

## **Reflection on Building a library for a local secondary school in Vietnam**

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I decided to join this project because I don't want to graduate with regrets. This project has given me unforgettable life and things that I haven't experienced before in both civil engineering aspects and social science aspects.

I was assigned to be an assistant resident engineer and learnt a lot from different stages of the project. For example I have learnt to read the drawings and planning of the construction. This is the first time I examined the details of drawings and figured out some mistakes of the drawings. This is quite important as the construction will need to follow the details of drawings during the construction period. Besides, I learnt that the situation on site is sometimes quite different from the reality. For instance I learnt in my civil course that casting concrete will need to do a lot of tests to test the quality. However, in Vietnam there wasn't enough time and those 7-day test, 28-day test and slump test were not performed. The quality of concrete will be judged by the workers by experience. Moreover, I learnt how to use shovels to dig holes and to bend the steel bar into needed shapes. Although these experience may not be applicable in my future career, it was fun and memorable. In addition, I learnt that there will be some obstacles and challenges between different stakeholders and this will bring negative impact to the schedule and planning of the work. I felt great success and satisfactory after the completion of the library and this is the first time I witness how a structure was built from zero to hundred percent within such a short period of time.

One important reminder I learnt from Vietnam is that we should wear proper safety equipment when we are working on site because I stepped on nails once and the nails were completely inserted into my safety shoes. Luckily the soles of the shoes are thick enough to protect me from the risk of getting Tetanus. Also, the workers in poor countries, including Vietnam, may not have a good sense of safety and most of the time they are not protected properly. They should be more careful and alert.

Apart from the internship works, I also learnt how to cooperate as a team and communicate with a big group of people from different major and countries and to gain myself some valuable personal skills such as time management and healthy lifestyle. Also, I have visited the villages in different communes as to gather information by interviewing the families. This has great impact on my values as I never visit rural area before. Participating in this project was really a wise choice for

me and I found that the theories I learnt from the lecture may not be completely applicable to the works I need to do in the future but the more important knowledge I learnt from university is the engineering sense which helps the future career. I also learnt to put myself into to others' shoes before I make decision. This project has become a milestone of my life.