tourism and hospitality programmes at Pakpasak. Teachers carefully select and invite guest speakers who can complement the core curricula with relevant industry knowledge. For example, baristas and bartenders from establishments such as Crowne Plaza Vientiane, share their expertise in food and beverage services, while travel agents educate students on creating and selling tour packages.

Teachers propose guest speakers for their courses before the semester starts, and the list of potential speakers is reviewed and approved by Pakpasak's management before teachers reach out to the professionals directly.



### RESOURCES & CHALLENGES

The primary resources required for this programme are the identification and coordination of suitable guest speakers. Teachers at Pakpasak begin planning before the semester starts, identifying industry professionals who can provide insights relevant to each subject. While businesses are often willing to provide guest speakers free of charge, some logistical support may be needed, such as covering travel expenses or providing overnight accommodation if speakers are coming from outside the school's area.

A potential challenge is ensuring that the guest speakers' expertise aligns closely with the curricula and that the local industry has professionals with the necessary experience to offer valuable insights. Additionally, if the guest speaker is conducting a practical class, specific equipment or materials might need to be procured in advance.







## BENEFITS

The Guest Speaker Programme offers numerous benefits, as it exposes students and teachers alike to private sector professionals and their industry skills, while complementing core teaching with relevant, up-to-date insights from a local employer.

The programme is easily replicable with a good presence of medium-sized businesses, and serves as an effective first step for schools seeking to build relationships with the private sector. Moreover, expanding the programme to include soft skills training—such as CV writing, job searching, and interview techniques—could further enhance students' employability.

As for the businesses, partnering with the vocational training institutions is a chance to engage future industry professionals; this can also serve as an opportunity to enhance their reputation and fulfil CSR goals.



## KEY INSIGHTS & REPLICATION

This Guest Speaker Programme is a simple, cost-effective way to engage with local businesses, enhancing student learning with real-world insights while simultaneously building stronger ties with key industry players. The model is also versatile and can be easily adapted to various subjects within the curricula.

Schools looking to replicate this model should plan the guest speaker schedule in advance, ensuring that the topics covered align with the students' progression through the training programme. Schools should actively promote the benefits of these partnerships to the businesses, emphasising the significant role that industry professionals can play in enhancing student learning and shaping the future of industry professionals.

This practice can be expanded beyond core skills to include soft skills training, such as career advice and job application tips, provided by industry professionals.





## Skills Competitions Various Schools and Colleges



### OVERVIEW & PARTNERSHIP DETAILS

Vocational training schools and colleges across Lao PDR have collaborated with industry professionals to provide students with practical training culminating in skills competitions. These partnerships involve inviting private sector experts to co-teach specific skills alongside school instructors, which are then tested through student skills competitions.

- The **Khammouane and Savannakhet Technical Colleges** invited local pastry chefs to demonstrate cake baking techniques. The training covered essential skills such as ingredient selection, oven temperature control, and cake-frosting, culminating in a class skills competitions between the students to demonstrate their learning.
- **Pakpasak Technical College** partnered with chefs from renowned establishments in Vientiane (such as Crowne Plaza Vientiane, Laotel, and Souphattra Hotel) to train students in preparing traditional Lao dishes. The chefs' workshops included the preparation of dishes like duck salad and fish salad, and emphasised the use of organic products.
- **The Integrated Technical Vocational School of Nambak** invited staff from Victoria Xiengthong Palace to conduct training and demonstrations on the production of a variety of popular menu items, and upgrade skills in cocktail making and table setting.
- **The Technical - Vocational School of Bokeo Province** held a competition in table setting, cocktail making, and Lao and International cuisine. The school made all necessary logistic arrangements, from scheduling, issuing of the invitations, purchase of equipment and materials, and organisation of the competition. The private sector was invited to be part of the judging panel. To further incentivise the private sector and show their appreciation, the college presented certificates of honour to the participating companies.





## RESOURCES & CHALLENGES

Implementing skills competitions requires careful coordination and resource allocation. Schools need to identify and secure commitments from industry professionals who are willing to donate their time and expertise. While many professionals are motivated by the opportunity to contribute, scheduling and logistical challenges are common. Material resources such as ingredients, equipment, and facilities are also

essential, particularly for practical skills. Schools need to allocate sufficient time to accommodate both the training sessions and competitions within the regular timetable. Additionally, good communication and coordination between the schools and the private sector are crucial to ensure that the events are well-organised and meet the educational objectives.



## BENEFITS

For students, the skills competitions offer a platform to apply their learning under the guidance of industry professionals. The competitive aspect of the events adds a sense of excitement, and the feedback provided by the judges offer valuable insights into their strengths and areas for improvement.

These competitions within the regular timetable also enhance the relevance and quality of schools' training programmes by incorporating industry practices and standards.



## KEY INSIGHTS & REPLICATION

The success of this skills competition initiative lies in its ability to integrate practical industry involvement directly into the learning process, for students to understand how these skills are applied.

A key advantage of this approach is its low-cost nature. To be replicated, this model will require the school to identify key industry professionals who can contribute to the training of students, and maintain a strong alignment between the training provided and the competencies required by the industry. The concept can also be expanded to other vocational areas.





## Training Industry Professionals on College Modules The Lao-German Technical College (LGTC)



### OVERVIEW & PARTNERSHIP DETAILS

The Lao-German Technical College (LGTC) in Vientiane has taken a forward-thinking approach to enhancing collaboration between education and industry, providing specialised training modules in automotive and agro-machinery heavy equipment, to industry professionals. This programme, conducted annually, includes external staff from partners like Kubota, who send their technical staff to partake in specific modules. The training covers topics that the staff have not previously encountered, such as the maintenance of combine harvester machines, single pumps, tractors, etc.

The LGTC accommodates up to eight external staff who join existing student classes, without charging fees to partners with whom they have an MoU.

While LGTC's focus is on automotive and agro-machinery sectors, the model's adaptability suggests it could be expanded to include training in tourism and hospitality, especially given the ASEAN Common Competency Standards for Tourism Professionals' emphasis on standardising and improving competencies across the ASEAN region.



### RESOURCES & CHALLENGES

This approach requires careful coordination between the college and its industry partners to identify suitable modules and schedule training sessions. It is also important to build confidence in the teachers' capacity to deliver relevant training to industry professionals; hence, building a reputation is crucial for the success of this model.

On the logistical aspect, the college must ensure class sizes can accommodate additional industry representatives, without disrupting the learning environment.

