



“A Hinrich scholar comes out of his comfort zone and keeps learning and sharing.”

Sophal Bun, Associate Dean
College of Media & Communications University of Cambodia
Hong Kong Baptist University, MAIJS '14

“Learning is boundless. No matter where you are, who you are or how old you are, you can trigger a change anytime, anywhere – provided that you put your heart into it.”

Coming out of comfort zone

“Success comes when you seek change and strive for the better. I can honestly say that success came to me when I actively sought opportunities to learn something more.”

Sophal believes in transitions that happen when one has the courage to step out of their comfort zone and learn something new and something better.

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A challenging climb

Born to a family of three kids, Sophal fought hard for education and success. His father is a motor taxi driver and his mother passed away in 2015. He grew up in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and showed early signs of promise by being an outstanding student.

Although, he managed to consistently land in the top three, his parents had to make him quit school after his secondary education due to financial constraints.

Never one to lie low, he enrolled himself in electronics repair course for six months, computer repair for another six months, and then vocational training course in printing for two years.

Still, he did not give up his dream of pursuing a higher education degree. He actively searched for scholarship opportunities and was successful. He was awarded a government scholarship to study Bachelor of Education in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language), and then completed a master’s degree in Development Studies at Royal University of Phnom Penh.

In 2012, Sophal applied for and received the Hinrich Foundation Master of Arts in International Journalism Studies scholarship at Hong Kong Baptist University. Sophal regards this as the culmination of all his efforts to achieve higher education.



Sophal with the Management team of the University of Cambodia, where he is currently the Associate Dean for the College of Media & Communications

“Honestly, I didn’t have a solid background in journalism – just a limited one from a few short training courses until I got the Hinrich Foundation scholarship. Being at HKBU opened a new world for me. I learned immensely interacting with classmates, being exposed to different cultures and from practical experience of lecturers, instructors, researchers and guest speakers who freely shared their wealth of journalistic experiences. Further, I have absorbed a lot by just being immersed within different cultures and ethnicities.”

Sophal feels that this experience has opened his perception about education and how the right change of career – at the right point in time can change lives. He is still drawing upon experiences from other HF scholars and team members that are helping him pave his way in his current career.

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Winning is to bring about change – Giving back to others

“My life changed with my time at HKBU. Completing my master’s degree was my winning moment. I immediately worked for the Hinrich Foundation as soon as I graduated. It was like I was being given a reward for the entire struggle I had faced to reach this point. But deep in my heart, I know that this position is given to me, so I can bring out the same change in other disadvantaged lives.”

As a Cambodia Export Consultant for the Hinrich Foundation Export Trade Assistance program, Sophal worked with and helped Khmer handicraft suppliers to sell products to international buyers through online B2B marketing. He also helped showcase traditional handicrafts to the world at the Global Sources trade shows in Hong Kong.

In addition, Sophal facilitated and connected overseas buyers to meet local Khmer garment factory owners for small orders on customized garments and fashion accessories. These activities taught him the practical aspects of business communication among buyers and producers – skills that form the heart of trade.

In addition, he and his team actively organized scholarship information sessions at universities or even coffee shops for young Cambodian students to learn about Hinrich Foundation scholarship opportunities.



As Cambodia Export Consultant, Sophal helped Khmer handicraft suppliers to showcase their products to international buyers at the Global Sources Hong Kong trade shows

Changing lives with learning

Sophal feels he has found his calling being the Associate Dean for the College of Media & Communications at the University of Cambodia as it combines his two great loves: pedagogy and communication. His students vary from media students from the university to other private institutions.

“Throughout my life, I have learned – and taught what I learned. After all, that is how change begins.”

“Throughout my life, I have learned – and taught what I learned. After all, that is how change begins. As Associate Dean at University of Cambodia, I teach four classes a week. I also help promote the courses, produce educational and feature videos, recruit faculty members and oversee other executive management duties. I want to help the young, media-savvy generation to fill the market needs of companies in Cambodia.”

He wants his country to benefit from his knowledge and experiences so that he can impact student lives.

“If you think differently, act creatively and put your heart in your efforts, opportunity will come knocking for sure.”

Sophal firmly believes that it is important for every person to think out of the box in today’s changing world.



