

NEWSLETTER

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Expression of new volunteers



LAY Ouksaphea,
FUSAAC volunteer studying
International
Studies at Institute
of Foreign
Languages

"I'm glad to be a part of something great. It's an engine for personal growth and opportunity to strive.."



OUNG Pingann,
FUSAAC
Volunteer,
studying Business
and Enterprise
Management

"FUSAAC is a place of diversity, yet unity for development."

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*** FUSAAC = Fulbright and Undergraduate State Alumni Association of Cambodia, formerly known as Fulbright Alumni Association of Cambodia (FAAC), today includes alumni of all exchange programs sponsored by the US government through the US Embassy in Phnom Penh.

Mock TOEFL helps students measure English proficiency

By SEANG Soleak,
FULBRIGHT Scholar 2007-2009

Kompot, 27 Aug: With some 80 students in a conference room of the University of Management and Economics, Sou Sina sat waiting for her guest speakers to arrive. Sina and a few of the students have heard of the Test of English as a Foreign Language or TOEFL, but they never had an chance to sit a test.

As non-native speakers of English, students have to score well—at least 500 on a paper-based TOEFL test—to compete with other students for overseas exchange programs. It was the first time Sina and her fellow students sat for a full TOEFL test—for free.

"The official TOEFL is expensive. So, you should prepare yourself well before you take a test," Chan Virak said. "Do at least three full sample tests in an appropriate test setting, and if you're happy with your results, go for it. Otherwise, you're going to waste your money."

Most college students in Cambodia take three hours of English classes per week. With limited resources such as test materials and guidance, it's difficult for many to harness their language skills. The Fulbright alumni and volunteers have been reaching out across campuses, helping students to help themselves learn English better. Since early 2010, they have administered mock TOEFL tests for about 1,000 college students throughout Cambodia.

"I get homework and tests in my English class, but it was not this intense," another student said after taking a mock TOEFL test at Angkor Khemara University in Kampot province. "I didn't score well, but that won't stop me from trying. In fact, it helps me to know what area I need to improve."

The US Embassy in Phnom Penh sends about 40 Cambodian students to the United States every year—some for a few weeks, some a few years. Those successful generally have high English proficiency, excellent academic records and strong application documents.

"English is not the only selection criterion for foreign exchange programs, but without strong English proficiency, you simply are out of the ring," Chau Sa said. **FUSAAC**



Mr. Chau Sa, former Public Affairs Officer of the United States Embassy, helps students explain in TOEFL mocking in Kompot Province on 27 Aug.

What is TOEFL?

TOEFL is a standardized English language test that evaluates the ability of non-native speakers of English to use and understand the language as it is spoken, written and heard in college and university settings. In Cambodia, it costs about US\$150 to sit an official TOEFL test and US\$40 for a TOEFL ITP test.



To learn more about TOEFL and test schedules, visit Room 103 of the Royal University of Phnom Penh or call 023 884 320



Photos: Educational project activities of FUSAAC and contribution of alumni to students and universities in July - September 2011

Meet Uncle Chau Sa , former Public Affairs Specialist of the US Embassy in Phnom Penh.

by Mr. Sok Eng, FUSAAC volunteer

You have spent over 18 years working at the U.S. embassy in Phnom Penh, so my first question for you is: What kept you there for so long?

The reason that I worked for the US embassy such a long period of time is that it is my favorite job that related to education, which is my specialization. You know, selecting students for a scholarship program is very important because the best student must be the one that is full of potential, knowledgeable and unselfish. They must be the one who goes to build their capacity and come back to help their country.

You were part of the selection committees for most U.S. exchange programs, including Fulbright. How many students have you helped send to the United States? And how do you feel about being part of that?

Through Education Exchange program of U.S. embassy, including Fulbright, UGRAD, English Intensive, SUSI and Hum... There are about 200 students that I have interviewed and they won the scholarship to the United States. I am excited and cheerful because students that I have selected were great and they never failed me in terms of studying. This makes me realize that my decision and expectation for them were right. Also, the number of scholarship provided by Universities in the United States are keeping increasing from 6 to 9 or 10 positions per year because of the good study performance of our students that selected to study in US.

At your farewell party in September, former ambassador Carol Rodley said you are one of the most talented staff of the embassy. What principles have you embraced that earned you such an appreciation from the ambassador?

It was surprising to me, as I was not informed in advance. So I was kind of stunning and have not much to say but I was really happy. I was praised because of my work. I was the member of selection committee, and nothing went wrong during each selection process. And students who have been selected to study in the US were so talented. Moreover, I was the founder and chairman of the Credit Union of the US embassy Local Employees Community, which is an association that helps sharpen the relation between Cambodia and American employees and it is a place to provide loan for lower income employees. It is the way we help our colleagues in exchange we got their respect.

