

Report on Participation in Thailand Field Trip

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The Thailand trip surpassed my expectations. The 9-day program consisted of academic workshops where we had discussions on our proposals and research projects, and more importantly great visits to different local places to experience the realities in a developing country rather than being a tourist, and we got an in-depth understanding in a way that was never done before. Our trip in Thailand, the largest ASEAN country in south east Asia, introduced us to how diverse the developing world is. Plus, we had a chance to meet and talk with students studying in Thailand from other ASEAN countries. We could make new friends and broaden our network with the chance of collaborating in the future.

The program also offered us chances to see agricultural production. Among all one of the farm that is a part of Thailand's Royal Project really impressed me. It was my very first time to learn how sustainable agricultural business model works in a real-life setting and the fact that local people economically benefit from it. Until then, I was only buying organic products or environment-friendly products and as an ordinary consumer, but I never got to know the whole production process and how such produce are delivered to markets. At the same time, you see the huge wage gaps between developing countries and developed world just by how products are priced there in Thailand.

For me personally I presented my own research proposal on the afternoon of the second day while we were at ChiangMai University. Surprisingly, I received valuable and useful comments and feedback that I will use to address the research question in my proposal. Specifically, participants asked about constructing datasets and technical issues that I haven't really touched on like some ready methods to match different datasets. I found this exercise quite helpful as it forced me to move out of my comfort zone and think more about my research.

The other workshop we had in Chulalongkorn University made it possible for us to learn about a variety of disciplines. For example, many students who work in Asia Studies gave interesting presentations about development issues in different countries, while some studied political economy.

We later paid a visit to one body of the United Nations in Thailand, called ESCAP. As a student working in development economics, I have always been inspired and motivated by the UNDP's work thus I also had great experience there at ESCAP. The staff showed us both how the UN system operates and how we could apply for a job at the UN. Also, one of them shared her personal experience of landing a job at ESCAP. The information from insiders' perspective is quite useful and, for that, I am considering working at an international organization, such as the UN, which is one of my top choices.