

## **Report on Participation in 2018 Thailand Field Research Trip**

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The field research trip to Thailand allowed me to visit universities, companies, as well as international organizations. During the trip, I could learn about possible jobs that I might consider in the future. After this trip, I am more motivated to conduct my research about regional inequality issues and the role that the government plays in economic growth.

Firstly, in the workshop held at Chiang Mai University, one student made a presentation about inequality issues in China and India. From her presentation, I learned about the systematic structure of growth theories, as well as the mechanism through which inequality affects economic growth. This information was very useful for me as I am building my own theoretical framework. The methodology of this research also provided me with a new possibility to tackle the issue of reverse causality between finance and economic growth. The discussion afterwards made all of us think deeper. While I listened to the other students exchanging their ideas, I realized it was very important for authors to give realistic and convincing explanations, instead of simply making a conclusion from the estimation result. Later in Chulalongkorn University, I was not only able to participate in a workshop with local students, but also to present my own research proposal. Such academic workshops have inspired me to keep improving my current research. And the cultural exchange between us and the students of Thammasat University, who are from multiple Asian countries, has provided us with a chance to know more about the close relationship among ASEAN countries.

Secondly, while ASEAN countries try to work together as a community, there are still many conflicts remained to be solved. Before I participated in this field trip, I learned how Laos wanted to build dams and how this ambition may have harmed the local people. But only after the lecture offered by Department for the Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable Development did I realize this may also harm other ASEAN economies because these countries are closely linked together by the Mekong River. Regional integration, including transnational investment as well as cross-border migration and trade, has created some issues. But integration is the driving force for ASEAN countries, especially the less developed ones, to grow. Furthermore, after visiting the Department of International Trade Promotion, I realized the necessity of integration and the significant role that Thailand plays in the ASEAN community.

Thirdly, I found out that the political and legal system in Thailand may be one of the main reasons that prevent growth in Thailand. For example, there was no clear policy regarding cross-country immigration. Migrated workers can work in Thailand, but cannot live legally in this country. In Thammasat University, Professor Chanin Mephokee gave a lecture about global economy and Thai economy. Even though Thailand has done well in export and tourism, domestic consumption and investment are still weak because of both global and domestic risks. As far as I am concerned, among all the risks mentioned, the political risk is the biggest reason that prevents Thai people from consuming and investing. The Thai government doesn't last for long, so they only care about short-term benefit and have no long-term agricultural policies to secure economic growth. Also, to hold the power longer, the government

has used money to please the public, while weakening the democratic movement by delaying the election. The situation in Thailand shows how political instability can impact an economy, inspiring me to continue researching the impact of government behavior on economic growth.

Last but not least, after the field trip to UNESCAP and UNIDO, I had a better understanding of the mission of international organizations. The 17 sustainable development goals touched me because they try to cover not only poverty reduction and equality, but also the nature and the well-being of every creature on this planet. And they are taking actions to achieve these goals. For example, one of the missions of the trade and investment division of UNESCAP is to make less developed countries benefit from, instead of exploited by, trade agreements. From this experience, I found out that what we have been learning in the past year has been tackling similar issues which UN organizations have been working on. As a second year Master's student, I am currently thinking about my career path after graduation and this program has definitely raised my interest in working in such kinds of international organizations.