It is almost 20 year that you spent on working in U.S. embassy you must have undergone various challenges, so what are they?

My challenges in working at the first time were Information Technology and English skill. However, after working in the embassy, I was trained to overcome those challenges via many training programs abroad regarding to data base system and other self development programs. We have to admit that every work has its own difficulties. But with perseverance, we will deal with it rather well.

You were a member of selection committees of U.S. scholarship for years, so what is your suggestion for students to prepare for winning the scholarship?

There are several things that students need do such as knowing the objective of scholarship provided, having a good command of English, having good academic transcript and involving in society through volunteering work.

Could you tell us about the common questions during the interview?

I could not tell you the actual questions. However, my tip for you is that you should build up your study objective. Ask yourself what you want to do in the future and do research indept of your field of study so that you could respond well to the question during interview because the question will be around your study objective. Another important thing you need to do is participate in community service. The more you involve in it the better you are able to answer the question, as volunteering work will give you a profound knowledge about society. You have to know that the experience you gain from your work will teach you. Last, form a habit of debate by joining the debate club or learn to share idea in class. This is a way how you learn to elaborate your idea. And the more you practice the better you are. Then you will survive during the interview.

What is your goal in life, and have you achieved it yet?

Like others, my goal in life is to have happiness in my family and ensure good future of our children. And I think my goal has been completed because my children are having good education and they can find a good job.

It seems that we have a lot of talk about you, so I would like to wrap it up by asking my final question: What is your next plan after retiring?

Well, honestly I have been invited to be an honor member for FUSAAC. I am happy to hear that and I am glad to offer my contribution to benefit society. Also, I have a plan to take a class, for teaching is my hobby and I would like to transfer my knowledge to the young generation. However, at this moment, I like to spend some time with my family and enjoy the retiring life for a while. **FAAC**



Chau Sa, former Public Affairs Specialist of the US Embassy in Phnom Penh

EDUCATION

- 2004 - 2006: Graduate Study in International Relations, Pannasastra University of Cambodia, Master's Degree in International Relations
- 1988-1991: In-Service Training - Undergraduate Study in Educational Psychology, Faculty of Pedagogy, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
- 1967-1968: Pre-Service Training for Junior High School Teacher, Faculty of Pedagogy, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
- 1966-1967: High School Diploma, Baccalaureat in Mathematics, Sisowath High School

WORK

- Present: Associate Director, Intertional Relation at PUC
- 1993-April 2011: Public Affairs Assistant, U.S. Embassy Phnom Penh Perform the same job as above
- May 1979 - March 1993
Head of Planning and Financial Office, Phnom Penh Municipal Department of Education, Youth and Sports
- 1970-1975: Head of Statistics and Planning Office, Ministry of Community Development
- 1968-1970: Teacher at Snuol Junior High School, Kratie Province **FUSAAC**



Photos: Educational project activities of FUSAAC and contribution of alumni to students and universities in July - September 2011

Idea of self-study club to hunt for scholarship

By CHOUP Mithona, FUSAAC Volunteer

Banteay Meanchey, Siem Reap, 21-24 July: Not so different from the previous year, the association in cooperation with the IFL Debate Club set off on a mission to provinces in order to share with provincial students useful information on how to create self-study club and to prepare for overseas scholarship. The three-day academic trip is divided into four different targets, one of which is in Banteay Meanchey while another three are set to Siem Reap. Even more special, this year trip is involved by three active Fulbright alumni: Mr. Chan Virak, Mr. Chan Sophal, and Mr. Chau Samphas. Also there are the participation by The US Embassy Representative: Mr. Bun Sambath, IFL lecturers, debaters and volunteers.

After arriving on the first day at noon, the mission group immediately head to Meanchey University to start the arranged workshop. The workshop, despite the heavy rain, begins with the opening remark by the school rector and the sample debate by the volunteer debaters from IFL. Though there are some unforeseen difficulties like rain, and the limited understanding in English by the participants, the debate does inspire most of the participants to want to have such an opportunity in their community. After the debate, the remaining time is the lecture by Mr. Chan Sophal on the importance of and how to have a self-study club in their own university. He says students there can indeed create such a club on their own if they have high commitment and eagerness, and if the university supports them. Furthermore, materials like debate guide books and video will also be offered to the school to support the running of the club as well. Last but not least, Mr. Chan Virak gives an overview of the scholarship preparation including the requirements such as study objectives, personal statement, recommendation, transcript and so on. He also leaves a vital message to the participants that they should be well-prepared ever since they are in the final year of their undergraduate level, especially with the building of English language if they want to get a scholarship.

