

HANOI HEADSHOTS AND BIOS



Nick Mendez is a first-year law student at NYU Law, originally from Washington, DC. He attended college at Harvard University, where he concentrated in History with a citation in French. Prior to law school he worked as a Project Assistant at Sidley Austin in Washington, and as a Senior Associate in the Corporate Issues and Crisis Communications group at Weber Shandwick. He is interested in the intersection of regulatory law and startup operations, particularly around technology, digital health, and data privacy.



Jill Golub is a second-year law student at NYU Law. Born and raised in Westchester, New York, Jill studied European History and English at the University of Pennsylvania. Prior to law school, Jill worked for one year as a paralegal at the Manhattan District Attorney's office where she helped assistant district attorneys with casework and trial preparation. This past summer, Jill interned at Lemonade Insurance Company, working on topics including data privacy and artificial intelligence. She is interested in working with startups and technology companies. This summer she is excited to be working as a summer associate at Cooley LLP in New York City.



Adrienne is a first-year law student at NYU Law. She is originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and did her undergraduate studies at NYU, where she majored in Politics. Prior to law school, she worked at various data and technology companies in both Washington D.C. and New York City. Prior to that, she served as a Teach for America Corps Member in the Bay Area. She is interested in startup, technology, and venture capital law.



Elizabeth Damaskos is a graduate of Wesleyan University and is pursuing her JD at NYU School of Law. At Wesleyan, she explored courses in Philosophy, the Classics, and Social, Cultural and Critical Theory and was a corporate paralegal at Paul Weiss for five years prior to coming to NYU. She is passionate about using the law for the social good and supporting diverse

innovators in the legal profession and beyond. At NYU she is concentrating her studies on Social Entrepreneurship and Impact Investing and committed to learning both inside and outside of the classroom. In Autumn, she will be joining Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP in New York as an Associate.



Michael is a 2L at NYU Law. He was born and raised in the Philadelphia area, and graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a degree in English, concentrating in Medieval Literature. Prior to law school, he worked as an editor for several major publishers in New York. At NYU he is President of First-Generation Professionals (FGP), Treasurer of the Health Law and Policy Society (HLPS), and Alternative Break Co-Chair of the Social Enterprise and Start-Up Law group (SE-SL). He spent his 1L summer as a summer associate at Cleary Gottlieb, and will spend his 2L summer as a summer associate at White & Case.



Scott Chen is a third-year student at NYU Law. He was born and raised in Las Vegas, NV, and graduated from Emory University with a degree in Neuroscience & Behavioral Biology. Prior to law school, he worked as a research scientist at Emory University School of Medicine. He is interested in working with technology and life sciences companies. This fall, he will be joining Morrison & Foerster's Technology Transactions Group in San Francisco as an associate.



Shirley Li is a second-year student at NYU Law. She was born and raised in Shanghai, China, and graduated from Georgetown University in 2017 with a degree in Economics and a minor certificate in Government. Prior to law school, she worked as a paralegal in a full service boutique law firm, primarily working on tort claims and small business transactions. At NYU Law, she is the Outreach Co-Chair of APALSA, and she is interested in working in investment funds, particularly in cross-border and impact investing. This summer, she will be joining Debevoise & Plimpton in their New York office as a summer associate.



Neal Rooney is a 3L from Providence, Rhode Island. Prior to law school, Neal worked for an early stage education technology startup in Silicon Valley. Neal is President of the InnoVention Society, InnoVention Startup Competition, and the Social Enterprise and Startup Law group. Outside of NYU Law, Neal is a Venture Fund Fellow for the NYU Innovation Venture Fund, Future Angel for the New York Angels, and an InSITE Entrepreneurship and Venture Capital Fellow. This fall, he will be joining Gunderson Dettmer's New York office as an associate. Neal is a former collegiate javelin thrower.



