

Report on Participation in Thailand Field Trip 2016

Jake Wallace
Year level: 2
Graduate School of: Economics
Kyoto University

The Thailand field trip was, for me, an incredibly useful and beneficial trip. I have come away from this experience with numerous insights, which are explained below in accordance with the matters required for inclusion in this report. Looking at each matter separately, I have explained the reasons why this course has been so beneficial for me, and the experiences I have gathered.

(a) Academic outcomes;

When first looking into Master's programs one of the aspects of the East Asia Sustainable Economic Development Studies course that interested me was the opportunity to visit Thailand for a field trip. I applied to study in Japan because I am very motivated to study overseas, so that I not only gain academic knowledge, but also a better understanding of Asian cultures and societies – which this field trip has given me.

I would say that this trip has furthered my interest in overseas studying and international understanding. Having the opportunity to share experiences with students from around the world, and alongside students of the Thai universities we visited, means that we are able to hear and understand different perspectives and cultures. Talking to the students of these universities meant that I was able to develop a further insight into Thai society and culture from a first-hand perspective, which I would deem necessary for gaining the deep insights in which we gained.

(b) Your experiences while overseas;

I used the summer break to explore South East Asian culture and this trip helped me to explore Thailand further. Having a Thai student from Kyoto University – Paravee – join us was incredibly helpful in enhancing the experiences I gained from the visit. She, alongside other Thai students from Chiang Mai and Thammasat University, was able to help explain to me particular aspects of Thai culture that is difficult to learn unless speaking with someone who is from the culture.

From this trip I was able to learn in great detail about the royal family, which was relevant not only because I am also from a constitutional monarchy, but also because of recent news of the King's passing, and how this will affect Thailand. Not only this, but I was also able to gain some historical context to modern Thailand's development – in both an economical and societal sense.

(c) The content of the program;

In regards to the content of the program I would like to focus specifically on FAO and UNIDO. Whilst all of the content of the program was incredibly useful and insightful, these two visits stood out to me in particular. With my research focusing on social entrepreneurship there was a clear link to UNIDO's work, and looking at some of the projects they are currently undertaking, there are some parallels. The staff at UNIDO were also incredibly friendly and having a Kyoto University student currently undertaking an internship there, we were able to gain additional insight into how the organization operates.

FAO, the other UN organization we visited, was equally as welcoming and they provided detailed and interesting insights into their work, and how successful it has been. Whilst my research does not specifically look at food and agriculture, the operations of farmers etc. is still an area of interest of mine, and so being able to ask questions directly to very senior members of the organization meant that I was able to gain a great deal of knowledge particular to my interests.

(d) The impact of the program on your career plans;

I was not aware of internship programs available at UNIDO and FAO – and Kyoto University’s relationship with them – and so this has been something that has intrigued me since. I will definitely be applying for internship opportunities at both organizations, as they are fields that I would like to pursue in the future. As such, I will be applying to internships at UNIDO and FAO, as well as looking into the possibility of pursuing a career at one of the UN’s numerous organizations. Considering my interests center on Asia, enterprises and society, I believe that this career has benefitted me through showing me the different possibilities that are available to me in South East Asia.