Another challenge is about integrating credit-earning and non-credit-earning participants within the same class structure. This requires flexibility in scheduling and potentially adapting the timetable to suit both student cohorts.

While additional costs might incur, they are minimal and the school could ask the business to contribute or cover them.





## BENEFITS

This collaborative training model offers substantial benefits to all parties involved: the college enhances its reputation as a reliable training provider, while industry partners gain access to specialised, low-cost training for their employees. This arrangement is particularly advantageous for businesses that may not have the resources to provide such training internally.

Furthermore, the presence of industry professionals in the classroom can enrich the learning experience for students, exposing them to real-world industry perspectives and standards. This interaction can inspire students and provide them with a clearer understanding of the practical applications of their studies.



## KEY INSIGHTS & REPLICATION

This partnership model exemplifies a cost-effective and mutually beneficial collaboration between vocational training institutions and industry partners.

For successful replication, other institutions should first establish clear communication channels with local industry partners to identify training needs. They should then ensure that their training programmes can accommodate external participants without compromising the quality of education for enrolled students. Additionally, schools may consider expanding the model to include evening or weekend classes to accommodate industry professionals.





## Delivering Private Sector Training Various Schools and Colleges



### OVERVIEW & PARTNERSHIP DETAILS

Schools and colleges across Lao PDR are increasingly collaborating with the private sector to deliver specialised training that directly addresses the needs of the workforce. These partnerships are helping to establish vocational schools and colleges as reliable training providers across multiple sectors, including hospitality, agroforestry, and heavy machinery.

Through these collaborations, tailored training programmes are offered to private sector employees, utilising school resources while fostering stronger ties between educational institutions and businesses.

- **The Integrated Technical and Vocational College of Xiengkhouang**, in collaboration with the Department of Information, Culture, and Tourism (DICT) of Xiengkhouang and industry partners, developed a week-long training programme focusing on Lao cookery and food and beverage services. The training was conducted using the school's facilities, with a nominal fee charged to the private sector participants to cover direct costs such as materials and meals.
- **Khammouane Technical Vocational College** provided fruit carving training to local businesses (such as Lebut Thong Do Hotel, Sehai Restaurant, Fig Tree Restaurant, The Terrace Restaurant and BQ88). The training was an initiative led by an appointed committee that coordinated the logistical elements of the training.
- **The Technical - Vocational School of Bokeo** partnered with local establishments (Phen Jai Restaurant in Ton Pheung District and local restaurants in Huay Sai District), to deliver training on food serving for the staff.
- **The Technical College of Vientiane Province (Vang Vieng Campus)** engaged with Angsavanh Resort in Vang Vieng to train their housekeeping staff. The two-week training programme ran for 8 hours per day, split between 3 hours per day of theory and 5 hours of practical training. The teachers were compensated at a daily rate plus travel expenses.





This partnership model exemplifies how educational institutions can play a pivotal role in supporting local industries, by providing targeted training that addresses immediate business needs while also contributing to the long-term development of the workforce.

## RESOURCES & CHALLENGES

Delivering private sector training through vocational schools and colleges requires careful planning and resource allocation, alongside navigating various challenges. First, teachers must be well-versed in both theoretical and practical aspects to provide an industry-relevant programme. Another significant resource is the availability of appropriate facilities and materials. Additionally, covering direct costs such as materials, ingredients, and other essentials is often managed by charging fees to participating businesses.

Challenges in these partnerships include ensuring alignment between the training provided and the specific needs of the industry. This requires constant communication between the school and the private sector, as well as an understanding of the industry's evolving standards. Another challenge is managing the availability of both the private sector employees who need upskilling and the teachers who can deliver the training, particularly when the training must be conducted outside regular working hours.

## BENEFITS

For the schools, such collaborations can significantly enhance their reputation as leading training providers, thereby attracting more partnerships and potentially more students. Skill gaps are also addressed since the training is tailored to their needs, and the businesses gain access to specialised training at a reasonable cost. Moreover, the insights gained from private sector feedback can be integrated into the curricula, enriching the educational content for students and ensuring that it remains relevant to current industry demands.

Another key benefit is the opportunity for the institution to generate revenues from these training sessions.

Additionally, through this activity, the school or college is building the capacity of the local industry, and contributing towards growing the tourism economy.

## KEY INSIGHTS & REPLICATION

The success of these training programmes highlights the importance of proactive engagement between educational institutions and local industries. Establishing a framework where industry needs are regularly assessed and addressed through tailored training can create a sustainable model of collaboration.

The flexibility of this approach allows it to be replicated beyond hospitality into other sectors. Critical to the success of this model is the school's capacity to build and maintain relationships with industry partners, ensuring that the training provided is both relevant and of high quality.

Furthermore, the ability to charge nominal fees for such training programmes can turn this into a revenue-generating activity, contributing to the financial sustainability of the educational institution.







## Equipment Donations by the Private Sector Lao-German Technical College (LGTC)

### OVERVIEW & PARTNERSHIP DETAILS

In 2013, Kubota Lao partnered with the Lao-German Technical College (LGTC) to support the development of a skilled labour force in agro-machinery. This collaboration allowed LGTC to launch specialised agro-machinery curricula, addressing Kubota's need for trained mechanics in the Lao market.

Kubota Lao played a pivotal role in this partnership by providing the college with new machinery and heavy equipment used in their daily operations. In addition, Kubota offers up-to-date training for students and ensures the equipment remains in optimal condition, by sending a technical expert every three months to inspect and maintain the machinery.

Furthermore, Kubota Lao leverages the college's expansive training facilities—now the largest in Lao PDR for Kubota equipment—to conduct regular staff training sessions, bringing in trainers from Kubota Thailand. Teachers also stay updated on the latest technologies and practices as they participate in these training sessions alongside Kubota's staff.

### RESOURCES & CHALLENGES

The foundation for this kind of partnership lies in being proactive and actively building strong relationships with private sector companies. It is crucial to make businesses aware that such a collaboration is possible.

Arrangements may also be needed for the transportation of the equipment from the company to the school. In return, the school or college should consider offering sponsorship of facilities or promotional opportunities as a way to express gratitude for the donated equipment.

Challenges in this type of partnership include establishing and adhering to a maintenance schedule for the donated equipment, ensuring that teachers are properly trained by the industry partner, and convincing businesses to donate their latest technology to the school.





## BENEFITS

The continuous supply of new machinery ensures that the students gain practical experience with modern agricultural machinery, while the school has access to the latest technology, enhancing the learning opportunities for their students.