A major career highlight for Sophal was receiving the 2018 Distinguished Communication Alumni Award from HKBU

He has dedicated 12 years of his life to education and training. Besides his experience in advertising, marketing and public relations, Sophal's biggest strength is his empathy. He knows how hard it is to seek an education and find the right career for a person who belongs to a disadvantaged economic background. In his current position, he finds himself able to motivate students to never give up on their dream or their education.

Global trade leader & teacher

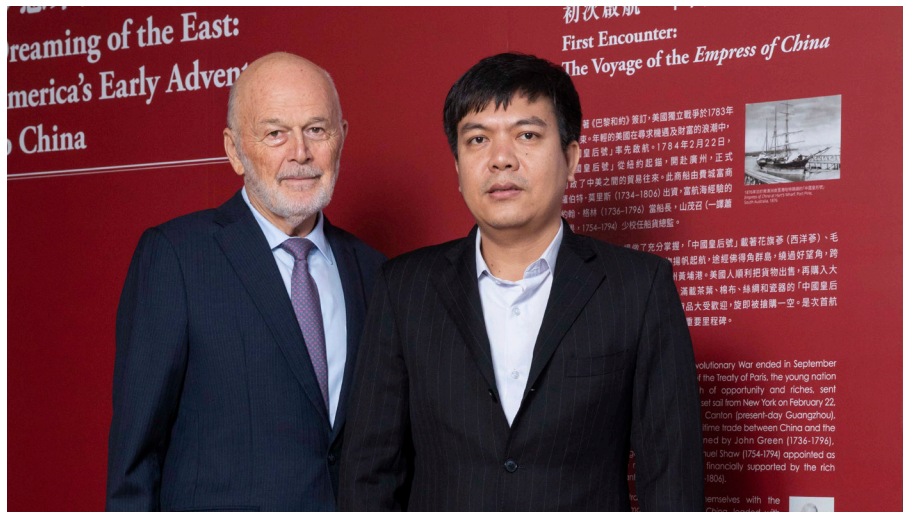
In 2018, Sophal received the Distinguished Communication Alumni Award from HKBU in recognition of his remarkable accomplishments as Associate Dean of the School of Communication, University of Cambodia – a major career highlight for Sophal. The HKBU School of Communication conferred the award to alumni who have had significant contributions to society, the industry and their alma mater.

"More so, because I will be at the helm, I will be able to help more students reach their goals and bringing about positive change in my country."

Sophal aspires to be promoted to Dean of the College of Media & Communications at his university. "More so, because I will be at the helm, I will be able to help more students reach their goals and bringing about positive change in my country." As always, Sophal sees himself immersed in education and communication, surrounded by his students – and his community.

Sophal finds extreme satisfaction in his current career and he believes that his family and the Hinrich Foundation were key players in helping him reach this far.

"I am grateful to my wife because she was willing to let me go to study in Hong Kong. She took care of our two children alone, and it really motivated me to study hard. Secondly, I wish to thank HF Program director Alex Boome for his faith in my ability and potential by offering me the journalism scholarship to me way back in 2012."



Sophal poses with Mr. Hinrich during the Hinrich Foundation Alumni Association - Alumni Leadership Committee 2018 meeting in Hong Kong. Sophal is the HFAA Cambodia chapter leader

“Keep dreaming and pushing yourself hard. Keep learning and proactively share that learning.”

He said he feels deeply indebted to Hinrich Foundation for offering him the scholarship opportunity, which helped pave the way to achieve his dream. To future Hinrich global trade leaders, here is Sophal’s advice, “Keep dreaming and pushing yourself hard. Keep learning and proactively share that learning.”

Read more stories of inspiration from our Hinrich Global Trade Leaders [here](#).



“Success for me is living a valuable life by making positive impact on society and family.”

Phoebe Lu

Co-founder
AceEver Technology
Limited

Hinrich Foundation alumna
Hong Kong Baptist University
BBA '14



“It’s important to find passion in even small, mundane jobs. In the completion of little tasks lies the key to achieving bigger things.”

Khiem Vu

Chief Representative
Global Sources
Ho Chi Minh City
Vietnam

Hinrich Foundation alumnus
Chinese University of
Hong Kong, MBA '16
Hong Kong Baptist University,
MAIJ Studies '07



“The key to any positive transition is to get out of your comfort zone and explore new opportunities.”

Mohammad Nurun Nobli

Engineer
VF Asia Limited
Bangladesh

Hinrich Foundation alumnus
HK Polytechnic University-
Warwick IGDS, Master
of Science in Manufacturing
Systems Engineering'16



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