

Summary for Overseas Travel WENDI 2018-2019

Name	Xu Cong
School	Graduate School of Advanced Integrated Studies in Human Survivability
Grade	3
Supervisor's name	Yamaguchi Eiichi
Travel period	16 th Feb – 25 th March
UN agencies / International organization visited	International Labor Organization, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
Theme of overseas travel	Internship in Decent Work Team (DWT) ILO Bangkok

Outline of the activities (4 pages including photos, figures, etc.)

- 16th February 2019: Kyoto – Bangkok
- 18th February 2019: Starting the internship at ILO Bangkok

On the first day of my internship, one of the general staffs named Ted helped me settle into the new environment because all my coworkers in the team were on a mission. In our team, we have four people including me, my supervisor (Charles Bodwell), Sara Anderson (specialist), and Alix Machiels (project consultant). Then I met the staffs in the Human Resource Department to go through some paperwork. They gave me a tour of International Labor Organization Bangkok office and explained the security issues to me. They also helped me get my ground-pass in the UN building and welcomed me on board.

- 19th February 2019: Sara was back from her mission so we had time to meet and talk.

She briefed the projects that our team is currently working on, the organizational structure and units, and the documents that I need to take a look in order to contribute to the team effectively. Our team focuses on providing technical support for Decent Work Team (DWT) in ILO Asia and the Pacific Regional office, on a variety of subjects such as supporting business development and entrepreneurship in 25 countries, improving the livelihood of refugee youth, and helping solve other social issues including gender inequality, particularly in business. I read through the documents related and the training materials that the team has developed during the first week.

- 24th February 2019: Charles was back so we had a meeting.

He briefed the organizational structure, and again the ongoing projects but provided more details, as well as the training tools that we are developing and using, and specified my

responsibilities for the following 6 months.

One of the training tools that we are using is called C-BED (community-based enterprise development; <http://cb-tools.org/>). Different from the traditional training method, it aims to improve individual management and business skills through peer-to-peer learning. It mainly has two advantages. First, it exerts a huge impact while minimizing the cost (i.e., trainees only need to print out the training materials, bring pens and paper). It avoids the big expense on paying experts to conduct training workshops which are only available to a limited number of individuals. It is especially useful and effective to reach marginalized groups and the people in remote areas without good infrastructure. Second, it is effective in reducing the negative feelings such as shame which is normally generated among marginalized groups. Experts are lack of knowledge of what is actually going on in the community. As a result, they may not understand the actual needs and solutions for the people inside. C-BED assumes that people inside know best their communities, and they are not empty buckets. They are capable of developing the best solutions for their communities on their own, as long as they know how. This is the similar philosophy to shared leadership, that is, it is possible that everyone builds up their leadership and contributes to the team.

Our current projects are mainly relying on C-BED training methodology. The projects aim to support the livelihood of refugee youth, promote decent work among SMEs and local farmers, and help the youth gain business and develop entrepreneurship skills. For example, we organized an Entrepreneurship Day in Cambodia. Thousands of university students attended this event, swinging a national-wide impact. We plan to do the same in Thailand and China in the following months.



C-BED Training Project in Cambodia

Regarding my responsibilities, he put a variety of tasks on my plate. In addition to that, he asked me to take a lead in a couple of projects based on C-BED. One is, cooperating with Boston University, to develop an entrepreneurship and leadership training App named GoBiz targeting the youth from developing countries such as Cambodia and Vietnam. Boston University provides technical support while we provide App content. This project is based on the fact that smartphones are popular even in some local villages in developing countries. Depending on paper materials

merely is not using most of the Internet. We wish the application of technology would exert a bigger impact and hope we will eventually bring it to other markets such as China in the following months.

The second is to do project measurement and evaluation (M&E). For instance, assist in the development of a regional database for ILO to access relevant program data, implementation reports and statistics on the C-BED and in business programs, develop new and improve existing survey instruments for quantitative and qualitative data collection through shared measurement systems. There are many finalized and ongoing projects which all need an extensive and intensive M&E.

Moreover, based on the similar logic of C-BED, I touch on designing training materials for developing leadership skills in solving other social issues such as marine debris. The training targets are children and young people who will potentially be future leaders across a variety of domains. Therefore, from February to August 2019, I will focus on the projects and tasks I mentioned above.

(1) Global leadership

One of the most important things that I have learned during the past two months is that ILO is taking global leadership in building a respectful work environment. 2019 is the 100th anniversary of ILO. It organized a variety of activities in celebration. The theme was to build a respectful work environment. The Geneva Headquarter sent experts to regional offices to do training workshops related to creating a respectful work environment. The content includes what cultural diversity actually means, zero-tolerance sexual harassment (e.g., sexual harassment is all about the impacts not about intentions), and the implementing core values of United Nations fitting into ILO Bangkok contexts.

