

Cambodian Disabled Student Studying Master's in the US

By Yun Samean

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A Cambodian disabled student received a scholarship from American University to pursue a Master's degree in Comparative and International Disability Policy.



Mr. Khy Huy, Cambodian disabled student, received a scholarship to study Master's degree in disability policy in the US

Mr. Khy Huy, a Cambodian disabled student, received a scholarship for a Master's degree from American University's School of International Service for the world's first virtual Master's program on disability studies and public policy. The Institute on Disability and Public Policy has created this online Master's program and admitted ten students from the ASEAN region for the 2011 academic year.

Mr. Khy Huy, 29, who recently received his Master's degree in International Legal Studies said during the phone interview from Bangkok, Thailand that he hoped that the study in this disability and public policy program will enable him to use his knowledge gained from the program to help persons with disabilities in Cambodia receive a proper education and employment. He noted that in the past, persons with disabilities in Cambodia have been discriminated against:

"I have noticed two important issues for people with disabilities in Cambodia that have not yet been addressed. The first issue is education. People with disabilities have not received attention yet. Almost every school, whether private or public, is not disability friendly. For example, there

are no ramps at schools for people with mobility impairments, providing challenges in attending school.”

Mr. Khy Huy is originally from Kompong Chhnang province. He was born with a significant visual impairment. However, having studied very hard, he attained two bachelor’s degrees – one in law and another in English. In 2010, he received his Master’s degree in International Legal Studies. He stressed that his effort has enabled him to succeed in his life:

“In the future, I wish to become a human rights activist so that I can help protect human rights, especially human rights of persons with disabilities. This program will help me achieve my goals.”

Mr. Khy Huy is currently in Thailand attending the Institute on Disability and Public Policy’s inaugural two-week residency program introducing the first cohort of students earning the Master’s of International Affairs in Comparative and International Disability Policy. According to the Institute on Disability and Public Policy’s press release, the aim of this Master’s program is to provide persons with disabilities the opportunity to study at a graduate level not previously received, and allow them to become leaders in international disability policy for the public and private sectors, and NGOs. The program is based on cyberlearning principles, and will be taught entirely online. Mr. Khy Huy sent an important message to persons with disabilities in Cambodia:

“We can do everything regardless of our disabilities. We can do everything just as non-disabled people can as long as we have determination and specific goals in our lives.”

The 2009 annual report of Disability Action Council indicates that 2% of the total population of Cambodia has disabilities, including 11% of disabilities caused by landmines, 10% of disabilities caused by war, and 20% of disabilities caused by birth. The Asia Pacific region has the highest number of persons with disabilities in the world.

Source: <http://www.rfa.org/khmer/indepth/huykhy-07202011042343.html>