



FAAC prospects in 2010

By *Theam Rottanak, FAAC President*

In addition to our office at the University of Puthisastra (UP), we have set up a new office at the Institute of Foreign Languages (IFL) to serve students who need information for further study and advice on available overseas scholarship programs and how to prepare for a rigorous graduate study abroad, not just information on the Fulbright Scholarship. Our offices are like a center for research and a place to help students improve their English proficiency and the TOEFL score, as it is fundamental to success in graduate education. In our offices, students can also get most updated information on our Fulbright lecture series, i.e. when and where another lecture will be conducted. Our trained volunteers will be very happy to answer questions from the visitors to our office and can also help connect them with our alumni who will then be able to provide more specific counsel on particular field of study, and consultation on a variety of academic issues, career prospects, and job markets.



Theam Rottanak, Fulbright Scholar 2002-2004

As in 2010 and beyond, to broaden the scope of the alumni association and to obtain more available resources, FAAC is working to expand and seek to include all alumni of other US-sponsored exchange programs such as Humphrey Fellowship Program, The Global Undergraduate Program (Global UGRAD Program), Undergraduate Intensive English Language Program, and Study of the United States Institute for Student Leaders Program (SUSI for Student Leaders), etc. We will thus have to modify our constitution and make some changes to the structure of the working committee to better arrange our activities and to effectively organize ourselves.

Alumni in action

FAAC alumni Chan Sophal and Chou Huot and former US Exchange alumni Virak Bunnaroath in March 2010 traveled to various high schools in Takeo, Kampot and Preh Sihanouk provinces and talked to some 2,000 students about selecting university majors, overseas scholarship opportunities, and foreign language education. The students took a real interest in these topics and asked a lot of good questions.



Chan Sophal talked to students in Takeo about selecting university majors

The three alumni put a special emphasis on the importance of university education. Students' decisions to choose a university major depend extensively on personal inclination to their career paths. But gathering enough information is critical to make good, informed decisions. When it comes to English language learning, the three alums advised the students to expose themselves as much as they can to the language they are learning. There was a lot of interaction and they recognized it as a productive and meaningful trip.

Top: Fulbright Alumni Peou Chivoin, Khiev Khemara, Chan Sophal and Por Phak presented How to Score High on TOEFL and How to Win a Scholarship

Down: Deputy Chief of Mission Theodore Allegra of the US Embassy presented a certificate of appreciation to Chan Sophal

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FAAC alumni and volunteers at the annual dinner reception hosted by Mr. John E. Johnson, Public Affairs Officer of the U.S. Embassy in Cambodia, on January 15, 2010

To showcase the contributions our alumni have made to the nation, we create this space for profile articles of our alumni. In this edition, we feature Mr. Sen Sovann, Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

Sen Sovann, Deputy Secretary General, MAFF

Educational Background

-1989, BVSc, Royal University of Agriculture, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

1992, Postgraduate study in Special Veterinary Pathology, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand.

1996, MSc, Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, Louisiana State University, USA.

Work

1990-1993: Chief Pathology/ Microbiology Section, Vet diagnostic laboratory, Department of Animal Health and Production

1993-1994: Livestock Specialist/ National Consultant, Agricultural Development Option Review (ADOR) Project, Cambodia. FAO/UNDP

1997-1999: Acting Dean, Faculty of Animal Production and Health, Royal University of Agriculture, Cambodia

1999-2005: Deputy Director of Department of Animal Health and Production and Vice President, Southeast Asia FMD Campaign (OIE), Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

2005-2008: Country Director, Heifer Project International.

2008-Present: Deputy Secretary General, Cambodia Delegate to OIE and Secretary General of OIE Regional Commission, Asia Far East and Oceania, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Phnom Penh, Kingdom of Cambodia.

2008-Present: Advisor to Deputy Prime Minister Tea Banh, Technical Team Leader for Cambodia Military Armed Force to the UN Peacekeeping Operation in Sudan, Council of Ministers, Phnom Penh, Kingdom of Cambodia.

Former Fulbright scholar changes the ways farmers think about animal farming

By: Ms. Thon Sonina and Ms. Han Chansokhen

Growing up, Sen Sovann saw how a family had to go through a farming life to keep their farm and their animals healthy and alive. The love of farming and animal care became an eager goal that he wished to explore later in life.

Sen Sovann was born in the Khmer Rouge regime, during which most of the country's infrastructure was devastated. For him, going to the US was an eye-opening experience and an opportunity to learn new skills.

We asked him about his experiences.

What did you study at university?

I studied Veterinary Medicine (animal health science). The major I pursued was Veterinary Epidemiology and Community Health – the major upon which I have built my professional portfolio.

What was your biggest challenge when applying for Fulbright?

The difficulty for me then was the language. And there were a lot of differences in terms of education system.

As a Fulbright scholar, what did you gain from studying in America?

The biggest challenge for me was the adaptation to the society of this super power. I didn't know anything even about the banking system and the education system. I grew up during the Khmer Rouge time, and I didn't understand those social systems. However, I considered all the challenges as the opportunities for me to learn new things. That is what I have always believed in. With courage from my family and friends until today, I keep going and I never give up hopes and efforts.

I'm pleased to have brought a western schooling system, "the credit system", to the Royal University of Agriculture, which was the first school to adopt such a system. This implementation has had a huge impact on other universities in the country.

