

## Report on Participation in Thailand Field Trip

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I was honored to join the Field Research trip to Thailand. This trip allowed me to obtain new knowledge by attending seminars and talking to professors and other students. In addition to that, I was able to learn about various aspects of Thailand by exploring the city and meeting local people.

The highlight of the program for me was biking in Bang Krachao and hearing stories from local people about the current situation of cycling tourism there. Cycling tourism has gathered attention these days since it has social, environmental and economic advantages and matches with SDGs. The theme of my research when I was doing intern at JICA's Balkan office this September was cycling tourism in Serbia and so this became my thesis topic. It was fortunate for me to have the chance to explore a case study in Thailand. The situation in Bang Krachao was quite different from Serbia, however, visiting Bang Krachao was a great opportunity to see and know about the current situation by direct experience in the field and to hear information from both professors and local people. This experience enhances my motivation for further research about cycling tourism.

Attending this program was my first time for me to go to Thailand and also developing countries in Asia, thus there were new findings during the stay. For example, an obvious difference was the price of commodities between local places, and tourist and business areas exists. I believe this is a symbol of disparity of rich and poor and reminds me of the statistic that the richest 1 % gains approximately 67% of the total wealth in Thailand. Also, I found the importance and meaning of the monarch to the society in Thailand is different from Japan by seeing numerous monuments about the royal family on almost every corner of the streets and in almost all buildings. Moreover, it was surprising that some of the bicycles we borrowed at Bang Krachao were secondhand ones imported from Japan.

Participation in this program really opened my eyes throughout the trip notably at #Chat4SDGs: Current State of SDGs in Southeast Asia. During this program, students and researchers from seven countries gave presentations about the current status in their home countries. Through their talk, I could learn not only new facts but also their values as people who talk with emotion. In particular, the Cambodian case left an impression on me the most, especially when she was talking about history. The fact of most educated people left the country a few decades ago must have had a huge meaning not only on the economy but also to society.

This allows me to discover academic careers by interacting with master and PhD students. Since I am an undergraduate student, normally there are not a lot of opportunities to know what the student life is like after graduation from a bachelor's degree. Listening to the presentations conducted by students about their own research made me consider going on to graduate school in the future. Also, it was my first time for me to talk about my research theme in front of professors, graduate and PhD students and I was privileged to have some heartwarming advice and comments. Although from next year I will work at a private enterprise, knowing about various academic career paths such as coming back to graduate school after several years of working experience, gives me some tips about better future plan after graduation.