This experience is quite inspiring to me. I have learned how a training workshop is organized in the United Nations and what can be improved. For example, everyone in the organization is busy and has their own priorities. The training is important because creating a respectful workplace is the basic and pivotal step for other tasks. So how to make everyone willing to participate and feel it was not a waste of their time? It made me do some reflections on my research and my future career as well.

Furthermore, ILO is a workplace doing shared leadership. Everyone has their expertise and brings something unique to the team. This workplace encourages everyone to contribute instead of regarding it as a competition. People share their opinions and respect, and cooperate with each other in a well-coordinated way. At the same time, I can see the endeavor that the leaders are

taking, which explains the great work environment. For example, When I had a chance to talk to the head of the regional office, she asked me how to do leadership empowerment and shared leadership effectively in ILO because she is facing many obstacles. Those obstacles are real and universal. They can exist in any other organizations and any leaders could have the same problems. She is frank and humble which has won my full respect.



The celebration of ILO 100th anniversary

(2) Scientific significance

The C-BED approach has been applied throughout the Asia Pacific in the new product lines. The programs differ from conventional training models by relying on peer networking and activity-based social learning techniques that develop creative, critical and analytical thinking skills alongside core business competencies. By dramatically reducing the time, resource and capacity requirements for programs, the approach has been successful in mobilizing a number of new and diverse organizations targeting entrepreneurs in previously underserved markets.

It has helped refugees, SMEs, and local farmers and business owners build necessary business and management skills and knowledge. It has been reported that after the training, participants' income has been recognizably increased; new businesses were started; new jobs were created. Some participants also said that that was the first time that they felt they were receiving a university-equivalent education.

(3) Originality/Universality

The C-BED training methodology has been proven to be effective across different countries and groups. Since 2014, more than 60 organizations across 14 countries have begun implementing

the C-BED and related programs in Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East and North Africa, and Latin America, and more than 70,000 entrepreneurs have been trained. Implementing services include government ministries, employers' organizations, trade unions, UN agencies, non-government organizations (including INGO), the private sector, and academic institutions. It is particularly effective in bring training resources to marginalized groups and minorities, as well as to remote areas with poor infrastructure.

(4) Reasons and motivations for visiting UN agencies / International organizations

I visited the International Labor Organization, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific for my oversea internship. I have a strong willingness to do the internship here because it best fits my life interests and career goals, as it runs training programs, for one mainly focusing on building leadership, for another, relying on the training logic of peer-to-peer learning which is similar to my research topic – shared leadership.

My primary motivation for being an intern in ILO starts from a big wish - to make the world a better place - and I believe people are the key to the solution of social issues. As an undergraduate student, I met a young woman who was obliged by her parents to abandon her education in order to pay her younger brother's tuition fee. Her story upset me and continues to motivate my studies today. Despite her obvious abilities, her family undervalued her education solely because of her gender. Unfortunately, I have heard many similar stories, where people's potential and contribution have been squandered or misplaced. These stories have made me determined to be an expert in talent management and leadership training. My education in the UK and Japan helped me to find that people are the key. If you want to make the society better, you should start from people themselves, especially those who have the power and resources to influence an entire society (e.g., entrepreneurs), and those who are lack of resources and who need help (e.g., SMEs and the youth in developing countries).

The programs here are pivotally important. For example, SMEs play big roles in achieving sustainable economic growth, low rate of unemployment, individual well-being and happiness, and social stability. However, they usually have little resources (e.g., money, knowledge, human resource) to build up their own competitive advantages for their business. Hence, it is difficult for them to survive in the industry, let alone to compete with the big companies. SMEs could develop their own advantages such as quick adaptability if they are gaining adequate resources. Additionally, people in impoverished areas don't have access to education. Hillary Clinton once stated that talents are everywhere but opportunity is not. The programs in DWT aims to change it and make efforts to create business and entrepreneurship opportunities for many. Therefore, I believe it to be the best place for me to gain the skills and outlook necessary to pursue my career goals and personal commitments, but also that I will learn the best and most advanced tools,

strategies, knowledge, and skills for training and developing people in business worldwide, especially SMEs and the youth.



Conclusion

This internship so far has broadened my visions in various ways. To start with, it has given me a valuable insight into how an organization committing to promote decent work and protect labor rights construct and develop its own work environment on a respectful base. It has made me think about how to conduct a good training workshop, especially among specialists.

Second, it has shown me different types of leaders and how they devoted to their projects and how they work with people from different backgrounds. By communicating with them, I started to realize the problems they are facing, which has inspired me on how to improve my academic research and what academic management research should be done.

Third, the ongoing training projects in our team have made me understand how management and leadership training are conducted beyond the university context, and what kinds of training can help those who don't have access to them and eventually have impacts on or even transform their lives.

Fourth, on an interpersonal level, I have learned more about interacting with people from different backgrounds and how important it is to be able to speak different languages. Working and living on diversity is an amazing experience!