



International
Labour
Organization

ILO/China
Partnership
Programme

UN SOUTH-SOUTH DAY

Skills for Future

Strengthening Skills Development in ASEAN through
South-South and Triangular Cooperation

*Inclusive skills.
Stronger people.
Prosperous ASEAN.*



People



Skills



Opportunities



Stronger
Together

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Skills development through South-South and Triangular Cooperation

The ILO/China Partnership Programme on Strengthening Skills Development in ASEAN through South-South and Triangular Cooperation aims to improve workers' employability and enhance enterprise productivity through skills development and institutional capacity building. The programme has made significant contributions to strengthening policy and institutional frameworks in the region, including support for the development of the Employment Law (2023) and the Skills Development Law (2024) in Lao PDR. These laws reinforce employment services, labor migration management, skills training, and workforce development. The project has also supported Cambodia in organizing National TVET Day over several consecutive years, helping to elevate the profile of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and promote skills development nationwide.

The project has further strengthened skills systems and regional cooperation by developing and disseminating Employment and Skills Needs Surveys and Skills Mapping reports in Cambodia and Lao PDR. In Lao PDR, it supported the establishment of national skills standards frameworks covering five occupations: barber, tailor, air conditioning technician, domestic housekeeper, and beauty salon worker, aligned with ASEAN standards. As a result, 49 Institutions are improving curricula and strengthening links with industry. 980 Workers are having their existing skills recognized, while 4,611 young people are gaining better access to career guidance, skills development and employment opportunities.

In addition, the South-South Cooperation Network on Skills Development was established, bringing together 40 TVET institutions from Cambodia, Lao PDR, and China to exchange knowledge and deliver peer-to-peer training in areas such as new energy vehicles, e-commerce, electrical and electronics engineering, IoT, ICT, web design, welding, cooking, tailoring, furniture making, and air-conditioner repair. The project places strong emphasis on tripartite cooperation among governments, workers' organizations, and employers' organizations, while promoting inclusive skills development for women, young people, persons with disabilities, return migrants, and job seekers. Through upskilling and reskilling initiatives, skills assessments and certification programmes, job fairs, and skills competitions, the project has expanded access to employment opportunities and supported youth participation in WorldSkills competitions. Through South-South Cooperation, over 1,088 TVET trainers and students are gaining new technical and teaching skills.

The project has also achieved high visibility through extensive national and regional media coverage, including features on the ILO website, China Daily, the Belt and Road Portal, and leading media outlets in Cambodia and Lao PDR. In recognition of its contributions, the Governments of Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic awarded Certificates of Appreciation to the ILO/China Partnership Project for its role in strengthening skills development, addressing skills shortages, and promoting decent work and employment opportunities.

STORY OF CHANGE | LAO PDR

Strengthening tailoring skills for the Lao Women's Training Center

Thiphavong Vongmano is an experienced cutting and sewing instructor from Sisangvone Village, Xaysettha District, Vientiane Capital. She has been teaching at the Lao Women's Training Center for 19 years.

She recently completed a training course at Dongguan Technician College in Guangdong Province, China. This opportunity was made possible by the ILO/China Partnership Project on Strengthening Skills Development in ASEAN through South-South and Triangular Cooperation, which focuses on skills development. During her training, she learned how to create patterns for modern Chinese-collared blouses and exchanged knowledge with the college's instructors on how to make Lao traditional skirts.

She plans to apply her newly acquired knowledge in both theory and practice to her teaching. She intends to train other instructors at her center and continue her own professional development by researching new designs to meet with current modern trends.



STORY OF CHANGE | LAO PDR

Upskilling youth in electrical installation and air-conditioner maintenance



Lo Vangpolor, 20 years old, graduated from high school in Thadin Deng Tai Village, Xaythany District, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR. Coming from a farming family, he has always been determined to build a better future for himself. Lo aspires to develop practical skills in electrical installation and refrigeration, with the ultimate goal of pursuing a career in this field. However, due to his limited experience and technical skills, finding stable employment with good working conditions and benefits has been a significant challenge.