Heidi Hai is a first-year student at NYU Law. She was born and raised in Shanghai, China, and graduated from Columbia University in 2019 with a degree in Sociology and a concentration in East Asian Languages and Cultures. She came straight-through to law school after spending one summer researching on the interaction between law and emerging industries at a corporate law firm. At NYU Law, she is a first-year representative in the Law and Business Association. She is interested in startup, intellectual property and venture capital law.



Arthi Naini is a first-year student at NYU Law, originally from California. She graduated from UCLA in 2016 with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology. Prior to law school, she worked for a legal-tech startup company in Los Angeles, working on using technology making legal resources more accessible. She is interested in the area of technology, startup and intellectual property law.

HANOI ORG WRITEUPS

KOTO (Shirley Li)

KOTO stands for “Know One, Teach One” and was founded by Vietnamese-Australian Mr. Jimmy Pham in 1999. It is a hospitality training program that provides internationally-accredited training courses in hospitality for at-risk and disadvantaged youth, who hopefully can use these skills to find stable jobs and achieve self-empowerment. KOTO has training centers in Hanoi and Saigon and has trained over 700 students. KOTO has a Foundation sector which focuses on raising funds for its charitable activities and an Enterprise sector, which provides a platform for hospitality training through KOTO training restaurants, catering services, and cooking classes.

During our visit to KOTO in Hanoi, we learned about their 2-year training program aimed at disadvantaged youth, mostly from rural tribal communities outside Hanoi. Students entering the KOTO hospitality training program are given the option to specialize to become either a chef or a bartender and are trained at KOTO-owned restaurants to fine-tune their skills. Students also live together in the KOTO dorms, where they attend other classes such as mathematics, English, and computer training, and engage in community bonding activities such as an annual class trip. We also had the chance to take a tour of KOTO’s training center and saw their classrooms, library, and dormitories, and we even had to chance to enjoy a cup of tea and some delicious cookies prepared by KOTO students in their own little cafe. It was an incredibly educational visit, and we send our best wishes to KOTO and their students!

Coc Coc Browser (Thomas Chen)

Cốc Cốc (pronounced Coke-Coke, as in Coca-Cola) launched in Vietnam 2013 as a local competitor to the Google web browser and search engine. Their products include a browser, search engine, map navigation, and advertising platform. It was founded by Lê Văn Thanh, Nguyễn Thanh Bình, and Nguyễn Đức Ngọc, three Vietnamese graduates of Moscow State University, and CEO Lavrenko Victor, a Russian entrepreneur. As of April 2018, Cốc Cốc retains 25% of the desktop browser market in Vietnam, as compared to Google Chrome’s 60%. Their success is in large part due to features tailored to their local user base - they autocorrect for VN tones and other diacritical marks, saving typing time by 30%. The company has also responded to the Vietnamese appetite for online videos, but poor local internet speeds by optimizing downloads speeds within the browser. In their most recent funding round in 2015, they raised \$14M from Burda Principal Investments.

We met with Vu Anh Nguyen, the deputy CEO of Cốc Cốc and former fintech and banking expert. He introduced the company to our group and walked us through its founding,

including its close relationship with Russian CEO Lavrenko Victor. Vietnam maintains a close relationship with Russia due to their shared communist roots. Vu Anh shared that it was not uncommon for Vietnamese students to study at Russian universities prior to returning to Vietnam for work. Today, the Russian influence may remain, but the company is run by engineers with Vu Anh Nguyen at its head. He shared that he was brought on to instate a standard operating procedure and help define company culture in a way that motivated employees and united them around common values.

On the business side, Vu Anh reminded us that Cốc Cốc was the second most popular browser in Vietnam, behind the global powerhouse Google Chrome. However, Google Chrome was and remains a distant leader in the market and Vu Anh questioned whether they would ever be able to be the leading provider in Vietnam, despite tailoring their product to the Vietnamese user preferences. In addition, Vu Anh noted that one of the major challenges of their business was contending with internet providers, particularly those who route through China and other foreign regulatory bodies that can impose a burden on Cốc Cốc's ability to transmit data. Thankfully for them, Cốc Cốc still has a strategic advantage in that they continue to collect consumer data and they have more plans to put that to use in their mobile application. Further down the line, Cốc Cốc has plans to advocate for stricter protectionist regulations with the Vietnamese government, which could potentially give them the advantage over Google in the long run.