What do you like the most about your current job?

Coming back from the U.S, I brought valuable experiences to contribute to agriculture and animal health. To be able to change one's self is a challenge; yet having the ability to change others is even more challenging, which is why I'm very happy with myself. With just one simple idea but with strong motivation, I have made countless farmers change their way of thinking towards animal farming. I'm very happy to be able to fully contribute to the development of the village animal health system and public health service.

Would your life be any different if you hadn't applied for Fulbright?

Without Fulbright and the journey to the US, I would be totally different from who I am today. If I had not been granted the training, I would be working as an ordinary teacher or a volunteer staff and would not be taking parts in the society as I am doing now.



Sen Sovann, Fulbright Scholar 1996-1998



FAAC members with the Public Affairs Section of the US Embassy conducted Fulbright information sessions 2010-2011

The climate after Copenhagen

By Seang Soleak

When President Obama and more than 100 world leaders convened in Copenhagen late last year to negotiate a global climate deal, hundreds of climate campaigners in Cambodia voiced their concerns about climate change from this part of the world. They had high expectation of Copenhagen, but those Heads of State failed them. The outcome of the Copenhagen negotiations was a disappointment and developing countries like Cambodia didn't walk out well of the global climate talks.

Some, however, recognize that Copenhagen did make progress in global climate policy, with the \$30 billion financial commitment made by developed countries to meet the backlog of urgent adaptation demands and to expand mitigation opportunities. But for many, this outcome falls short of what is needed to prevent catastrophic climate impacts to address the needs of the world's most vulnerable people. It was a shame that leaders of the major powers negotiated for their national interests, instead of safeguarding our shared global destiny.

The negotiated outcome clearly left the job undone, with a low level of ambition and many gaps left to be filled. Heads of State at Copenhagen couldn't agree on an emission reduction target. Sources of the financial commitment remain

unclear, and neither is there a clear mechanism of how the \$30 billion is going to be channeled to help poor communities adapt to the changing climate.

There is no better time than now to capture new energy and mobilize our public and political power for a fair, ambitious, and legally binding deal by the next climate summit in Mexico late this year. Through Copenhagen, we should understand that this will not be an easy task, but there is no credible alternative. Much will have to be done in this year to build on Copenhagen.



Seang Soleak, Fulbright Scholar
2007-2009

For developing countries like Cambodia, building technical capacity of their climate negotiators, coupling with grassroots campaigning from affected communities through the media, will increase their voice and leverage in the next negotiations. Poor countries will have to compete to get a share of the \$30 billion, which requires national governments to develop a sound regulatory framework and set up proper mechanisms to tap on adaptation finances and to wisely manage the money in the interest of the people at large.

A perspective about literacy for language education in Cambodia

By In Vichea, PhD student, University of Ohio



In Vichea, Fulbright Scholar
2006-2008

Literacy is generally known as ability to read and write and, to lesser extent, familiarity with literature. It is common that most language programs focus on ability in reading and writing, and on literary and cultural knowledge. Tying literacy to ability to read and write places text as the center of learning and teaching. Thus, pedagogical emphasis

is on correctness and convention of text, and usually one privileged type of writing, especially essay writing. Complete meaning is embedded in the text itself and can be uncovered once the reader has mastered text decoding skills (i.e. involving grammar rules). In this sense, text is autonomous.

The traditional view of literacy above has limitations. First, literacy is conceived as the end product of teaching rather than a variable dependent on various factors such as social factors. How a learner uses literacy in the real world is not a concern. Second, literacy is conceived as autonomous and universal. In this sense, there is one way of reading and writing. Scholars of the traditional view even advocate that Anglo-Saxon essayist tradition of reading and writing is the most privileged one. This leads to transmission model. A uni-

form set of abilities can be transferred to students. Students can transfer the same set of abilities across language contexts. Third, the traditional view prescribes norms of text rather than emphasizing pragmatic aspects of language, thus downplaying communicative purposes of language. Effective communicators need a range of knowledge about different contexts and discourses.

Recent views of literacy have seen literacy as social practices, not a decontextualized practice. Literacy is no longer identified with prescriptive, normative standards. Literacy is no longer "literacy", but "literatecies". Literacy is socially, culturally, and historically situated practices of using and interpreting diverse texts to complete particular tasks. Critical literacy has also emerged with an aim to empower students to understand how texts are trying to impinge on them as members of society. Literacy practices have to move beyond decoding texts by enabling readers to question things rather than taking things.

I here offer a model of critical literacy instruction in brief for both foreign language and first language instructors. The model comes with three interacting layers. In the first layer, students and teachers draw on personal and cultural resources to create activities and content for the class. In the second layer, critical social practices are specific practices where students and teachers engage. These practices include interrupting the routine, questioning multiple viewpoints, focusing on sociopolitical issues, and taking action to promote social justice. The core layer of the model is the critical stance. Each literate being should possess attitudes and dispositions to enable him or herself to become critical. One needs to consciously engage, consider alternate ways of beings, take responsibility to inquire, and be flexible. Classroom teaching and learning in Cambodia like in most places in this world are institutionally constrained, but there is always space where teachers and students can entertain such a critical model.



FAAC alumni and volunteers posed for a group photo at the annual dinner reception on 15 January, 2010

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