



**Ms Sang, weaver of
Phiengdi Village,
Bolikhhan District**



“I came to Phiengdi Village together with Khampha, a relative of my husband”, said 34-year old Sang, who now lives next door to Khampha. “My village in Xam Tai district of Houa Phan province is even more difficult to reach than Khampha’s village. There are no proper roads and there are no schools or clinics”, Sang added. Married at 18 to Saitong, Sang wanted a better life and a better place to raise their children, and Phiengdi seemed to offer better prospects to the young family. Sang now has 4 children, the eldest is 14, while the youngest is 7. All attend school near the village.

Sang is a good weaver, a common trait among women of the Tai Deang ethnic group from Houa Phan who have been passing this ancient skill from mother to daughter for generations. “All the girls in our village knew how to weave. I learned how to weave from my mother at age 5. My daughter now aged 9 already knows how to weave since age 6,” Sang explained, showing off a beautiful skirt-border with deer and flower motif woven by her daughter, Lah.



Like Khampha, Sang’s life in Phiengdi village revolves mainly helping her husband grow rice and other food crops mainly for subsistence. To earn cash for daily expenses, she depends on the sale of her woven products.

Two years ago, she joined the weaving group headed by Khampha.

“Joining the group was a good thing. We share weaving knowledge and marketing information. We also learn to help and support one another”, Sang explained. “Another benefit is that we get training on use of natural dyes and about designs and colours which are in demand. We now understand the importance of making sure that the quality of the weaving is good and consistent”, she added.



Sang’s income from weaving has increased since joining the weaving group. “In the past I cannot make much money from weaving because there are not many buyers nearby. After joining the weaver’s group, things have become better”, Sang said. “We have more places to sell our weaving. This is because PADETC links us to more buyers and we now get more orders”, Sang continued. With her income now averaging about 900,000 kip per month, Sang is hopeful that she can keep all her children until they finish high school and good jobs. “I hope their lives will be easier than mine”, sighed Sang. Her next wish is that she can build a new house. Looking around her modest house made mainly of woven bamboo, she badly wants to build a bigger and better house.



Sang is already working hard to make her dream come true. Pointing to a pile of wooden planks under her house, Sang said, “I am slowly accumulating wood and I hope that in another two years, we will be able to build a better house”, she said. To this, her husband Saithong sitting nearby nodded in agreement.

