

Self Reflection

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This is the first time I have joined a programme offered by Project Mingde and I think it is a rare opportunity to let me learn more about civil engineering. I found out that this internship programme does not only provide me the chance to apply my engineering skills into practical use, but it also can provide support to the students in rural area in Vietnam to improve their learning environment. Therefore, I decided to join this meaningful internship programme to gain more experience and further broaden my horizon.

During the construction of the library, we civil engineering students took up the role as assistant resident engineers to help facilitate the construction process. Despite the scale of construction of the school library is small compared to most construction projects in Hong Kong, the short period of construction gave us the opportunity to experience each and every stage of a construction project during the 7 weeks of internship. Most of the reports required to present the construction progress or other things such as regular meetings with contractor and World Vision representatives were very new to me and most of us did not know where to start or what should be delivered at first. Fortunately, through communicating with our internship coordinator, Dr. Ryan Wong, staffs from World Vision and the local people, we have better understanding on the working routines and got used to it in a short time. Another interesting part of this internship programme is that I can actually work inside a construction site and learn practical construction skills. We took part in the construction process through participating in different stages of construction such as laying bricks, mixing and placing mortar, fixing reinforcements etc.. I feel a great sense of satisfaction when we finished the construction of the library and hand it over to the school as we really build the library by putting in our physical effort.

The construction safety standard in Vietnam is quite different from Hong Kong as not many safety measures can be seen in the construction site of the local library. For instance, most of the construction workers wears slippers in the construction site and they do not wear safety harness for working at height. Luckily, there is no accident in the site during the construction period. Even though the lack of safety measures in working site may be due to the local limitation, I believe that the safety of workers should be the utmost important consideration during construction.

Apart from the library construction, we civil engineering students also cooperate with social science and comparative literature students to conduct research and presentation on topics such as reading habit of students to provide suggestions to the local school and optimize the use of the school library in the commune. I think that it is an interesting experience to participate in a cross disciplinary programme as I learnt a lot from my social science and comparative literature groupmates on things that I could not experience in the civil engineering aspect.

This internship programme provided me the chance to learn a lot of technical and practical skills that I cannot learn just inside the university. I have learnt the importance of the role of a good engineer in a construction project as we have to be critical at anytime and able to respond and cope with the unexpected challenges quickly. Throughout the internship period, internship coordinators from HKU, World Vision staffs and the local community in Vietnam provided us students interns with huge support, and therefore I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to them. It was a memorable experience to participate in this Vietnam Library Project and I believe I could be a better civil engineer after the programme