For Kubota Lao, this partnership has created a pipeline of skilled mechanics trained specifically on their machinery, reducing the gap in technical expertise

within the local labour market. Additionally, the company benefits from access to a large, well-equipped training facility, which can be used for regular staff training sessions.



## KEY INSIGHTS & REPLICATION

This case study demonstrates the value of private sector contributions to vocational training schools in providing up-to-date training resources. Even older or second-hand equipment that is no longer in use by businesses may be of help to colleges.

To replicate this model, vocational training institutions, especially in sectors like tourism and hospitality, should consider engaging with equipment suppliers or service providers.

Schools can also incentivize these partnerships by offering reciprocal benefits, such as recognition or sponsorship opportunities.







## Joint Industry Advisory Committee Pakpasak Technical College



### OVERVIEW & PARTNERSHIP DETAILS

Pakpasak Technical College has established a Joint Industry Advisory Committee for their Tourism and Hospitality Department to help keep its curricula and training programmes relevant and closely aligned with the evolving demands of the tourism and hospitality sector. This committee consists of 15 representatives including people from hotels, restaurants, and travel businesses.

This committee plays a pivotal role in aligning the institution's curricula and programmes with industry needs, with direct insights into industry trends, requirements, and expectations.

The committee convenes twice a year to:

- Evaluate and provide recommendations on curricula updates
- Offer guidance on student assessment methods
- Review and suggest improvements for internship programmes
- Analyse local industry trends and their implications for training courses
- Foster stronger connections between the school and the industry

Additionally, the committee has set up specific support groups on:

- Marketing
- External relations
- Curricula review and development
- Internship review and planning



### RESOURCES & CHALLENGES

The resources required to maintain the Joint Industry Advisory Committee are primarily administrative. These include organising biannual meetings, managing communication with committee members, and facilitating the logistical aspects of their involvement, such as travel arrangements and the provision of meeting materials.

The time commitment from both Pakpasak staff and industry professionals is also a significant resource, and it is crucial to value their contribution to maintain engagement from both sides.

Challenges include maintaining the regular participation from





the same industry representatives, to ensure the committee's work is consistent and effective, but also the sustained commitment and openness of the school to act on the advice and feedback provided by the committee.

Another challenge lies in persuading industry partners of the long-term benefits of participating in the committee, especially as the immediate advantages may not be apparent.

## BENEFITS

The Joint Industry Advisory Committee model gives the college direct access to a high-level network of industry practitioners; it also guarantees that its training programmes are industry-validated.

This collaboration gives the businesses the ability to shape the college's development and provides a direct influence on the curricula.

## KEY INSIGHTS & REPLICATION

The establishment of Pakpasak's Joint Industry Advisory Committee demonstrates the value of structured, formalised partnerships between educational institutions and industry stakeholders.

For other vocational training schools and colleges looking to replicate this model, it is crucial to establish the committee through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and appoint members from a broad range of industry sectors for a set term.

The success of such a committee hinges on the school's willingness to listen to and act upon the advice received from its industry partners; however, it doesn't require significant financial or teacher time investment.





## Utilising Private Sector Facilities for Training The Balcony Training Centre, Luang Prabang Technical and Vocational College



### OVERVIEW & PARTNERSHIP DETAILS

The Balcony Training Centre, in partnership with the Luang Prabang View Hotel, has developed a valuable collaboration to enhance the practical training of its students. Recognising that the model bedrooms at the training centre were insufficient for preparing students to work in luxury hotels, a partnership was established to bridge this gap. The four-star Luang Prabang View Hotel offered five of its bedrooms for a two-week period, allowing students pursuing a C1 Certificate in Housekeeping to receive hands-on training in a real-world luxury hotel environment.

In addition, the hotel made key staff available to assist the teachers in training students to their own hotel standards on:

- Bed-making
- Provision of luxury room amenities
- Minibar management
- Bathroom cleaning techniques
- Use of specific detergents



### RESOURCES & CHALLENGES

The model requires significant resources from the private sector, such as putting at disposal hotel rooms - however, if timed to coincide with the low season, this should be possible. The willingness of the partner business to allocate staff to co-train students alongside the school's teachers was also critical.

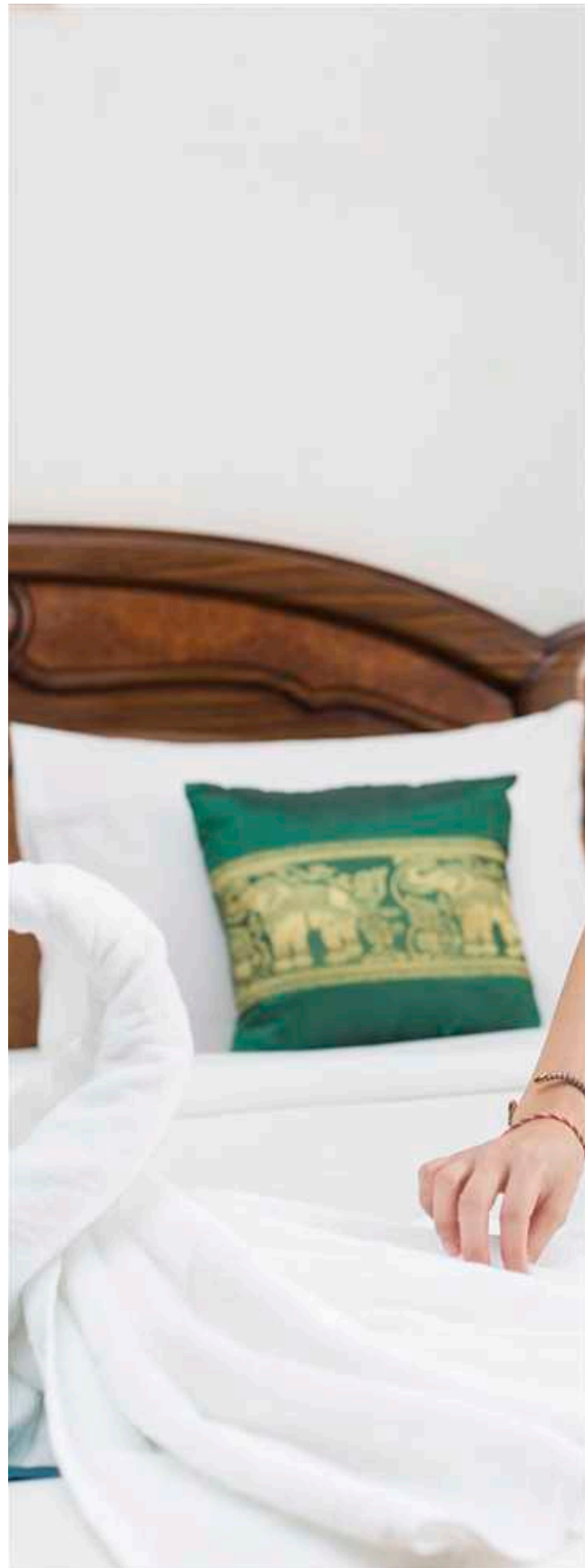
Arranging transportation and associated costs for students to the venue could be another logistical challenge to anticipate.



