

Report on Participation in Thailand Overseas Field Research

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Thailand fieldtrip was the first overseas field trip that was held for 2016 class of East Asia Course at the Graduate School of Economics at Kyoto University. The program was one awaited event by the students since we had some experiences in hosting international students from some partner universities. Exchanging ideas and active discussion of the local issues in Thailand are the outputs that I expected. Overall, the programs were interesting and enriching, particularly within the field of track #2 of EA Course: Environmental Policy and Rural Development. There are three kinds of aspects that I would like to discuss in this report.

Thailand and ASEAN Connectivity

The ASEAN Economic Community that has been implemented since 2015 is one of big steps taken by the Association of Southeast Asian Nation in establishing one of their common goals: improving equitability among the members. During the lectures at Chiang Mai University and Thammasat University, it was interesting to hear the point of view from Thailand's scholars. There are strong connections between Thailand, Myanmar, and Laos in implementing this regional connectivity. They have established strong trade activities; with Thailand as the most powerful one in terms of GDP, playing a role in enhancing economic conditions in Myanmar and Laos by recruiting human resources.

In my opinion, the connection of Thailand with other ASEAN countries was not really being discussed. We were told that the implementation of the program has not been maximized yet; there are still many rooms to be strengthened. However, Thailand as one of the biggest economy in the region must have some undergoing progress with the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam, which was not particularly discussed during the sessions. In addition to that, during seminars at UNIDO and ESCAP, we discussed the role of the world organization in the economic and social development of Thailand and neighboring developing countries. It was fascinating to know that various steps and coordination have been undertaken to keep the Thai industries thriving and to take into account their environmental and social impacts, in line with their economic growth.

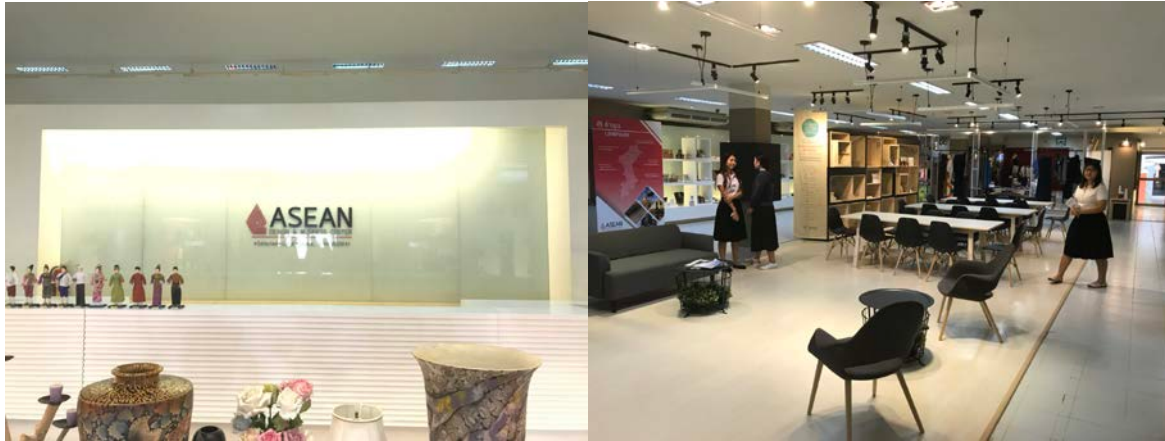
World Organizations in ASEAN Region

One interesting thing to see about Thailand (especially Bangkok) is the operations of world non-governmental organizations. We had a chance to visit ESCAP and had a seminar session with UNIDO. Although the focuses of the organizations are different, I had the impression that both organizations have been doing many projects within the scope, and sometimes overlapping each other. The ESCAP focuses on trade investment and innovation, while UNIDO focuses on broader aspect of trade and industry including social (poverty reduction), economy (trade capacity building), as well as energy and environment. Particularly UNIDO works with many business associations and federations. This is closely related to my research topic and made this visit more interesting for me. The discussion was active and inspiring, but time-limited.

UNIDO and ESCAP are part of the United Nations, adapting a system based on donor percentage in terms of recruiting

the representatives. One of UN's goals is creating equal position of all society in the world, and I hope they can establish their role with clear perspective that every nation has equal voice, and the voice is not based on their financial contribution to the organization.

Thailand and The Creative Industry



The visit to ASEAN Design and Business Center reminds me of my hometown, Bandung that have similar climate, geographical conditions, and the role as a city of local creative industry. From my perspective, the programs and facilities provided by Thai government and the local council is progressive and aggressive. Why progressive? The creative industry has started to emerge within this past two decades. Compared to other Southeast Asian cities that try to take role as city of creative industry such as Bandung in Indonesia, and Penang in Malaysia, Thailand's Chiang Mai has created the umbrella organization for the ASEAN Region. Although in my opinion, this design center and incubator (or likely association) is mainly covers the product of Thai creative industry; not necessarily the other ASEAN countries, their initiative is a good thing to inspire the other developing countries.

Overall Conclusion

The field trip was full of important schedule and meetings with the scholars from local universities. To be honest, I had initially expected more exchanges of ideas and presentations with local students in order to get more insights, however due to some schedules placed over the weekend, the number of local participants were less than I expected. However, the professors and students are very warm and friendly.

Overseas field research Thailand trip 2018 was an enriching experience that broader my point of view oh how the concept of sustainability is adapted in developing country. Even though my interests has been regarding the contents of regional economic development that was discussed in some sessions, I found that learning about environmental and social aspects of sustainability constructed the whole ideas of sustainable development in Thailand. This trip had inspired me to try applying jobs at international organizations or implementing the value of sustainability at my future workplace. Lastly, I would like to thank the professors and academic staffs of Kyoto University who gave me chance to learn and witness new things through this opportunity.