

Reflection on Experiential learning programme in Vietnam

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It is glad for me to become one of the members of Project Mingde and represent Project Mingde to go overseas for a service trip about toilet construction. With the cooperation of social science students, we have done a lot of meaningful and influential job in Vietnam, which makes it an unforgettable project to me.

Before getting about the background of this project, I originally thought this project was just a chance for us to learn about more engineering techniques and some practical skills, which could be favorable to our future career. However, we did have learnt a lot of things after this project, even for non-engineering aspect. During this trip to Vietnam, we had faced and encountered a number of problems and barriers. This was a great chance for us to tackle these challenges on our own. Finally, the lavatory construction finished on time and had an inauguration ceremony in the secondary school where the lavatory located.

During the construction work, we had to act as an assisted registered engineer and serve for supervising the construction work and communicating with the school and local contractor. There were number of issues like poor soil foundation, bad weather causing the construction delay and incidents happening in the construction site. It was a challenge for us because we had never faced any practical issue before. Yet, it made a great chance for us to work as a team to analyze and think of any solutions. With the cooperation with my teammates, our work could be completed appropriately. Apart from civil engineering work, the Project Vietnam also involved other tasks to do including need analysis of two poor commues and also voluntary teaching for the junior secondary students. That is the reason why Project Vietnam is a cross-disciplinary program between the Faculty of Social Science and the Project Mingde.

During the need analysis, we had to work social science students and conducted a number of surveys to the local people for analyzing what they need in terms of resource and facilities. After the need analysis, my feeling was that social science students really think different comparing with us. In terms of skills for conducting survey and also how to analyze the issue in social science, they did far better than me. In this modernized society, an integrated knowledge is needed because every

problems can be existed in two disciplinary fields. It is a great chance for us to learn from social science students and train up for skills for our future.

Another inspiring task we had done is the voluntary teaching. Teaching seems like an easy job as you are seemingly required to transfer your knowledge only, but the way to teach is not as easy as your imagination. How to teach students with a different mother language is really a harsh task. However, I would consider it is a worthy one when I saw the smiley face of those little kids. Education is one of the key to make a country become wealthy and let the new generation have a better living standard. I was proud of being a teacher to teach the next generation of Vietnam.

This trip to Vietnam had really broadened my eyesight and it brought me unreplaceable experience in terms of practical and communicating skills. I hope that Project Mingde could continue to hold similar programs afterwards.