### BENEFITS

The partnership between The Balcony and the Luang Prabang View Hotel allowed students to learn in a real-world setting, which cannot be fully replicated in the classroom.

Businesses benefit from it by shaping the skillset of potential future employees who can meet their specific operational standards, fostering a pipeline of well-prepared candidates for their workforce.

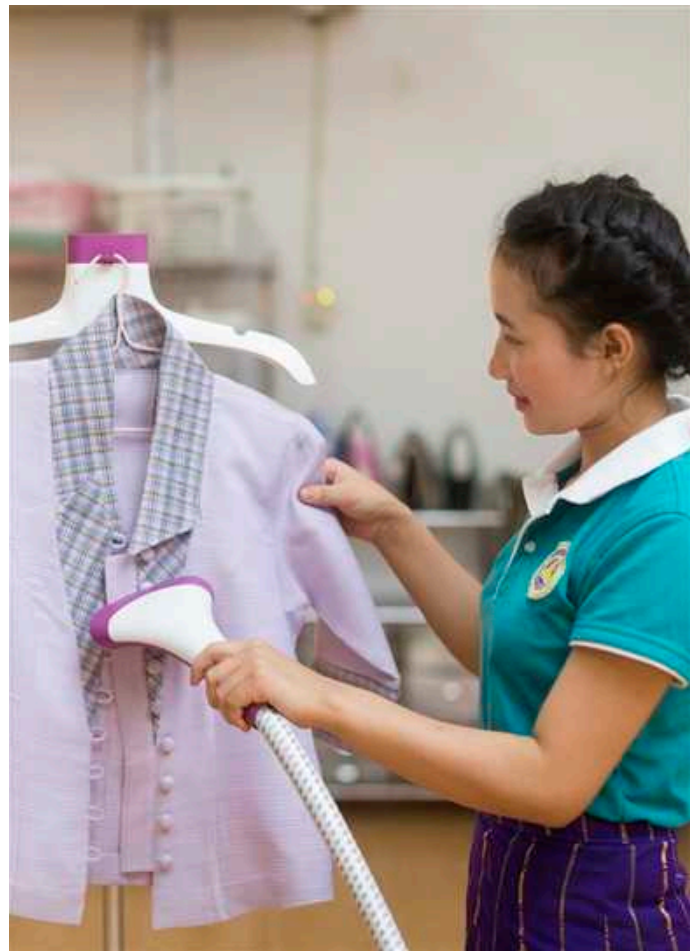






## KEY INSIGHTS & REPLICATION

The key insight is that schools should actively seek out opportunities for collaboration with local businesses, particularly those that can offer unique training environments. There is always an opportunity for businesses to open their facilities and share their staff's expertise, especially during the low season.



These collaborations are not limited to housekeeping; similar initiatives could be developed in areas such as kitchen operations, bar services, and front desk management.

The school needs to identify at first topics that could be enriched through real-world learning, before mapping out and selecting local businesses, based on their facilities, product and service quality.





## Hosting Job Fairs Pakpasak Technical College



### OVERVIEW & PARTNERSHIP DETAILS

Pakpasak Technical College organised a job fair to help graduates from the C1 programmes secure employment in the tourism and hospitality sector. The job fair targeted graduates specialising in Lao Cookery, Food and Beverage Services, Housekeeping Services, and Kitchen Operations. The event was designed to bridge the gap between newly trained students and potential employers, creating a conducive environment for students and employees to interact, learn about each other and explore opportunities for working together.

Prior to the job fair, it was important that the college was able to identify businesses with suitable vacancies available.

The job fair was well-supported by local businesses in Vientiane Capital, who recognised the value of recruiting skilled graduates directly from the college, and featured:

- An opening introduction by the College Director, followed by a summary of the courses including key learning objectives and skillsets graduates should be expected to have.
- A school facility tour of each department, led by the teachers.
- As the tour reached the Tourism and Hospitality department, employers could observe practical skill demonstrations by students from each course – for example F&B students serving welcome drinks and Lao Cookery students providing delicious snacks they had made.
- Businesses were able to set up tables to promote their business and share job opportunities for students who would visit each table. Interested students could then sign up for job interviews to be held onsite in dedicated interview rooms.
- Specialised support was available from career counsellors to complete application forms and prepare for interviews.

The fair's structure ensured that both students and employers maximised the opportunity to connect in a meaningful and productive way.





## RESOURCES & CHALLENGES

Organising a job fair requires resources from both the college and participating businesses. The college has to carefully plan and coordinate the event, ensuring that the businesses invited have suitable vacancies for the graduates.

Teachers are heavily involved in the preparation, including conducting vacancy surveys and coaching students for their interviews.

Additionally, a budget is required to cover the costs for signage, invitations, and ingredients and materials needed for the skill demonstrations. The institution also needs to ensure sufficient space to accommodate businesses and private areas for interviews to be conducted.

Challenges included the time-intensive nature of the event's organisation, the need for thorough student preparation, and ensuring active participation from businesses. For schools in more remote areas, attracting a sufficient number of businesses could also be a challenge, requiring even more effort to engage the private sector.



## BENEFITS

Students are given the opportunity to showcase their skills and directly interact with potential employers, which greatly increases their chances of securing employment post-graduation. For the businesses, the fair offered a cost-effective way to recruit qualified graduates who have been trained to industry standards. Businesses who have partnered with the college on other types of engagement activities are often the most keen to attend. The institution, on the other hand, benefits from increased visibility in the labour market and strengthens relationships with the private sector, which can lead to further collaborative opportunities.



## KEY INSIGHTS & REPLICATION

Key insights include for the school to be proactive, with the necessity of thorough planning, active student preparation, and strong industry engagement to ensure the event's success.

