

## Summary for Overseas Travel WENDI 2018-2019

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School	GSAIS
Grade	3rd grade
Supervisor's name	Prof. Yuichi IKEDA
Travel period	January 19th to March 25th
UN agencies / International organization visited	UNESCO Bangkok
Theme of overseas travel	The Viability of Greater Liberalization of Labor Mobility in ASEAN with a Focus on Thailand

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



#### (1) Global leadership

Working in an international environment, I was exposed to different forms of leadership and cooperation by interacting with my supervisor, my colleagues, and my fellow interns.

From this experience, I learned several important things about global leadership. First, teamwork is predicated on a fundamental respect between parties. In this working environment, input was encouraged from all staff members. The quality of the suggestion, rather than the seniority of the person who pitched it, determined whether ideas were implemented. I believe that this system arises because people are passionate about their work. When a person's goal is to improve a project, then, generally, criticism tends to be more constructive. People are open to new ideas rather than seeing them as a personal attack or as competition. These are ideas and behaviors that I would like to carry into my future workplaces.

Secondly, I learned that expertise is integral to a creating an effective and pleasant team.

From my supervisor, in particular, I was able to see how many years of experience working with others, sometimes in incredibly difficult situations, take decisive action while remaining open to suggestions. My co-workers had broad knowledge and many different experiences. From watching them work, I learned the importance of having an expertise and developing skills that allow one to integrate into a team.



*The Lifelong Learning and Literacy Team, Educational Innovation and Skills Development Section, UNESCO Bangkok*

## (2) Scientific significance

Thanks to my time at UNESCO Bangkok, I have been able to visit several community learning centers where migrants and their children study non-formal educational (NFE) curriculum in Burmese, Mon, Karen, and Thai. Young students at these learning centers are often enrolled in a language program, equivalent to a Thai primary or pre-primary school. This program allows them to gain the necessary skills to move to a Thai government school. Older students may also transition to a formal school, or complete an equivalency exam and receive a certificate that allows them to attend university. In addition to the Thai curriculum, students may also learn the Burmese curriculum which would allow them to reintegrate into the Burmese school system if they return to Myanmar. Finally, on Sundays, older students who work during the week are able to learn Thai and work towards equivalency certificates.



*Students using ICT at an NFE Learning Center outside of Bangkok.*

Exposure was critical for my research, as it allowed me to speak with people involved in facilitating flexible educational strategies for students who are usually very difficult to reach. Education and training are critical for the region, as Thailand (the host country) wishes to transition to a knowledge-based economy and as Myanmar (the origin country for many migrants) begins to become more open to other countries. Migrants and their children are in a unique position to act as facilitators in this transition due to their exposure to both cultures. However, this situation also represents a unique challenge, as children must learn in several different languages and balance two curriculums. Furthermore, educational centers such as this provide benefits beyond skill training, often acting as mediators between migrants and the host society. Centers often help migrants with visas and registration, help students in their interactions with Thai people even after they have moved to a Thai school, and connect them with other needed services.

These centers highlight the importance of research in guiding policy. To promote greater economic security and wellness for both individuals and the society at large, it is important to identify what places can act as mediators. In the case of these learning centers, greater study would allow these centers and governments to ensure that their citizens prosper. For example, examining the networks which connects these learning centers and migrants could show how to better connect migrants with important services and information. These services could include educational services; legal services related to labor, residency, housing, or harassment from police or others; and health services. Secondly, the learning centers could help their students to access training outside of the NFE curriculum. Teachers at the learning centers would often say that students wanted to improve their English as it could improve their career prospects. The role of ICT in the classroom could also be skills that students will be able to transfer to other parts of their life. Developing a program which allows students the opportunity to gain greater training, while keeping in mind the challenges they face because of lack of time, previous education, etc., could have huge impacts.

### (3) Originality/Universality

During my internship at UNESCO, I was able to participate in the implementation of a program which compensates students based on how often and how much they read eBooks. The goal of this program was to reduce child labor and allow children and young adults to finish their education. My role was to conduct data analysis on the data collected, including

total time read, what time of day students read, demographic information (e.g. migrant status, age, sex, ethnicity, etc.), and more. Through this analysis, I was able to provide new insights into how to structure the program. From the insights gleaned from the data, we were able to personalize the program for different groups. For example, older children (age 14+) were given greater financial compensation, in recognition of the fact that they had much larger responsibilities than younger children. Following the completion of the program, we hope to publish a paper on how reading habits can be established in a vulnerable and difficult to reach population.

The program is still on-going, so its effects are not completely clear yet. However, the program is unique in several ways. First it

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

By visiting UNESCO Bangkok, I hoped to gain a greater understanding of how work was conducted in international organizations and whether I should pursue a career in this field. From this experience, I found the skills in research and data analysis, as well as strong communication skills and teamwork skills, are essential to working in this field and having a positive impact. From conversations with my superiors and my peers at UNESCO, I've gleaned that these skills will only become more important in the future. Furthermore, my time at UNESCO has made clear to me what is UNESCO's mandate and how that shapes the work they do. International organizations have an enormous power to set standards and to collect information for thousands of NGOs, governments, and other actors across the world. As a result, research, policy, facilitating partnerships between the relevant parties, and the setting of international standards are often the top priority.

Because of this time at UNESCO Bangkok, I have gained a greater understanding of what skills are necessary in order to contribute to the solution of global issues. These skills include a specialization in a field, good writing and research skills, as well as the ability to work cohesively and effectively with others. Secondly, I was able to contact learning centers which will allow me to collect data on one community's skill development and social network. Third, I was able to participate in a project which was unique and to which I provided a unique skill. I would like to thank the WENDI chair for providing me the means to pursue these opportunities and this invaluable experience.