

Ag-ESD Symposium 2016/TGSW2016 (Sep. 18th 2016)

Summary of Discussions and Recommendations

A. Theme of the Symposium

The overall theme of the discussions at the symposium was ` **Overseas internship** ` with specific focus on:

1. Education for Agricultural Development:
2. Overseas Internships in Agriculture, Food and Environment

B. Objectives of the Symposium

1. Report on the conditions and outcomes of training programs in the areas of food, the environment, bio-resources and food production, based on implementation from businesses, universities, and laboratories conducting global operations and internships overseas
2. Discuss the opinions of experts on the new training programs for nurturing students in the future
3. Draw connections with the nurturing of personnel capable of building new global innovations.

C. Summary of Discussions and Conclusions

Various types of internship for students:

1. Place
 - a. Universities,
Ex.) Participation to internship program is obligation for students in Gadjah Mada University → strong impact on student's mind
 - b. Research institutions,
 - c. UN/International Organizations,
 - d. Private companies,
Ex) internship for one week/ year (Kubota)
 - e. Field
Ex.) internship at family farms at village level---benefit to farmers and villages
2. Various durations (short, medium and long-term)
3. Different institutional arrangements (formal, informal, with credit or without credit, etc.)
4. Various financial arrangements (sponsored, self-funded, with the provision (or non –provision) of allowance, free accommodation and /or food, etc.)

Impacts and benefits of internship (based in experience)

1. Gain practical know-how, experience and working knowledge in different countries (different culture, values, socio-economic and institutional conditions, etc.)
2. Promote better understanding of own country by knowing difference with other countries
3. Gain better understanding on global and regional issues
4. Promote English and/or other language ability
5. Promote connections with people and expand personal network
6. Provide opportunities for interns to expose potential working places in the future
7. Contribute to hosting institutions by bringing fresh and new thinking
8. Provide benefit to the recipient institutions such as family farms and villages by providing manpower and skill support.
9. Organize an internship program that has a potential to be expanded for diverse students (case of Kubota that accepts Thai students as interns in local corporations in Thailand)

Challenges

1. Institutional arrangements (credit in school, duration, eligibility, etc.)
 - Some of internships are not associated with the provision of school credit, which prevented an attraction to some of students to apply internships
 - Many internships require a minimum duration of 2-3 months, which sometimes do not fit to student`s schedule (many students are interested to undertake internships during summer or spring holidays of less than 2 months)
 - There are very limited opportunities for undergraduate students for internships at academic, research and international organizations (many of available internships are for master and doctor degree students), while internship opportunities are also very useful to undergraduate students to navigate their future carrier opportunities
 - Preparation of private companies to accept internship students differ considerably among them. Some of them have well established effective institutional arrangements to host internships, while some companies are not well organized and deal internships on ad hoc manner which sometimes resulted in poor effectiveness of internships.
2. Evaluation
 - Some of host institutions allow interns to present results and self-evaluation report at the end of internship, but some host institutions do not make such arrangement

- Some of host institutions provide performance evaluation of interns and/or a written certificate upon completion, but some others are not.
3. Financial support
- There are very limited sponsorships or provision of financial support to interns, which limit the number of intern applications
3. Language
- International job requires high English level and GPA score as well. Encouragement would be needed to students to promote their English ability and GPA score
 - Internships would provide a good opportunity to students to learn practical English at a working environment. However, students should be capable to speak, read and write in English at an appropriate level at the inception time of internship, to ensure effective communication and understanding.
4. Opportunities
- There are lack of clear navigations to students to look for internship information and opportunities.
 - Limitation for getting international internships due to the limitation of availability of internship opportunities and language problems
 - There are lack of sufficient public / private sector services to assist and send students for internships abroad (they should provide right information and navigate students for appropriate steps)
6. Others
- Recent changes in mentality of younger generation in Japan have resulted in increased number of young generation introverted and less interested in studying and working in abroad.

D. Recommendations

1. There is a great need to promote overseas internships in agriculture, food and environment sectors which would enable students to gain practical know-how, experience and working knowledge, as well as learn different culture, values, socio-economic and institutional conditions in other countries, and facilitate them to gain better understanding of their own country and beyond.
2. Promotion of internships in overseas is highly recommended also for the purpose of enhancing the understanding of students on global and regional issues and priorities, and promoting their English language ability as a common global language for communication, which would facilitate in increased number of young generation who bridge international cultural differences and own a

sense of global citizenship

3. In order to attract more students to join overseas internships, it is highly recommended to facilitate the allocation of school credit to internships, establish a mechanism to share internship opportunity information, enhance public and private sector services for internships, and introduce more flexible internship conditions and durations.
4. It is recommended to establish an appropriate evaluation mechanism by each hosting institution to evaluate the performance of interns including the provision of evaluation report and a formal certificate.
5. Provision of financial support to interns through sponsorship or low interest loans or other forms of cash or in-kind support would hold a key to attract more applications for internships. It is therefore recommended that such financial or in-kind support to internships be promoted, especially to those poor qualified applicants.
6. Successful internships should be documented and shared widely, to enable both students and hosting institutions learn from experiences of others, and promote better understanding of the benefit of internships. Academic advice and consultancy from academic staff of University are encouraged to support student's motivation and enhancement of internship quality.