For replication, schools or colleges should consider tailoring the scale of the job fair to match their resources and the number of graduates. They should also focus on establishing strong ties with local businesses well in advance of the event. By fostering these relationships, schools can ensure that their students are well-prepared for the job market and that businesses are eager to participate in the recruitment process.

This model can be easily adapted to various industries beyond tourism and hospitality, depending on the specific vocational training offered by the institution.





## Private Sector Sponsored Scholarships Dongkhamxang Agriculture Technical College

### OVERVIEW & PARTNERSHIP DETAILS

Dongkhamxang Agriculture Technical College has seen a substantial increase in student enrolment due to its partnership with Pakouy, a Chinese company investing in banana plantations in northern Lao PDR. Under this agreement, the company offers 50 scholarships per academic year to selected students, which has significantly enhanced the appeal of the college's agricultural programmes.

This collaboration not only provides financial support but also guarantees practical work experience, setting a new standard for industry-education partnerships in Lao PDR.

The scholarship programme operates under a structured 12+3 academic framework, providing students with both theoretical knowledge and hands-on experience as they work towards their Higher Diploma. The partnership also includes a language-learning component and two semesters studying in China, further enriching the students' learning experience and skillsets.

Under this partnership, Pakouy covers the tuition fees and language classes, as well as the expenses associated with the semesters in China for each student. In addition, the student will receive 500 CNY (or 1,550,000 LAK) per month throughout their studies. The college also receives 500 CNY (or 1,550,000 LAK) per month per student, as a management fee, ensuring that administrative and logistical aspects of the programme are well-supported.

- In the first three semesters, students engage in theoretical coursework at Dongkhamxang Agriculture Technical College, with an additional requirement to study Chinese, provided by Mulan Language School. At the end of the third semester, students must pass the HSK 3 exam, a Chinese language proficiency test.
- In the fourth and fifth semesters, students complete part of their studies in China, at Guangxi Agricultural Vocational-Technical College.
- In their final semester, students return to Lao PDR for a mandatory internship at Pakouy, where they apply the skills they have learned in a real-world agricultural setting.







## RESOURCES & CHALLENGES

With this partnership model, no financial resources are required from the college; however, the college does need to manage the logistics of students studying abroad, such as visas, travel, and accommodation, which requires careful coordination between the college, the Chinese educational partner, and the company.

Key challenges are for the student to pass the language test, which is mandatory for their studies in China; during the last semester, the student also needs to maintain the balance between academic learning and internship demands.



## BENEFITS

The scholarship programme offers financial relief to students while providing them with a structured path toward completing their studies, including international exposure through a semester at a vocational university in China. The programme equips students with both technical agricultural skills and practical workplace experience through their internship with Pakouy.

The partnership has been instrumental in attracting new students to Dongkhamxang Agriculture Technical College, positioning the college as a desirable institution. Unlike many other colleges, Dongkhamxang has witnessed an increase in enrollments over the last couple of years, which the college attributes to this programme.

By investing in the education and training of students, the company secures a well-prepared workforce, reducing recruitment costs and ensuring a better alignment between their educational background and the practical skills required for their business.



## KEY INSIGHTS & REPLICATION

This partnership between Dongkhamxang Agriculture Technical College and Pakouy showcases how vocational education can be enhanced through strategic collaboration with the private sector. The scholarship programme is successful in attracting students by offering financial aid, international education opportunities, and guaranteed internships. A key insight is the importance of integrating language skills into the curricula when international study is involved, as this directly affects the success of the programme.

Other vocational institutions can replicate this model by partnering with businesses that require skilled labour in specific sectors. The key is ensuring that the partnership is mutually beneficial, with clear financial and educational support provided to students, and tangible workforce benefits for the private sector. Maintaining open communication between all stakeholders, particularly in managing international study components and internships, is critical for the programme's success.







## Coordinating Internship Schedules with Local Businesses Technical College of Vientiane Province



### OVERVIEW & PARTNERSHIP DETAILS

The Technical College of Vientiane Province collaborates with the private sector to provide students hands-on experience in subjects such as crop production and aquaculture.

Internships are tailored to match both the curricula and the unique operational needs of each business, ensuring that students are sent for training based on seasonal requirements and business demands.

The college collaborates closely with business partners through memoranda of understanding (MOUs), developed after comprehensive discussions involving key college and business representatives to align training goals, timelines, and the practical needs of all parties.



### RESOURCES & CHALLENGES

Ensuring students have an engaging and rewarding internship experience requires careful coordination, planning and execution.

Since teachers are responsible for overseeing practical training at various industry sites, time management is a critical factor. Additionally, the coordination between institutions and private sector partners involves significant planning and staff allocation, with both parties appointing personnel to oversee collaboration efforts, and ensure aligning the theoretical curricula with the evolving demands of the private sector.

To address these issues, the college prioritises continuous communication with businesses, including feedback loops on student preparation and mutual understanding of expectations for the students. Efforts are also underway to improve infrastructure and teacher capabilities through joint training programmes.







## BENEFITS

The students are provided with highly specialised, seasonally-based training that aligns directly with the practical demands of local industries. This ensures that students not only gain technical skills in their fields (e.g., aquaculture, crop production) but also learn how to work according to the natural cycles and specific needs of each sector



## KEY INSIGHTS & REPLICATION

This collaboration highlights the importance of aligning education with real-world business needs, particularly in industries that rely heavily on seasonal cycles and practical skills.

The approach of tailoring internships to sectoral needs can serve as a model for other educational institutions aiming to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

Additionally, the partnership serves as a template for developing mutually beneficial relationships between educational institutions and the private sector, which can be replicated in other vocational training contexts across Lao PDR.







## Teacher Training

Integrated Technical Vocational School of Nambak, Technical - Vocational School of Bokeo Province, Bolikhamxay Technical and Vocational School



### OVERVIEW & PARTNERSHIP DETAILS

Several colleges and schools have collaborated with hotels to offer teachers practical training in key aspects of tourism and hospitality, including food and beverage services, food production, and front office operations. Teachers are temporarily relieved of their teaching duties, usually for 1 to 3 weeks, and participate directly in hotel operations. This hands-on training allows them to learn the latest skills and use modern equipment while fully engaged with colleagues and customers. As a result, educators gain valuable skills and experience that they can bring back to their classrooms.

**Pakpasak Technical College** worked with Crowne Plaza Vientiane on a three-week programme for the teachers. The “Train the Trainer” programme was planned with the college’s management to avoid disrupting the academic calendar, and was held during the school summer break. The training covered food and beverage services, food production, and front office operations.

