

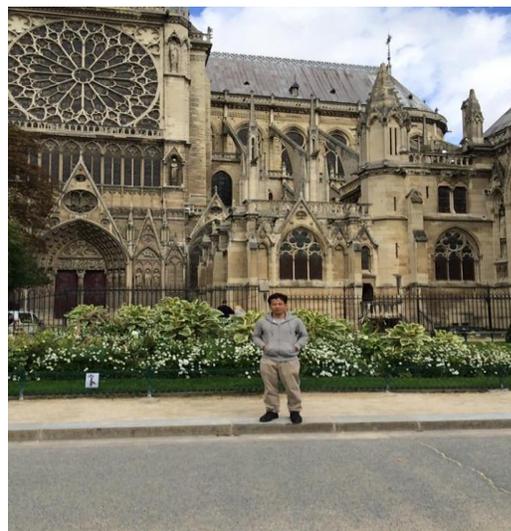
## My one-month research in University of Nantes, France

Hay Chanthol, economic lecturer, University of Battambang, Cambodia

I am Chanthol, a lecturer in economics from the Department of Sociology and Community Development of University of Battambang in Cambodia. After spending about 10 years teaching in Cambodia, I applied for international mobility program for a period of one month from 8 September to 6 October 2017 under Docksider project to University of Nantes in France to do a research on the impact of irrigation on rice yield in Cambodia under the supervision of Professor François-Charles Wolff in the Laboratoire d'Economie et de Management Nantes-Atlantique.



The motivation behind the application for the mobility was to experience the world's most popular tourist destination and many cultural treasures and to learn research capacity in higher education in France as well as to put myself in European economic integration. France is the world's most popular tourist destination, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization and the home of many cultural treasures, not the least its language. On my first day of arrival in Paris, I was astonished by well-designed architecture of elegant buildings and many beautiful spectacles in Paris. I spent 2 days visiting many places including Musée de Louvre, le Tour Eiffel, Arc de Triomphe in Paris before going to Nantes for my research. We can travel by metro to visit those places conveniently at reasonable costs. Another exciting moment is that I could use French language which I have not used for long time to ask direction, in super markets etc. I did study French language in high school and in university and from this language study; I can understand some French culture including some famous places such as Tour Eiffel, Arc de Triomphe, Notre Dame. I was very excited to see those places in person in France and to practice my French language. Research capacity in France is very well recognized in the world. My supervisor who published hundreds of academic articles is very helpful in guiding my research. We can discuss in French or in English language to conduct research. In addition, the doctorate student lab which is filled with students from many different nationalities from Senegal, France, and Vietnam is also very tranquil that allow every doctoral student to concentrate on his/her research well. Moreover, the University of Nantes looks green and is well equipped with modern libraries, cafeteria and its connection to city center is also convenient. We just can take bus or tram to city center spending less than 20 minutes. If we like sport, we can go jogging along beautiful river Erdre just behind the Laboratoire d'Economie et de Management.



I also took my research opportunity to visit famous cities including Brussel, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Luxembourg and Rome during weekends to understand more about regional economic integration and culture. I was surprised about bus transportation between countries. It was very convenient to enter a country without passport check. It was not labor-intensive at all. The bus company has only one driver who manages everything from luggage loading to ticket checking

and driving the bus. So it is very convenient and time saving. We can use euro currency in those cities without having trouble of exchanging money in each city. From this I understand the economic integration is moving fast and making mobility of labor, of goods and finance very smooth. However, the food, drinking water, accommodation etc are expensive in particular in Amsterdam and Luxembourg. During my travel to those cities, I met some friends from other countries too. So my travel was exciting to meet new friends and to see ancient cities and well as modern cities in Europe.



Besides taking weekend time traveling, I was based in doctorate room to focus on my research, in particular, to review articles related to my research topics, doing data analysis. However, one month is not enough to finish my research paper which requires longer time and deep analysis of a series of socio economic data pooled together. But my supervisor and I can work online later or visit Nantes next time because research need long term collaboration.

After coming back from Nantes, I have a desire to help transfer my earned knowledge to my students in Cambodia through research trainings and taking parts in activities to improve education in Cambodia so that our human resource can be a driver of Cambodian economic development as we are now so lagged behind other countries but want to be integrated with other countries. So far, I have taught many undergraduate students and some graduate students in various universities in Cambodia for my last 10 years, developed curriculum for graduate school of economics in University of Battambang. Although I am now doing my first year PhD outside Cambodia, I am still developing some economics textbooks in khmer language to help Cambodian students who are poor in foreign language.

I will work to contribute to the improvement of collaboration between University of Nantes and University of Battambang in terms of research capacity building. When research capacity at university is well, then we look for how that research outcome could be used for policy making or policy implementation of the public sector. Up to now, almost all universities in Cambodia lack research capacities in terms of insufficient labs, staffs, equipments and lack of connection with leading research think tanks outside the country. Visiting Nantes provide good opportunity to build more research collaboration to be undertaken many years ahead.

Finally, I would like to thank Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union Dockside Project who provided funds for my one month research in University of Nantes.

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