Baker McKenzie Hanoi (Elizabeth Damaskos) (I wasn't sure what was really relevant for the report, so let me know if anything else should be emphasized instead)

The group was excited to visit Baker McKenzie and we were greeted warmly by Tran Manh Hung, The Country Managing Partner, Dang Thanh Son, a Corporate Partner focusing on M&A and International Commercial and Trade and Hoang Ngoc Minh, a Business Development and Marketing Executive. They gave an overview of the firm's Vietnam offices in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City and informed us that they had recently helped to support the top 50 competitors of a startup competition in Vietnam by helping them to file for patents in the U.S. and other countries.

Son described to us his journey to Baker McKenzie so that we could understand better the legal landscape of the country and the different paths attorneys in the country may take. Son had a global and varied career and through his work at a major Telecommunication company was able to share his insights on the industry and where Vietnam should focus in the tech space. He noted that the tech laws in Vietnam were not so different than that of the United States. Son was particularly invigorated by the swiftly changing tides in technology and quickly assessed that areas such as Big Data and AI would be the next frontier, even teaching himself to code along the way! The areas of Big Data and Data Privacy were the focus of a lot of our conversation as Son explained how even the omnipresence of Grab, the Vietnamese version of Uber, applied for an e-banking license in Singapore to bolster the use of the data it was collecting from its app. Singapore, he emphasized, is doing a very good job at poising itself as an IP Hub for the region. He also noted that the law is always behind the development of technology and we as attorneys need to be asking ourselves the big questions as the tides change such as "who will take responsibility for xyz new liability?"

We were also delighted to be able to spend time with the legal trainees, paralegals and lawyers of the firm in order to be able to better understand the process of becoming an attorney in Vietnam. During our conversations we wanted to understand what are the options that the folks in the room were trying to decide between and how innovative could you be as a young lawyer in the country. It was invigorating and fun to meet with the young attorneys and future attorneys and found that many of them had a very international focus to their studies, practice area and interests.

CSIP (Heidi Hai)

Centre for Social Initiatives Promotion (CSIP) is a leading Vietnam-based, non-governmental and non-for-profit organization working to promote the development of social enterprises and social initiatives in Vietnam and in the SEA region. Established in 2008, CSIP aims to provide direct investment and support to people and social enterprises who apply innovative and sustainable business solutions to solve social and environmental issues. They also work with other stakeholders to raise awareness of social enterprises, build business network and improve the operating environment for social enterprises in general.

We entered the CSIP office at a majestic building with security check. The cozy, welcoming internal decor felt like a contrast against hustling-bustling avenue the building was located on. The phrase “social enterprise” is artistically woven onto a wooden board above a small sofa. Our presenter Quang Phan at CSIP led us into the meeting room, a compact yet clean and bright space. Covering an entire wall in the room are signs and boards showcasing the footprints that CSIP has made to advance social entrepreneurship in Vietnam since its foundation in 2008.

Quang spoke at great length about CSIP’s mission, achievements and challenges. CSIP primarily receives funding from overseas, with most of its sponsors located in the UK. CSIP functions as a platform connecting sponsors with the particular cause they want to support. In addition to finding funding for social enterprises, however, CSIP does much more beyond. It also works as an educator helping social entrepreneurs develop their projects into sustainable businesses. CSIP has also actively participated in advocating for the recognition of social entrepreneurship through legislation. It consolidated a report on various social enterprises in Vietnam, which led up to the legislative success in 2014, where the government formally recognized social enterprises as legal business entities in its commercial law. Quang interpreted this moment as that the government has started to allow private initiatives to solve public problems.

