

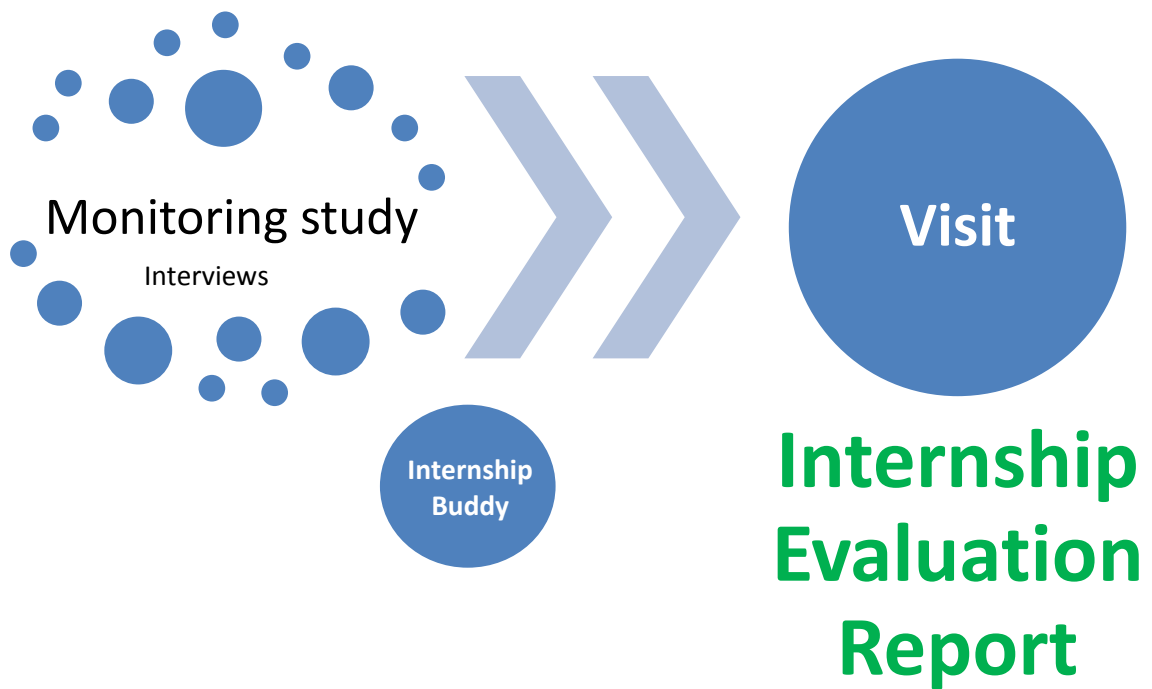


INTERNSHIP EVALUATION REPORT

Project SIMPLE study



Co-funded by the
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of the European Union



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Preface

The main purpose of education is to prepare students with sufficient knowledge and skills to become competent employees or entrepreneurs in their respective fields. It is a continuous challenge for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to design their curriculum in such a way that strikes a balance between theoretical knowledge in the classroom and ever-changing practical skills as well as soft skills for them to actually be able to implement what they learn. This is particularly hard for HEIs or universities in Asian countries, where resources and opportunities are limited.

In the area of agriculture and life sciences, internships are very important to make sure students have enough experience in the field, in addition to their time in the classroom, to have a significant impact in their communities. Agriculture is indeed one of the major sectors in Asian economies, and in some countries, absorbs most of the working population. Therefore, it is very important for agriculture students to be equipped with not only the knowledge, but also the experience to ensure productive outcomes.

To help equip Asian students in the future, Project SIMPLE seeks to encourage cooperation of the academic sector (HEIs) with the professional sector in agriculture and life sciences in selected Asian countries (Cambodia, Indonesia, and Thailand), leading to an enhanced employability of those universities' alumni. Through the following three strategies, the project is providing resources to universities:

1. Supporting networking and providing links between alumni and employers by establishing Alumni Centers and Platforms for Cooperation with the professional sector;
2. Improving the study programs' curricula at HEIs in the selected Asian universities by introducing compulsory internships leading to more practical knowledge and improved skills of the alumni; and
3. Enhancing soft skills of Asian students.

