

## **Valuable Knowledge and Experiences of Exchange Program in Kyoto University**

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Having an opportunity to study abroad in an exchange program at Kyoto University was a very valuable experience for me and I have learned a lot from this programme. Much of what I learned was different from what I have learned at my home university, so participation gave added value to my study. This exchange programme gave me a broader point of view regarding science, especially in terms of the perspective of the field of economics. It has motivated me to continue to learn from multiple angles and diverse resources. This programme has also motivated me to continue my education to the Ph.D level in the future, and if possible especially at Kyoto University. I love Kyoto University's education system, and I love Kyoto and Japanese culture as well. If I have an opportunity to get scholarship to continue my study, I will put Kyoto University at the top of my priority list. My time in Kyoto gave me an opportunity to meet with other friends from different countries, which gives me a broader relationship network from which I can enhance my knowledge. Based on this exchange programme experience, I will certainly encourage my friends to apply so they can benefit from the same opportunity as me.

During this exchange programme, I attended four courses: Comparative Development Studies, Qualitative Research Methods, ASEAN Economy and Sustainable Development Study, and Field Research, which all added valuable knowledge to my learning processes. In Comparative Development Studies, I learned about how sustainable development is related to solving problems which are best understood through interdisciplinary study, as the problems involve many stakeholders. I also learned about the three pillars of sustainable development (WCED, 1987) and the imperatives model of sustainable development (Holden *et al.*, 2017). At the end of the course, I was able to form my own definition of sustainable development which is "how to meet the needs of people by sustaining human freedom and the development of capabilities of the present people without compromising the capabilities of the future generation which involves interdisciplinary and holistic thinking, normative orientation through sustaining human needs, ensuring social equity, and respecting environment limit".

In the second part of the Comparative studies class, I learned a lot about agro-food systems: traditional societies, agro-industrial model (modern society), and satiety model (late modernity) seen from different perspectives: production, distribution, preparation, consumption, and ideological base or food identity. I also learned about the differences between rural development policies and agricultural policies, and how they impact on food production, support the farms families to survive and react to crises, and for resilient food production. I got a new understanding about alternative food network (AFNs) which covers new emerging networks and also about short food supply chains (SFSCs) which covers the interrelation of the actors in the systems. This new rural development (such as SFSCs) is leading to reconstitute spatialities which rely on new synergies between proximate relationship, associations, ecological and food identities. There are also several theories that underline the change in the food system: (1) multi-level transition theory - which have market selection processes and the actors that negotiate rules in communities; (2) social practice theory - which is an alternative approach to theories of consumption as culture, based on individual choice; (3) the real utopia project - which wants to elaborate, explore, and support scientific proposals for the redesigning of institutions that embody democratic, egalitarian, emancipatory, and sustainable alternatives. The next

challenge for food systems is to overcome fragmentation through a mechanism of empowered participatory forms of governance that foster food sovereignty - with new social alliance between farmers and ecological citizens.

In ASEAN Economy and Sustainable Development Study, I learned about Southeast Asia countries which are characterized by extreme diversity in population, land, sea area, political system, religion, and language, etc. Because of that, the Southeast Asia countries decided to gather as an ASEAN community to eliminate boundaries within the ASEAN countries - with history and geographical factors that affect each other and shape the ASEAN community. The ASEAN community has three pillars: (1) political-security community; (2) economic community; and (3) socio-cultural community. They also have several ways to solve problems within ASEAN community: (1) non-confrontation; (2) informality; (3) consultation; and (4) consensus building. In the political-security area, ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) tries to keep regional peace and stability with mutual trust and centrality - to secure the autonomy and initiative to influence the course of regional affairs. In economic relationship, ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) was founded in 1992, born from the failure of import-substitution industrialization in ASEAN, the establishment of WTO in 1986, and the foundation of trade blocks in 1990. Under AFTA, ASEAN countries have a free flow of goods that has several benefits: the elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade, which facilitates the physical movement of goods; the improvement of institutional and physical infrastructure, such as major projects in land transportation, maritime infrastructure, and the ASEAN highway networks. From the history and development in ASEAN countries, I learned that sustainability concerns both the present and future vision, and that development does not have a time frame as it requires foresight in order to protect the environment and give justice.

From Qualitative Research Method course, I learned about how to design research using qualitative methods, beginning from how to choose a research topic, how to make research questions, how to design a questionnaire and interview, and how to select a sample from the population. I learned that there are several methods that can be used to conduct our research: participation observation, focus group, natural experiment, ethnography, life history, and semi structured interview. In this course, I also learned several research tools to provide high quality data that can be used to answer research questions. We also did some role playing to analyze several example cases which added a good understanding about what had been learned.

After attending Field Research at Kyoto Wholesale Food Market, I learned that food (vegetables and fishes) is been traded in Kyoto from producers to retailers by auction methods. It was very interesting because the process was very fast and the buyers were using hand signals to bid for the crops or fish, and I learned that it takes years of learning to master the process of the auction. The auction workers represent the farmers or fisherman and the buyers (the retailers) represent the consumers. So the auction workers want to sell with the highest price and the buyers want to buy with the lowest price. The price of the crops and fish are based on price trends. Currently the auction process is not popular among the retailers throughout Japan anymore, but in Kyoto this process is still maintained.

All of these courses have made an impact on my current study. All of it added value to my research topic, broadened my point of view and holistic thinking about my thesis and added a stronger understanding about research methods that I can use when I do my research. I am currently working as a government officer, so through these courses I got a lot of valuable insights that can be implemented in my job. I hope Indonesia will have sustainable development programs in many areas so that we can solve a lot of pressing problems that our country is facing right now, especially those related to ending fraud and corruption - because that is my institution's function. Last but not least, I would like to say thank you to Kyoto University for giving me an opportunity to join this exchange programme and I also would like to say that I am encouraged to continue my study in Kyoto University on the next opportunity.