

Lyda Ngin

Professional Statement

I remember coming across an English textbook on a desk when I was seven. Excitedly, I opened it to the first page, only to be met with a wall of unfamiliar words. At that moment, I promised myself that I would one day read that book cover to cover. It was then that I realized just how much I craved knowledge and education. Despite facing numerous challenges, such as family separation, domestic violence, bullying, and poverty, my determination to learn helped me rise above these obstacles and break free from the oppressive hold of my mother and grandmother. Now, I strive to use my education to help others and contribute to society in a meaningful way.

After graduating high school, I discovered my profound interest in law by witnessing injustice in sexual harassment and abuse of children as I was growing up. Many children, especially females, became the victims of the crimes, and other times, they married the criminals due to the lack of enforcement and corruption. The cause of the problems was the lack of law, education, and economic situation. Hence, I believed that becoming a lawyer was the most empowering profession concerning socio-economic welfare. It would best concede me to bring change and justice for many vulnerable children.

When I began my law degree, I received an offer for a partial scholarship to study business administration (BA) at another university. While my aspiration was to become a lawyer, I also recognized the significance of comprehending Cambodia's economic situation and finding sustainable solutions, which motivated me to pursue a BA degree. I completed both degrees in 2009, with plans to enroll in the Bar Association Kingdom of Cambodia (BAKC) for a two-year lawyer's program. However, due to financial difficulties within my family and the prevalence of bribery within BAKC, I was unable to cover the cost of additional education and daily expenses. Consequently, I was compelled to seek employment.

In 2009, I began my career as a Volunteer Assistant with Habitat for Humanity Cambodia (HFHC). My hard work and dedication quickly earned me a promotion to Communication Assistant for the Jimmy and Rosalyn Carter Project in early 2010. This role allowed me to connect with a wide range of stakeholders, including local and international media, donors, partners, and colleagues across various departments. Despite not having a formal degree in communication, I was able to learn and grow in this field. After two and a half years, I was promoted to Communications and Resource Development Officer, where I organized and executed significant events such as Mekong Big Build, Habitat Youth Leaders Build, and Khmer Harvest Build. Seeking further growth, I left HFHC in 2013 to join a prominent advocacy nonprofit, The NGO Forum on Cambodia, as a Media and Communication Coordinator. This membership-based organization offered me the chance to enhance my skills and gain experience in advocacy and coordination by organizing media field trips, press conferences, and budget and policy advocacy activities with the government. My work allowed me to establish a robust media relationship, benefiting my profession. I was featured on local media platforms to promote my community development and advocacy projects.

I prioritize continuous personal development and have actively pursued growth opportunities through various scholarships. 2014 I earned an ICT and Pedagogical Development certificate from Sweden and Uganda. In 2016, I received a certificate from The United States Department

of State Bureaus on Educational and Cultural Affairs as a Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiatives awardee. I was also honored to be selected as an awardee of the Open Society Foundation (OSF) in 2017.

After being invited by the Country Director, I returned to HFHC in 2016 as a Communications, Resource Development, and Advocacy Specialist. During my tenure of one year and three months, I spearheaded two significant projects. The first project was the Habitat Youth Leaders Build, where we recruited over 500 volunteers, including celebrities, government officials, and youth, to build and repair houses and schools. The second project was organizing the first-ever "Housing Forum" in Cambodia, which brought together 250 participants from government officials, academia, private sector, local/INGOs, and communities. The forum focused on sustainable solutions to housing and land issues.

Despite my progress in my career, I recognized the importance of pursuing an advanced education in communications to take on more significant responsibilities and attain loftier aspirations. Unfortunately, as no universities in Cambodia offered a master's degree in this field, I applied for a scholarship to study abroad. In 2017, I was fortunate enough to receive a scholarship through OSF to attend Ohio University, where I earned a master's degree in communications and development studies.

Throughout my academy experience, I was fortunate enough to immerse myself in diverse cultures and learn about the unique perspectives within the United States. As I neared completion of my communications program, I discovered a newfound passion for expanding my knowledge and honing my practical skills. My interests lay in leadership, strategic development, public-private partnerships, and networking, all of which I wanted to explore further. After thorough research, I pursued a Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree from Ohio University's esteemed Voinovich School.

Enrolling in the MPA program in 2020 was a crucial turning point in my education and future career. The curriculum was exceptional, and all the professors and faculty members were highly experienced and qualified. By the end of the program, I had gained valuable skills such as strategic planning, leadership and management, innovation, technology, and a deeper understanding of public administration.

Following graduation, I aspire to become the Head of E-Commerce Consultant for a socially responsible organization operating in Cambodia. This company's primary objective is to foster social entrepreneurship and implement sustainable measures to combat the region's economic challenges. While my childhood ambition of becoming a lawyer was not realized, I am confident that I can overcome any obstacles and play a pivotal role in advancing the betterment of my country.