

Globetrotting Student Offers Tips on Scholarships



Ea Sou Eng, 18, is an alumnus of a high school in Israel and recently won a scholarship to study for a bachelor's degree in the US. Recalling her experience of applying for a scholarship, Ms. Sou Eng said some schools asked for scores from her school in Cambodia, but some did not, asking only for a transcript. There is also an application available online that students can fill in once and send to multiple schools, she said.

As a high school student, Ms. Sou Eng received a two-year scholarship to study at Eastern Mediterranean International School in Israel, which was a partial scholarship covering 95 percent of the total program fee. Last week, she left Cambodia for the US to study for a Bachelor of Science degree in tourism and hospitality management. The course runs from 2016 to 2020.

Ms. Sou Eng recommends that students applying for scholarships do a lot of research on schools' websites and apply directly to the schools they are interested in. United World College has 14 schools around the world offering scholarships to international school students.

Ms. Sou Eng added that schools in the US really want to know about the applicant's qualities as a person, while schools in the UK are more interested in the applicant's qualities as a student.

As a young woman seeking further education opportunities abroad, Ms. Sou Eng said she had been determined to win a scholarship to study abroad since she was young, because she felt it would allow her to continue the kind of research she had always preferred to rote learning from books.

“I love to learn and research new things beyond what is taught in class. But I prefer to follow my heart when it comes to learning, rather than limit myself to what is in the lesson,” she said.

When she was, Ms. Sou Eng said she was very happy at high school in Israel and enjoyed studying there, because every lesson required some degree of independent research, as well as collaboration with her fellow students, who were from many different countries.

Ms. Sou Eng contrasted this with her experience in Cambodia, where her teachers simply wanted to hear her repeat information taught in the classroom. When she went beyond what was contained in the lesson, the teacher would judge her answer as wrong. Often her answer would contain the same information as what was taught in the lesson, but her answer was in a different form as she had discovered it in the course of doing her own research.

Ms. Sou Eng’s friends and family asked her if she wasn’t scared to study in Israel, as the country is frequently rocked by clashes with Palestinians. She replied that in Cambodia she wasn’t inspired to study.

“My family and friends did not want me to study in Israel, and asked me if I was scared. But I told them I was not worried that something bad would happen,” Ms. Sou Eng said.

Among the subjects she studied were math, Chinese, English, social studies, science and music which is her elective choice.

As for her degree, Ms. Sou Eng chose to major in tourism and hospitality management at university after learning that not many students study the subject in Cambodia, despite the country’s many natural wonders, monuments, temples and other tourist locations.

When she returns to Cambodia to work she plans to open her own hotel. Most of the modern hotels in Cambodia are run by foreigners, Ms. Sou Eng said, so she really wants people to know that Cambodians can also operate this sort of business successfully.