At last session, some of the participants ask a few questions about their concerns, especially how to improve their English language skills. Therefore, they are advised to start caring about their English study and practice it from now on although they are from different majors. Furthermore, the participants are promised to have a mock TOEFL for the first time at their university sooner or later by the Cambodian Fulbrighters. Doing so, participants will have chance to improve their English skills.

The whole workshop finishes with a good impression from participants despite some immediate obstacles, particularly the weather. Hopefully, those participants will learn some valuable messages intended by the groups. They will, at least, learn to create their own study club to improve their study, especially for their higher education and scholarship. **FUSAAC**

International Youth Day 2011

By CHOUP Mithona & LY Dalin, FUSAAC Volunteer

Phnom Penh, 12 Aug: The 12th International Youth Day is celebrated among various NGOs and Youth Organizations and Associations in Cambodia. This year, the whole-day event is held at Toulkork Center with the participation of more than 500 youths from different universities and institutions in Cambodia. Divided into two main sub-events which are the morning forum and the afternoon concert and exhibition by about 13 different NGOs, this year International Youth Day proves out to be a great success and beneficial to the youths as a whole. And as usual, FUSAAC which is one of the organizers also participates and assists with the process of this year event as well, especially with its informational exhibition to participants regarding scholarship and its services.

Not so different from the previous year, this year's topic revolves around "The Dialogue and Mutual Understanding" which aims at promoting the respective participation of youth in the bigger and more important discussion in society. Therefore, five honorable guests from different institutions and companies are invited to share a few useful topics respectively. However, FUSAAC, in contribution to the celebration of the event, also has many responsibilities as well. A few FUSAAC volunteers come to help and have responsibilities as the MC of the forum, the performers in the inspiring youth performance, the interpreter for foreigner guests, and the coordinators at the exhibition booth. Although it was a bit tiring for everyone. As a result, we do also help share a lot of knowledge and information to the participating youths who are not really aware of the many opportunities in the society, especially regarding education and job.



Group photo posting of guests and organizers at the end of International Youth Day 2011

The International Youth Day 2011 is a very memorable event, which consciously aims at lifting up the awareness of youth's potential ability in social involvement. Within this episode, youth will have ideas and raise the common issues for the government, organizations and institutions to lighten up the needs of self development in youth spirit of significantly committed implementation. Future International Youth Day will furnish crucial topics and dialogs for youth who is eager to grab such a precious opportunity. **FUSAAC**

We go to any campus across the country

FUSAAC is pleased to assist you in setting up a mock TOEFL test in your school. All you need to do is:

- select or gather 30 students or more;
- secure a room suitable for the number of students you selected;
- call 013 757 443 or email: info.fusaac@gmail.com

Just 30 students or more, a room and a call away, and we'll go to your campus, anywhere in the country.



Alumni of FUSAAC posed a picture with new FUSAAC volunteers during welcome lunch for new volunteers on Oct 21, 2011.

Fulbright and Undergraduate State
Alumni Association of Cambodia



Special Note

Fulbright and Undergraduate State Alumni Association of Cambodia, formerly known as Fulbright Alumni Association of Cambodia (FAAC), today includes alumni of all exchange programs sponsored by the US government. FUSAAC has the following vision, mission, objective and board structure:

Vision

FUSAAC has a vision to contribute to foster peace and development in Cambodia through the promotion of access to quality education, youth capacity building and cross-cultural understanding.

Mission

The Association will be a major force in Cambodia's educational and cultural exchange with the United States and the rest of the world. It will strive to offer its members continuous personal and professional development, and contribute to fostering mutual understanding, primarily between the United States and Cambodian policy makers.

Objectives

- To be a forum for discussions on relevant topics;
- To maintain a linkage among alumni of all US exchange programs with a view to foster educational and professional opportunities for members and others;
- To collaborate with other organizations whose interests are similar to those of the Association;
- To support and promote activities that help Cambodian people and people of other countries learn about each other's cultures; and
- To act as a resource and coordinate activities of mutual interest among Cambodia, U.S. and other academics and policy makers.

Board Structure

- President: Mr. Theam Rottanak, Fulbright Scholar 2002-2004
- Vice President: Ms. Dek Dary, Fulbright scholar 2008
- Secretary General: Mr. Leang Sovannarith, UGRAD Alumnus 2011
Mr. Chhim Chhorm, SUSI Alumnus 2009
- Treasurer: Ms. Chea Chandany, UGRAD Alumna 2011

29th August 2011

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