



MEET OUR ALUMNI!



Michael Jung

BFS Class of 2006

- Harvard Law School, Juris Doctor, 2018
- University of Michigan, Bachelor of Business Administration, 2009

What are you up to now?

I am a human rights lawyer specializing in children's rights and child protection, particularly in the field of justice for and with children. My work also broadly encompasses access to justice, rule of law, international law, and engagement with human rights mechanisms, and I also work on the rights of other marginalized groups on top of children, including that of women, persons with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ communities, refugees, and ethnic minorities, among others. I've spent the past few years in Southeast Asia, primarily in Cambodia, Thailand, and Myanmar, with projects also in Vietnam, the Philippines, Timor-Leste, and others. Because I work at the sub-national, national, regional, and international levels, my work is diverse and dynamic, and it certainly keeps me busy.

Do you have any passion projects?

Where do I begin? My passion is my work in its entirety. This isn't always healthy, but given the amount of violence, exploitation, risks, and slew of challenges that children face in today's world, it's difficult to turn off the switch and call it a day. At the same time, it's hard to continue this line of work without passion for both the technical area as well as towards children. All of my projects are meant to support people in some form, whether structurally or individually, and I approach my work with the ultimate goal of helping children to feel and actually be safe, to grow up in a welcoming and nurturing environment, and to be empowered as rights-holders to be agents of change. A smile on a child's face is enough for me to keep going.

What was the biggest challenge you faced in College?

In hindsight, I don't think I faced any major challenges in college. But a challenge I did face both in college and in law school was how to manage my time effectively to maximize the experience and partake in everything I was interested in. Given the size of the institutions I attended, there were opportunities in so many different sectors and directions that caught my attention. I took full credit loads of courses and was involved in a large number of extracurricular and work activities, including clubs, legal clinics, community service, academic communities, part-time jobs, event planning, group discussions, and on and on. This meant less time to casually hang out with friends or to go on a trip for leisure, but I am satisfied with the busy life I had in college.

What advice do you have for BFS students as they go off to university/college?

Please treat college as a place to comfortably explore various fields and practices, rather than as a step that will completely decide your fate for the rest of your life. I think of trial and error, curiosity, and the willingness to be adventurous as key traits of college life. It's also a place where you can be creative in your approach to designing the experience you desire, combining both the opportunities within and outside of your institution. You may already have a good idea of your likes, dislikes, and what you do well, but please do not limit yourself just yet. Personally speaking, I never once considered entering the legal profession until I was in my mid-20s. It wasn't until several years after graduating from college that I felt the need to study law, and though what I do now is not related to what I did in college, the substantive knowledge and practical skills I gained as a college student still benefit me today. As you plan for college life in preparation for what you expect to do right after, I hope you can also feel comfortable about the possibility of pursuing multiple career paths throughout your lifetime.

What memory of BFS comes to mind?

I joined BFS when I was one of just a few students attending the school, and I spent a significant part of my childhood with the school. That entire time was a memorable experience, and it was a joy to engage with all the friends and teachers from various backgrounds who came and went over the years. I find it hard to visualize how I would have become who I am today without the positive growth fostered by my times at BFS. A specific experience that comes to mind is the community engagement we had conducted with a custodial facility for children, and thinking back, I believe this was the impetus for the work I do today in children's rights.