In 2024, he made the life-changing decision to participate in a training program on electrical and refrigeration systems, supported by the ILO/China Partnership Project on Strengthening Skills Development in ASEAN through South-South and Triangular Cooperation in collaboration with the Lao Trade Union Development Institute.

After completing the training, Lo gained extensive knowledge of electrical systems and refrigeration repair. His skills and understanding improved significantly compared to when he first started. He developed hands-on experience in tasks such as electrical wiring and air conditioning repair. He also learned to work with various car air conditioning systems and is now capable of installing and fixing air conditioners and electric systems.

STORY OF CHANGE | LAO PDR

Applying electronics training in the classroom

I am Ms. Chanthavee Savanhpheth, a teacher in the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering at the Lao-German Technical College. I have been a teacher for 12 years.

Recently, I completed a training program on the basics of electronics at the Yunnan Advanced Technical School of Electronic Information. Two months later, I applied this knowledge to teach a basic electronics module, covering both theory and practice—such as reading color codes, taking measurements, and building simple electronic circuits—for 30 students. This was done to help students understand electronic components, their functions, how they operate, and how to apply them in subsequent levels.

I would like to express my gratitude to the ILO/China Partnership Project on Strengthening Skills Development in ASEAN through South-South and triangular cooperation for giving me the opportunity to learn and exchange lessons and experiences from the teachers in Yunan. My sincere thanks also go to the Yunnan Advanced Technical School of Electronic Information and all the teachers who dedicated their physical, mental, and intellectual efforts to transfer knowledge to us. I truly hope that wonderful opportunities like this will continue to be provided in the future.



STORY OF CHANGE | CAMBODIA

Building better trainers for Cambodia's future workforce in welding

"The training opened my eyes to new technologies, modern equipment, and innovative teaching methods. It has strengthened my confidence as a trainer and inspired me to continue learning and sharing knowledge with my students." Chhuem Chandina, Welding Instructor, National Polytechnic Institute of Angkor

For many technical and vocational education and training (TVET) instructors, keeping pace with rapidly evolving technologies is a constant challenge. This was the reality for Mr. Chhuem Chandina, a welding instructor at the National Polytechnic Institute of Angkor (NPIA) in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

Before participating in a welding training programme supported by the ILO/China South-South Cooperation on Skills Development Project, Chandina faced limitations that are common in many training institutions. Access to modern equipment and advanced practical training facilities was limited, making it difficult to stay updated with the latest industry techniques and technologies. As the welding sector continued to evolve, he recognized the need to strengthen his technical expertise and teaching approaches to better prepare students for the labour market.

His opportunity came through a specialized training programme delivered under the ILO/China Partnership Project, which enabled Cambodian trainers to learn directly from Chinese institutions and experts. During the training, Chandina was exposed to modern welding equipment, advanced technologies, and innovative teaching and learning environments that were significantly different from what he had previously experienced.

STORY OF CHANGE | CAMBODIA

From learner to national skills champion: Cambodia reaches the ASEAN podium

"The training enabled us to apply international standards and advanced techniques that contributed to Cambodia winning a Bronze Medal in Wall and Floor Tiling at the ASEAN Skills Competition."



STORY OF CHANGE | CAMBODIA - CONTINUED

"The training enabled us to apply international standards and advanced techniques that contributed to Cambodia winning a Bronze Medal in Wall and Floor Tiling at the ASEAN Skills Competition. This achievement demonstrates the value of South-South Cooperation and quality skills development." Khiev Kongveasna, Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training

When Cambodia secured a Bronze Medal in the Wall and Floor Tiling category at the ASEAN Skills Competition, it was more than a victory on the podium. It was the result of years of commitment to strengthening technical skills, fostering international cooperation, and investing in people who can transfer knowledge to the next generation.

