

Female Graduate working with public sector

Women in a conservative and modern working environment



Ms Phoukham, a 24 years-old Livestock Graduate is from the first batch in 2013. She is from a Lao Loum family in Ban Hadhien in Luang Prabang town and her parents run a medium-scale welding company.

She presently works at DAFO in Luang Prabang as a contract staff – waiting for her acknowledgement as government employee.

She conducted her practical term in the same DAFO in the livestock section and performed very well. Due to her confidence, communication and technical skills, the DAFO decided to offer her a job after the graduation.

Starting her assignment in the livestock section with only male colleagues for about 3 months, she was assigned by the DAFO head to the administration section. She is now responsible for secretary work and a male agronomy graduate was posted in the livestock section.

In general she is very happy to work for the government, because of the long-term job-security.

However presently, Ms Phoukham cannot use her knowledge and skills, which she gained during her studies, as she is assigned to a field she was not educated and is not skilled for. This is not a single case and not at all satisfying. Interestingly, during the pre-tracer study, she already mentioned “social pressure and traditions” as the highest obstacle for enrolment in her study, and is now confronted with the same problem.

Nevertheless she is confident that she will be reassigned to the livestock section after taken over as a full government employee. She already uses her knowledge for providing private services as a veterinarian and is sometimes allowed to join the technical team in work in the villages under the 3-sang approach.



Ms Manula, a 26 years-old Khamu from Namback district is a Livestock Graduate from the second batch in 2014. Her parents are farmers and completed primary school only.

She presently works at the Luang Prabang PAFO Extension Section and is posted in Namluang Center, Namback district. Similar to Ms Phoukham she is employed as a contract staff and is waiting for a government position.

She performed her practical term at NAFC on the frog farm. Her thesis on research in differences on feeding of small frogs was very much appreciated by her teacher. As there was no opportunity to continue working at NAFC, she approached the PAFO office in Luang Prabang and was taken in job right after her graduation.

She is very happy that she was able to find this job by her own. She can apply her knowledge and skills gained at NAFC, especially the knowledge in extension, training and communication as well as the practical skills in livestock production. She has clear tasks and can work independently on the center’s extension farm and with nearby farmers.

She is presently working in a mixed gender team consisting of 6 staff, including 2 women. Her supervisor is very supportive and open and treats all the staff in an equal manner. She does not feel any restriction in working in the villages and is allowed to use her knowledge.

Her technical livestock skills are very much appreciated as well as her communication skills and open attitude in cooperating with farmers

She is confident that she will be taken over in a full government position and hopes that she can continue in this field, has the chance to improve her knowledge on-the-job and takes over even more responsibility.

Interview by Andrea Schroeter