Similarly, **the Technical - Vocational School of Bokeo Province, and the Integrated Technical Vocational School of Nambak** collaborated with the Luang Prabang View Hotel, sending two teachers for a period of three weeks, to gain practical experience in dining room service and kitchen operations.

Meanwhile, **Bolikhamxay Technical and Vocational School** also partnered with Crowne Plaza Vientiane to organise a similar training, where four teachers participated in two three-week batches, focusing on hospitality skills, such as serving and table setting.



### RESOURCES & CHALLENGES

To implement these trainings successfully, the hotels had to allocate staff to act as trainers during the programmes. In addition, hotels provided facilities and equipment to support the hands-on nature of the training, meals and work insurance for the teachers.



It is important to have a clear learning plan in place, so all parties have clear expectations. At the end of the training, an assessment should take place to assess teacher's progress against learning outcomes and provide an opportunity to reflect on what can be improved for future iterations.

Logistical challenges might arise, such as for the teachers that were trained at Crowne Plaza Vientiane, who needed to undergo pre-training health screenings. Other logistical concerns to consider are transportation and accommodation, and potential financial resources.

### **BENEFITS**

The on-the-job training enriches their teaching skills and allows teachers to return to their classrooms with updated industry knowledge, which they can incorporate into their lessons.



As a result, students indirectly benefit from the teachers' enriched expertise. They receive more relevant and industry-aligned information.

At the same time, teachers can use this opportunity to build or strengthen their relationships with the business, which can potentially lead to further collaboration for future activities.



### **KEY INSIGHTS & REPLICATION**

By providing teachers with practical training in real-world environments, such partnerships elevate the quality of education delivered to students.

Institutions seeking to replicate this model should start by assessing the possible partners and exploring potential collaborations. They should focus on mutually beneficial arrangements for both parties that allow teachers to gain hands-on experience, whether through short-term or longer, more intensive programmes.

Coordination between the school or college and businesses is critical for success, particularly when it comes to aligning training periods with both academic schedules and industry availability.





## Teacher Development Through Internships Pakpasak Technical College



### OVERVIEW & PARTNERSHIP DETAILS

The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) TVET Department initiated the “Hotel Internship Programme” in partnership with the Skills for Tourism Project (LAO/029) to address the growing need for tourism and hospitality teachers to acquire updated, industry-relevant skills. This collaboration with leading hotels such as Crowne Plaza Vientiane allowed teachers from Pakpasak Technical College to gain hands-on experience in a real-world hotel setting. The programme focuses on providing teachers with industry insights that they can pass on to their students, ensuring they are well-prepared for the hospitality sector.



### RESOURCES & CHALLENGES

Teachers selected for the internship are trained in either house-keeping or food production for a period of up to three months. Just like regular staff, teachers have to undergo interviews and orientation before being placed in departments relevant to their teaching subjects. Crowne Plaza supports the teachers by providing health check ups, health insurance and meals during the internship.

However, organising such internships can pose logistical challenges, particularly in finding interested enterprises. Another obstacle can be the teachers’ availability for such extended periods of time. In the case they are sent during the summer break for instance, the willingness to use personal time for professional development is paramount.





## BENEFITS

With these internships, teachers have the opportunity to improve their practical knowledge, and are able to incorporate the latest techniques and trends into the classroom, which enhances their teaching, as they can share to their students the realities of working in hospitality.

The experience also strengthens relationships between teachers and hotel industry professionals, creating opportunities for future collaborations such as skills competitions or study tours.



Additionally, the hotel benefits by fostering stronger ties with educational institutions, which could lead to future partnerships for student internship or recruitment.



## KEY INSIGHTS & REPLICATION

This teacher internship model is replicable, not just in tourism and hospitality but across various industries where vocational training is necessary.

Schools and colleges can seek out local businesses to form similar partnerships, and it can be done in various formats, from a few weeks to several months, depending on the resources available.

The key insight is the importance of continuous industry exposure for educators, especially in rapidly evolving sectors like hospitality. Future iterations of the programme could explore shorter internship stints or job-shadowing opportunities during non-teaching periods.





## Community Engagement Luang Prabang Technical and Vocational College

### OVERVIEW & PARTNERSHIP DETAILS

The Luang Prabang Technical and Vocational College actively engages its students in community service projects, which focus on providing vocational skills to local organisations and institutions. These partnerships include a variety of stakeholders such as hotels, restaurants, guesthouses, schools, health centres, and other establishments in Luang Prabang city and province.

Before coordinating with students, the college first identifies potential organisations interested in hosting volunteers. Once these partners are confirmed, the college formalises the arrangement by sending an official letter outlining the initiative. Twice a year, volunteer students and their accompanying teachers participate in these initiatives, offering services like computer maintenance and technical training. Businesses and institutions welcome these interventions, recognising their value in improving operations and developing local skills.



### RESOURCES & CHALLENGES

A key aspect of the volunteering initiative is the willingness of the students to participate, and ensuring the proposed skills match with community needs. Prior to deployment, participants receive comprehensive briefings and training to align them with the initiative's objectives, whether the tasks involve computer maintenance, repair, or capacity-building sessions.

The logistical side involves scouting potential locations, securing equipment, and arranging transportation and accommodation to support the smooth execution of tasks. However, significant challenges remain in covering expenses such as transportation and food allowances, which put a strain on the college's budget. Although some hosting businesses offer meals, the financial demands, particularly in covering operational costs, can pose difficulties for sustaining these volunteer efforts.



## BENEFITS

Students apply their vocational skills in real-world scenarios, whether they are troubleshooting technical issues in schools or local businesses, the hands-on experience enhances their professional development and confidence.

Additionally, the programme fosters stronger community engagement, as students interact with local businesses and institutions of their area, which can form valuable networks with potential future employers. This mutually beneficial relationship is further bolstered by the support of some establishments, which provide meals or other forms of hospitality, demonstrating their appreciation for the students' contributions. These gestures, while small, help mitigate some of the financial strain and enhance the overall sustainability of the programme.



## KEY INSIGHTS & REPLICATION

Replicating this volunteering programme requires building strong partnerships with local businesses and institutions.



The success of the programme lies in its flexibility and ability to adapt to the needs of diverse sectors, from hospitality to education and health.

Key steps to ensure successful replication include securing logistical resources such as equipment, transportation, and accommodation, and providing training for students to meet the foundational requirements of the projects. Establishing clear roles for students and teachers is crucial for effective implementation, as is finding innovative ways to share the costs, such as requesting businesses to contribute by offering meals or providing logistical support.