For Mr. Khiev Kongveasna, an expert from the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MLVT), the achievement represents a journey of continuous learning and collaboration. In August 2025, he participated in a specialized wall and floor tiling training programme organized through the ILO/China South-South Cooperation on Skills Development Project in partnership with Zhejiang Construction Technician College in China. The programme brought together Cambodian specialists and Chinese experts to exchange knowledge, practical techniques, and international standards in construction skills.

Although Kongveasna already had extensive experience in the sector, he understood that keeping pace with global standards requires continuous upgrading of skills and expertise. Like many professionals in Cambodia's construction industry, he saw the need for more advanced hands-on training opportunities that could help local experts meet the increasingly demanding standards of regional and international competitions.

During the training, he gained valuable knowledge in technical performance, skills assessment, modern construction techniques, and the proper use of tools and equipment. More importantly, the experience strengthened his confidence and expanded his understanding of what it takes to train and prepare competitors for success on the international stage.

"The programme did not only improve my technical knowledge; it changed the way I approach training and coaching. I returned with greater confidence, new techniques, and a stronger commitment to sharing what I learned with other trainers and students," Kongveasna reflected.

Upon returning to Cambodia, he immediately put his new knowledge into practice. He conducted dissemination workshops and coaching sessions to share international standards and advanced techniques with fellow experts, trainers, and students. Through this multiplier effect, the benefits of one training programme reached many others, strengthening Cambodia's broader skills ecosystem.

The impact became evident when Cambodian competitors demonstrated improved technical performance and competitiveness at the ASEAN Skills Competition. The knowledge and techniques transferred through the training contributed to Cambodia winning a Bronze Medal in Wall and Floor Tiling, an achievement that showcased the growing quality of the country's TVET system and skills development efforts.

For Kongveasna, the medal symbolizes much more than a competition result. It reflects the power of international partnership and knowledge exchange.

"When experts from different countries learn from one another, everyone benefits. Through South-South Cooperation, Cambodia is not only building individual skills but also strengthening national capacity to compete, innovate, and succeed," he said.

As Cambodia continues to modernize its TVET system and prepare a future-ready workforce, Kongveasna's story demonstrates how strategic investments in skills development can create lasting change. Through the ILO/China South-South Cooperation on Skills Development Project, one training opportunity became a catalyst for wider impact, transforming knowledge into action, action into achievement, and achievement into inspiration for the next generation of skilled professionals.

STORY OF CHANGE | CAMBODIA

Preparing Cambodia's next generation of technicians

Cambodia's factories are becoming smarter, faster, and increasingly automated. Yet for many technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions, keeping pace with rapid technological change remains a challenge. For Ms. Pea Sinan, a trainer at the National Polytechnic Institute of Angkor, preparing students for the future meant first strengthening her own understanding of industrial automation and mechatronics.

As an electrical trainer, Ms. Sinan was familiar with conventional electrical systems. However, she had limited exposure to real-world automated production lines and the technologies increasingly used in modern manufacturing industries.

"Before the training, I did not have practical experience related to automation processes and production-line systems used in factories," she recalled. "I knew these technologies were important, but I wanted a deeper understanding so I could better prepare myself for future teaching."

That opportunity came through the South-South Cooperation for Mechatronics training at Hainan Technician College, supported by the ILO/China South-South Cooperation on Skills Development Project. The training brought together participants to learn from Chinese experts and gain exposure to advanced industrial technologies and modern training approaches.

During the programme, Ms. Sinan developed practical knowledge in programming and controlling automated production systems, as well as skills related to installation, troubleshooting, maintenance, and operation of mechatronics equipment. More importantly, the training helped her understand how automation technologies are integrated into modern industries.

"The programme gave me valuable knowledge about automation systems, programming, installation, maintenance, and troubleshooting," she said. "I now have a much clearer understanding of how these technologies work together in industrial production."



CONTACT DETAILS

Mr TIAN Feng

Project Manager and Coordinator

ILO/China Project Strengthening Skills Development in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar through South-South and Triangular cooperation (SSTC)

Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

T: +66 2288 2107

E: tian@ilo.org

W: ilo.org/chinaprogramme