

News

Keo Duong, a Lecturer at the Department of History has won a Young Researcher Prize

Keo Duong has been awarded the 2022 Voltaire Prize from the University of Potsdam in Germany. The members of the jury stated that *"Duong Keo's careful research, courageous communication, and committed interaction in Cambodia have contributed significantly to a more conscious approach to the past, as well as to more tolerance towards the socially marginalized Vietnamese minority."*



Figure 1. Keo Duong with Professor Oliver Günther, President of the University of Potsdam, and Professor Ottmar Ette.

The 5000 EUR prize is awarded to a young scholar who has campaigned for freedom in research and teaching or the right of free expression. It acknowledges those who have contributed toward *"social dialogue on peace, international understanding, tolerance, and respect for differences"*, or those who *"promote diversity in society oppose racism and discrimination"*. It is

organized by the University of Potsdam in Germany with financial support from the Friede Springer Foundation. Since 2017, the award has been received by young scholars from Turkey, Guatemala, Afghanistan, Hungary, and Rwanda. Keo Duong, of Cambodia, is the first person from Southeast Asia to be recognized by the award.

Figure 2. Keo Duong with his supervisor, Professor Timothy Williams and Professor Ottmar Ette © University of Potsdam/Sandra Scholz



Keo Duong's current PhD research at Bundeswehr University in Munich is supported by a scholarship from the Gerda Henkel Foundation. He was nominated by his doctoral supervisor; Professor Timothy Williams based on two aspects of his work over the past 15 years. The first is his work as a lecturer since 2014 at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, contributing to a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the history of the Khmer Rouge. He has taught several subjects regarding the modern history of Cambodia, and historical research. Additionally, he worked for many NGOs, most notably Youth for Peace, Kdei Karuna, and the Bophana Audiovisual Resource Center, where he has conducted research, written books, and

produced films and multi-media resources. He was also involved in revising of national history curriculum for the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports seeking to improve education in Cambodia. He has also worked to promote tolerance and respect, and contributed to a deeper public understanding of ethnic Vietnamese minorities living in floating villages in Cambodia. He is one of a few Cambodian researchers brave enough to speak publicly about this politically sensitive topic, bringing academic and public attention to this issue.

Picture 3. Keo Duong holding the 2022 Voltaire Prize © Keo Duong



Keo Duong is committed to developing his academic career by continuing to contribute his knowledge, especially through his role at the Royal University of Phnom Penh. He plans to continue teaching and take part in research activities to contribute to strengthening the research culture in Cambodia. In his acceptance speech at the award ceremony in Potsdam, Keo Duong stated *“this acknowledgement of my work is very important to me and the prize motivates me to work harder in my research to contribute to the academic, as well as in my advocacy community in Cambodia and overseas.”*