Legislative impetus, however, seems to have slowed down after 2014, an issue among the biggest challenges that CSIP face today. While the legal recognition of social enterprises was certainly exciting news, Quang told us, further details are yet to be finalized. Going hand-in-hand with insufficient regulations is the persisting lack of public awareness. Many Vietnamese, he explained, remain unfamiliar with the concept of social entrepreneurship and tend to be skeptical towards entrepreneurs’ efforts to do good.



Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CSIE) (Tori Stringfellow & Adrienne Lewis)

Meeting with Dr. Truong Thi Nam Thang (Director of CSIE)

CSIE at the National Economics University in Hanoi is the first organization dedicated to innovation and social enterprises among the universities in Vietnam. CSIE promotes growth by conducting research on social innovation and entrepreneurship, doing policy advocacy, hosting lectures and other educational events, and operating an incubator. Their research team hosts annual conferences and releases regular reports on the state of social entrepreneurship in Vietnam. Their education team operates MoSIE, a masters program to train for innovation in Vietnam. Their incubator maintains an impact space for small social enterprises and hosts NEUrON, a start-up competition at the National Economics University. CSIE has a team of about 10 and a portfolio of about 14 companies, including KOTO, who we also had the opportunity to meet with.

At CSIE, we met with Dr. Truong Thi Nam Thang, the organization's Director. She spoke to our group about the substantial role the British Council has played in the social enterprise

community in Vietnam; the technical and financial support the British Council has provided to Vietnamese organizations has led to the widespread adoption of the UK social enterprise model in Vietnam. Specifically for CSIE, the British Council has sponsored a number of social enterprise source trainers to study in the UK. Furthermore, the British Council continues to connect Dr. Thang and CSIE with a number of universities and nonprofit organizations globally for educational and networking opportunities.

Beyond her description of the role the British Council plays in Vietnam's social enterprise community, Dr. Thang reinforced many of the points we had heard from other organizations about legal barriers to registering as a social enterprise in Vietnam and the role the Vietnamese government has played in fostering, or not fostering, the proliferation of such organizations.

Questions:

1. Your organization produces regular country reports, tracking innovation and growth in Vietnam. What major investment and innovation trends have you seen over the past five years? Are there specific sectors flourishing in Vietnam compared to the rest of SEA? What innovation or change do you anticipate in the next five to ten years?
2. Who is the target audience for your regular reports and annual conferences? If the audience is entrepreneurs, how have you seen your reports and events impact their business practices?
3. How do you select candidates for your incubator? What are some of the success stories you've seen with these companies?

AngelHack Vietnam (Neal Rooney & Jill Golub)

AngelHack Vietnam is part of the [AngelHack network](#) -- a global hackathon organization founded in San Francisco in 2011. AngelHack hosts an annual global hackathon competition, runs a pre-accelerator program for AngelHack winners, organizes corporate hackathons, and maintains [Hackathon.io](#) (an online community for hackathoners). AngelHack has expanded to over 50 cities -- including Hanoi -- with around 100,000 developers in the community.

When visiting AngelHacks, we met with Jasmine Nguyen -- the Regional Manager of Asia Pacific for AngelHacks. Jasmine shared with us her journey as a social entrepreneur. Jasmine is originally from Hanoi and attended Macalester College in St. Paul, MN. While attending Macalester College, Jasmine was heavily involved in the social entrepreneurship ecosystem and was awarded the prestigious Thomas J. Watson Fellowship following her graduation. The Watson Fellowship provides \$30,000 to each recipient and enables graduating seniors the opportunity to engage in one year of self-designed independent study and travel abroad after graduation. During her Watson year, Jasmine created a social entrepreneurship innovation hub in Vietnam. Since then, Jasmine has worked to mentor youth-led social ventures and create new ecosystems of opportunity and empowerment in Vietnam.

Toong Coworking Space (Arthi Naini)

Toong is the first work environment developer in Indochina, founded by a French architect. They create and operate a series of collaborative workspaces, which provide and customize full-cycled, flexible, human-centric office solutions for both independent workers and businesses of all sizes. An antithesis to the predominant concept of coworking space, Toong came into the picture at the time when most coworking spaces around the world were solely revolving around stylish, tech-driven, startup-oriented places that focus on businesses' growth. Meanwhile, Toong was born out of the philosophy that the work environment should, first and foremost, nurture the self-transformation of every individual, which will result in a tremendous momentum to their businesses.