## Private Sector Networking Events The Technical College of Vientiane Province



### OVERVIEW & PARTNERSHIP DETAILS

The Technical College of Vientiane Province recently organised its first-ever private sector networking event, showcasing an innovative approach to teacher development and industry engagement. The event was a follow-up to a two-week teacher training initiative in bartending, which provided teachers with new skills to integrate into their teaching. The event, hosted on a Friday evening, served as a real-world opportunity for teachers to apply their newly acquired skills.

The college invited its private sector partners in the tourism and hospitality industry, including businesses that provide internship opportunities, support college programmes, and purchase goods and services from The Academy Training Hotel and Restaurant. The college management, provincial education authorities, and heads of key feeder schools were also invited. This wide-reaching guest list highlighted the college's ongoing efforts to build stronger relationships with key stakeholders across the industry and educational sectors.

The event allowed the teachers to practise their bartending and hospitality skills, as they welcomed guests with a variety of cocktails and mocktails crafted specifically for the occasion. The food production team supported the event by preparing a range of snacks and finger foods, showcasing their culinary expertise.



### RESOURCES & CHALLENGES

The event involved both material and human inputs, as teachers prepared and served drinks and food, and the college's facilities were used to host the event. The participation of private sector partners, management, and key educational stakeholders highlighted the collaborative spirit of the occasion.

However, financial challenges might be a concern, since hosting such events on a regular basis requires funding for food, drinks, and logistics. The college is actively exploring options to secure sponsors for these events in the future. Alternatively, if sponsorship is not secured, the frequency of the events could be reduced to once per semester.



Coordinating these events with the provincial Hotel and Restaurant Association could also provide opportunities to overcome these challenges and share costs.

## **BENEFITS**

The networking event was a unique opportunity for the teachers to apply their newly learned skills under pressure, a situation far more demanding than a traditional classroom setting. Their successful execution of the event reinforced their confidence and solidified their practical skills in hospitality management.



For the private sector, the event offered a chance to connect more closely with the college and its programmes. Positive feedback was received from many participants, including a request from one hotel to train their staff, as well as another request for bakery product supplies sampled during the event. These outcomes indicate that the event successfully showcased the value of the college's offerings and established them as a reliable partner in workforce development.

## **KEY INSIGHTS & REPLICATION**

One key takeaway is that hosting real-world networking events creates a platform for teachers to engage directly with the industry, providing a practical and dynamic learning experience. The format of the event—focused on practical skills and informal networking—can easily be replicated by other institutions looking to build similar connections with their private sector partners.

In the future, the college aims to host these events on a monthly basis, in collaboration with the provincial Hotel and Restaurant Association. The format of the events will vary, sometimes taking place in the evening and other times over lunch, depending on the learning and teaching priorities of the month. Some meetings may adopt a more formal structure to facilitate in-depth discussions on industry needs, while others will continue to serve as platforms for showcasing the skills of both teachers and students.

To replicate this model, other educational institutions should consider identifying private sector partners willing to collaborate and support such events. Clear objectives should be set, and sufficient resources must be allocated to ensure a high-quality experience for attendees. Securing sponsorships or financial backing will be crucial to sustaining these events over time, but the potential benefits—both for the college and its industry partners—make the effort worthwhile.





## The Academy Training Hotel and Restaurant The Technical College of Vientiane Province



### UNIQUE HYBRID MODEL & OPERATIONAL DETAILS

The Academy Training Hotel and Restaurant (The Academy) is part of the Technical College of Vientiane Province's Vang Vieng campus, as a practical training facility integrated with a fully functional hotel and restaurant.

Located in the heart of Vang Vieng, The Academy offers students of tourism and hospitality programmes a unique practical training environment. With its six rooms, two meeting rooms and restaurant, The Academy aims to provide a real-world training environment for the students to gain industry-relevant skills; and to generate income with the goal to become self-sustainable, allowing reinvestment into the college.

The team at The Academy consists of a professional manager, and 10 full-time staff, all graduates of the college. During peak times, the team is supplemented by part-time staff, primarily students looking to earn additional income to support their studies.

In addition to the core team, two teachers are embedded within the operations of The Academy, and assigned full-time to a particular department for a period of four months. While posted at The Academy, the teachers are also working closely with department supervisors, learning how to operate each department, manage rosters for staff and manage inventory. This experience not only allows them to refresh their skills within a dynamic environment, but also to interact with customers and colleagues. After this four-month tenure, teachers return to the classrooms, and trade places with two other teachers, on an on-going basis.

The service range offered by The Academy to the public, private companies and non-governmental organisations, include:

- Selling hotel rooms via both offline and online channels;
- Offering breakfast to hotel guests and walk-in customers;
- Providing meeting room packages including coffee breaks and set lunches;
- Hosting private events such as special dinners for tour companies and international organisations;
- Operating a 40-seat restaurant open to walk-in customers six evenings a week;



- Supplying a bakery service to other hotels and restaurants with homemade croissants, breads, cookies and more.

## BENEFITS

Students directly benefit from The Academy in several different ways:

- The Academy offers a dynamic and practical training environment with high standards, particularly for F&B related services. During daytime, when The Academy is closed to the public, teachers and students alike can fully utilise the facilities for training purposes.



- Following their theoretical and practical training, students are assigned to work at The Academy on a rotating schedule, so they can implement and hone their practical skills within a real-world environment.
- Second-year students have the possibility to work part-time outside of their study hours, offering them a chance to earn additional income.
- The top graduates each year are often given the opportunity to take on a full time position within The Academy for one year, to further develop their skills before pursuing advanced roles within leading businesses in the sector.







## Company Insight - Crowne Plaza Vientiane



### COMPANY OVERVIEW

Crowne Plaza Vientiane, part of the globally renowned InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), is a 5-star hotel located in Vientiane. With 198 rooms, upscale conference facilities, and fine dining options, Crowne Plaza employs more than 300 people with the associated recruitment and retention challenges of such a large workforce.



### INVOLVEMENT IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Since beginning operations in 2017, Crowne Plaza Vientiane has taken an active role in addressing the skills gap within the tourism and hospitality sector, by partnering with a variety of educational institutions.

In addition to Pakpasak Technical College, the hotel collaborates with many other educational and vocational institutions in Lao PDR and the region, including the National University of Laos, Soutsaka Institute of Technology, Rattana Institute of Business Administration, Lao International College, and Khon Kaen University in Thailand. These collaborations aim to shape a more skilled workforce that meets the industry's evolving needs, and the hotel has engaged training students and teachers alike, in various departments, including front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage services.

