
USAID HIGHLIGHTS

USAID Sends Education Expert to U.S. University

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

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Dara Kim, scholarship student for USAID-funded Training for Future Leaders program.

A new USAID-funded scholarship program designed to train future leaders is sending a Cambodian to the U.S. this month to pursue a master's degree in education. Dara Kim, who works in Phnom Penh for the NGO World Education, will study curriculum development for two years at Michigan State University. Kim was one of 17 students selected in the inaugural year of the program, which is called Training Future Leaders.

"I am excited to have this opportunity to study in the U.S. It is very prestigious for a Cambodian to receive this kind of scholarship," he said.

Kim said the skills he learns in the U.S. will be valuable to him when he returns to his position at World Education. He said he hopes to be involved in further developing Cambodia's first national curriculum for basic education, which was created with USAID support.

The Training Future Leaders program provides academic scholarships and leadership-development opportunities to emerging leaders in USAID-priority countries in Asia and the Near East. The program is designed to cultivate national leaders who will be at the forefront of policy formation and socio-economic development in their home countries. The program also aims to strengthen ties between the U.S. and scholars in developing countries.

Upon returning home, the scholarship recipients will work closely with a local mentor, local institutions and USAID to assist in the development of their countries in their areas of expertise. The program is implemented by the Academy for Educational Development.

A native of Kampot Province, Kim will begin a six-day orientation in Washington on August 18 before heading to East Lansing, Michigan, to begin classes. As soon as he arrives on campus, he plans to meet as many of his fellow students as possible and begin exploring the many resources on offer at the university.

His only worry? "I have heard that Michigan is very cold," he said, laughing.