Each location uses the original venue as inspiration for the design of the space, while also incorporating Toong's general design - hoping that these unique styles will inspire people's work and encourage creativity in the community by inspiring each other. The interiors of the space reflect the local Vietnamese design but also have French influence. At this specific location, the tiles on the floor were the original tiles placed in the building over 30 years ago and this was intentionally left in place when Toong's coworking space was built since the building's original design was inspired by the surrounding province. From our visit, it was evident that Toong incorporates a human-centric approach to the way they design and manage each coworking space. The interior was decorated with locally inspired art, like landscapes of their surrounding region. The staff places freshly cut flowers everyday and carefully curates the essential oil diffuser for each room. They focus on the local culture and heritage of Hanoi and they regularly have art and cultural exhibitions, curated by Toong, including both Vietnamese and international artists.

Imagtor (Michael Strother)

Founded in 2016, Imagtor is a visual marketing BBO company focusing on real estate, while also creating social impact through equal employment opportunities and financial support to social initiatives, such as the Will to Live Center (whose staff were some of the originators of the idea for Imagtor). In 2016, 30% of their positive profit went to the development and activities of commonization for people with disabilities in Vietnam. Their mission is to become the first successful and scalable social enterprise in Vietnam to be led by People with Disabilities (PWD). On the business side, Imagtor offers photo editing, virtual staging, videos, slideshows, and other materials applicable to the real estate industry. The areas of impact include creating employment opportunities, addressing social exclusion, promoting education and literacy, and supporting children and vulnerable persons.

We met with Mr. Dam Quang Huynh, the CEO of the company, who joined in 2018. He had been friends with the Founder and President, Mrs. Nguyen Thi Van, for several years and had helped support Imagtor originally with financing, but when the company began to have some struggles, he decided to join to help turn around the business.

From the CEO we learned that currently about 40% of the staff are people with disabilities. They get more than 1,000 applicants at a time from people interested in open positions at the company, all because of their strong promotion and word-of-mouth marketing. The position is especially appealing to people with disabilities because it offers a workplace that is cognizant of, and accounts for, any disabilities they might have that could make it difficult to find work elsewhere. Imagtor not only offers a

place to work, but also has training sessions both on and off-site, allowing the employees to become better at their jobs and to, if they are interested, eventually leave Imagtor to join other organizations and firms in the industry either in Vietnam or abroad.

From the CEO we were also able to learn a lot about the state of social enterprises from a legal standpoint (bolstering the information we're already gathered during our other meetings), and the state of disability law and overall accessibility in Vietnam. Interestingly, Imagtor is not officially registered as a social enterprise, largely because of the various requests and requirements that are made for SEs even without other incentives. Instead, they've made it part of their general mission to work with the disabled population in the country (for which there are government incentives). Overall, however, the status of disability law in Vietnam is a bit bleak, and there is very little support from the government for people with disabilities. The Founder and President, who is a person with disabilities, receives only \$25 a month from the government, which isn't even enough to cover breakfasts for the month. Instead, it is through social enterprises like Imagtor that people are looking to help those with disabilities, with the hope that the government will start to catch up later.

Moving forward, the CEO hopes to grow the company into one of the top 10 in the industry throughout the world. A fascinating comment he made near the end of the meeting was that he doesn't like to think of the company as a social enterprise, and that isn't the focus he's putting on Imagtor as he tries to grow the firm in the future. To him, the idea that someone might hire their company *because* it hires people with disabilities and is a social enterprise isn't the angle he wants to take. He said that, first and foremost, he wants Imagtor to be known for their excellent work, accomplished by efficient and productive employees. He wants people to hire Imagtor because of their strengths as industry leaders, and if their social mission pleases the customer, all the better.