**Internships:** Students are offered internships lasting up to four months, during which they receive meals and a monthly stipend from Crowne Plaza. Interns gain exposure across various departments, with some transitioning into full-time positions. For instance, in 2020, 50% of the interns secured jobs at the hotel.

**Study Tours:** Crowne Plaza hosts 5-10 study tours annually, each accommodating between 30-50 students from Vientiane, other provinces and neighbouring countries. These tours start with a presentation of the hotel's operations, followed by the visit of each department, to introduce students to hotel operations.

**Skills Competitions:** Crowne Plaza Vientiane actively participates in skills competitions as both a trainer prior to competitions for the students, and participates in the judging panel.



Crowne Plaza’s staff members are frequently invited to judge these competitions, especially in food production and drinks preparation, providing valuable feedback that directly benefits both the students and the academic institutions involved.

**Guest Speaker Programme:** The hotel is also committed to sharing industry knowledge through guest speaker programmes, where members of the hotel’s senior management and department heads offer their expertise to vocational students. These sessions cover a range of topics, from industry trends to personal career experiences, aiming to inspire and prepare students for the demands of a career in hospitality.

**“Train the Teacher” programme:** In addition to student internships, Crowne Plaza offers a “Train the Teacher” programme, where educators work alongside hotel staff to enhance their practical knowledge. Teachers receive meals, health checkups, and health insurance, though they do not receive accommodation or an allowance. This programme enables teachers to better prepare students for the industry.

**Donations:** The hotel also contributes by donating used equipment to institutions like Pakpasak Technical College. Recently, these have included donations of used bedsheets and bathrobes, which while not meeting the standards of a 5-star hotel are perfectly adequate for use in training, supplementing the resources available at the colleges.



## BENEFITS & OUTCOMES

For Crowne Plaza Vientiane, these partnerships are mutually beneficial. Internships provide the hotel with a recruitment pipeline, reducing training time for new hires. The hotel benefits from an ongoing influx of well-prepared candidates, many of whom join the staff after completing their internships.

By offering practical training programmes, the hotel not only fills its immediate staffing needs but also contributes to long-term workforce development for the whole industry.



## CHALLENGES

Crowne Plaza Vientiane’s multiple partnerships and initiatives requires a significant investment in time, particularly from the HR department, in managing the relationships and activities with education partners. Line managers and supervisors need to be well informed of planned activities and dedicate sufficient time to ensuring they are carried out to the high standards expected.





## Company Insight - Laos Buffalo Dairy

### COMPANY OVERVIEW

Established in 2016, Laos Buffalo Dairy is a unique agricultural business in Lao PDR that specialises in producing buffalo dairy products, while also serving as a key player in agrotourism. Located in Luang Prabang, the farm produces high-quality buffalo mozzarella, ricotta, and other dairy products, supplying both tourism customers and high-end hotels and restaurants in the region.

The farm employs approximately 40 staff members and houses over 100 buffaloes, which it acquires through a unique “rent-a-buffalo” system. Under this model, the farm “rents” buffaloes from local villagers, providing care, nutrition, and health support for the animals. Once the buffaloes’ milking period ends, they are returned to the villages healthier and stronger. This symbiotic relationship not only supports local livelihoods but also ensures the farm has a sustainable supply of milk.

Additionally, Laos Buffalo Dairy is a popular destination for tourists seeking to learn more about sustainable agricultural practices and animal care.

### INVOLVEMENT IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Laos Buffalo Dairy has partnered with the Northern Agriculture and Forestry College and the Souphanouvong University in Luang Prabang, to offer students the chance to gain hands-on experience in agriculture. The company aims to introduce students to modern agricultural practices, allowing them to work with animals, plants, and dairy production while building a broader understanding of sustainable farming.

Internships typically last for three months, with 3-6 students per cohort. During these internships, students work on tasks related to animal care, including vaccination, medication, and artificial insemination. The farm provides housing, meals, and an allowance to support students during their stay. While internships for students from Luang Prabang province are the most frequent, students from other provinces usually participate in workshops.





In addition to internships, Laos Buffalo Dairy previously offered a 6-8 week training course focusing on a variety of hospitality and service-related skills such as customer service, hygiene, cooking, coffee-making, and English classes. The aim of these programmes is to equip students with skills that are directly transferable to both agriculture and hospitality industries.



## BENEFITS & OUTCOMES

Internships at Laos Buffalo Dairy offered students a holistic learning experience that goes beyond traditional agricultural training. In addition to hands-on experience with animal husbandry and sustainable farming practices, students are also exposed to the hospitality sector through the farm's agrotourism activities. They gain valuable skills in customer service, food hygiene, and coffee preparation, all of which are critical for servicing high-end tourism markets.

Students also work closely with international veterinary experts and farm staff, learning how modern farming techniques and animal care can be applied in a real-world setting. The exposure to diverse tasks—from managing livestock to engaging with tourists—gives them a well-rounded understanding of how sustainable farming can intersect with tourism, positioning them for future roles in agrotourism and beyond.



## CHALLENGES

One of the key challenges Laos Buffalo Dairy has faced in collaborating with vocational training institutions is its location. The farm finds it difficult to attract interns due to its remote setting, even though accommodation is available. This logistical issue discourages many students from participating in the internship programme.







## The Skills for Tourism, Agriculture and Forestry Programme

The five-year Skills for Tourism, Agriculture and Forestry (STAF) Programme aims to promote and facilitate meaningful change in the vocational skills development (VSD) sector, thereby increasing the employability of graduates to take advantage of job/income generation opportunities, leaving no one behind in Lao PDR's socio-economic development. The programme is co-financed by Lao PDR, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Switzerland and the European Union, and implemented by the Lao Ministry of Education and Sports and LuxDev, the Luxembourg Development Cooperation Agency.

The STAF Programme supports enhanced public-private sector collaboration by strengthening engagement between public vocational training institutions and skills development providers, and the agriculture, forestry, and tourism sectors at local levels. This initiative includes the development of case studies and implementation guidelines to facilitate effective partnerships and improve vocational training alignment with industry needs. The programme promotes sustainable and inclusive growth across agriculture, forestry, and tourism sectors in Lao PDR, thereby contributing to poverty reduction. By enhancing vocational education and skills development, helps to bridge the gap between the large number of job-seekers, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and the employment opportunities in these key sectors.





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**Supported by The Skills for Tourism, Agriculture and Forestry Programme**