

Report on Participation in Overseas Field Research

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Thanks to the Field Work in East Asia course, I was able to gain a lot of diverse and unique experiences that have allowed me to think of my own research from a different perspective. Due to these new networks, I was able to get new and inspiring ideas for my research.

The course was structured in a way that allowed for us to listen to various lectures from experts in the field. We were able to get a broad understanding of economic, social and ecological issues not only in Thailand but for the Southeast Asia region. In particular, we learned a lot about how each country perceives and responds to international sustainable development goals. We also got specific lectures on issues such as how sustainable development impacts the agricultural sector in Thailand. These kinds of lectures allowed for us to put the broad context lectures into real life situations. The course also created an opportunity for us to briefly talk to local people, in particular a local farmer, who told us about the struggles his community had and how tourism is impacting economic development in their community. This was really an upfront approach to how our own research is impacting real people. That made me think that we cannot just read literature, we have to talk to people and ask what is going on and what they really want. Finally, the final section of the course structure was the opportunity for us to present our research and listen to other student's research from Thai universities. There, we had the opportunity to get feedback for our own research but also it created a knowledge sharing space for us students. Overall, thanks to the structure of this program, I was able to get a diverse sense of issues in the ASEAN region, and it actually helped me see some similarities to my own research in Japan.

When it comes to outcomes, there are several I achieved through this program. The first is my own research network. Thanks to this trip I was able to meet a key person in my field that will allow me to conduct field work in Thailand for my future research. His expertise and knowledge is crucial if I want to continue to do my current topic and if I want to extend it to the international field. The second main outcome was the feedback on my research. I was able to get some understanding about how non-experts in my field think about my research topic and what the general understanding is behind their thinking. This allows me to modify my own presentations for future presentations. In addition, I was able to get a lot of feedback regarding how I approach my research topic. It forced me to think about fisheries from a global, outside perspective, rather than just focusing on the local level. Even if I still do a local scale analysis, it is important to get the global context as well. Finally, the biggest outcome for me was that my new network helped me see how I can possibly extend my research into Thailand as well. I found that issues found in Japan are also happening in Thailand as well. Though there are key differences due to political, economic and cultural contexts. However, it was clear to me that fisheries are a global issue and countries need to work together to solve socio-ecological issues on the large-scale. As for my future career, I plan to go into research so an experience like this has helped me grow my expertise and understanding of how the world works and interconnects with each other. In conclusion, not only was I able to get new information for my own research, I was also able to expand my knowledge by looking at issues from a diverse set of perspectives. I hope to continue to do international field work because I believe it is not only an interesting way to look at the world, but also because it is necessary to really get a deep understanding of our own research.