The project has been implementing these strategies in six universities in Cambodia, Indonesia, and Thailand. They are University of Battambang (Cambodia), Royal University of Agriculture (Cambodia), Bogor Agricultural University (Indonesia), Tadulako University (Indonesia), Kasetsart University (Thailand), Prince of Songkla University (Thailand). After successfully providing internship opportunities to students from these universities, it is now necessary to understand how the students benefited from the internships and to identify challenges that they faced.



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This report seeks to highlight the benefits and challenges faced by students during their internship by firstly describing the methodology of how the data were collected and then follow with a summary of the results of all reports. The lessons learnt are integrated within the recommendations section for future improvement of the internship program to help increase students' future employability in Asian countries and in the EU countries if applicable.

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Objectives	3
3.	Assessment Approaches	3
	3.1. Field Monitoring by EU partners	3
	3.2. Student Interviews	4
	3.3. Internship Buddy	5
	3.4. Evaluation Sheets and Questionnaires	6
	3.5. Events Relevant to Internships	6
4.	Results	9
	4.1 Internship Quality	9
	4.2 Feedback from Internship Students	27
	4.3 Career Days' Contributions to Internship Programs	37
	4.4 Internship Buddy Findings	37
5.	Lessons Learnt and Recommendations	39
6.	Conclusions	43
7.	References	44

Internship Evaluation Report

1. Introduction

Internship

An internship is very important for a student's at higher education levels. It is an opportunity to work at a firm or an organization for a fixed period of time. An internship gives practical skills, workplace experience and greater knowledge of industries or those sectors related to student's future career, in exchange for the employer benefiting from the student's inputs.

An internship can be either paid or unpaid. The trend is increasingly towards the former, as unpaid internships are often considered exploitative. Understandably, internships that pay well are usually very competitive. Many organizations may receive interns for a number of weeks or months to assist with the completion of a major project or event. Some organizations have student interns do routine duties in a support role. However, they are great opportunities for students to learn how the organizations operate, even if they are only carrying out basic tasks.

The majority of interns perform a range of support tasks in junior positions. The specific duties of an internship will vary considerably depending on the employer, the industry, and the type of internship. Unlike conventional employment, internships emphasise training, rather than employment itself.

Students doing internships will in fact benefit from developing practical skills in project management, problem solving, and colleague/client relationship management. Even if the internship is only for a short period, it can equip a student with a range of important skills, help initiate a network, and create valuable connections for their future career. CVs showing internship experience will always be to a student's advantage when seeking employment (Wikijob, 2019).

For HEIs, partnerships with firms based on students' academic needs, offer important mutual benefits in the form of the exchange of knowledge and innovation. Franco et al. (2019) studied these relationships by testing various hypotheses to measure the influence of certain factors on student's personal involvement in curricular internships

organized through HEI–firm partnerships. The results show that students assess internships very positively in all aspects including the organization of the internship, the HEI’s orientation, the host institution (HI), and the HI’s orientation. The authors concluded that the professional internships provided by HEI–firm partnerships play a crucial role in students’ entry into highly competitive labour markets.

Advantages of Doing an Internship

Advantages of doing an internship have been acknowledged by all parties in the field of education, including students, HEIs, as well as employers. Agricultural educational systems require an understanding of how to strengthen individual and collective abilities, and how to apply them to agriculture. Therefore, not only do students need to focus on academic knowledge, but also on systemic practices and behaviour that affect organizational learning, and the myriad of changes in this world of rapid development. An important element for a successful graduate is the social process of students interacting with various groups in a variety of working environments. They will be able to learn how to adapt, share interests, and create networks. These networks are the means that facilitate access to knowledge and opportunities for their future.

In relation to the above positive aspects of internship, Callanan and Benzing (2004) assessed the relationship between the completion of an internship assignment prior to graduation and subsequent employment in a career-oriented job after graduation in the mid-Atlantic region of the USA. Results showed that the completion of the internship assignment was linked with finding career-oriented employment, but was not related to a higher level of confidence that the position selected was a good fit for the employee. The article presents implications for future research and discusses practical issues related to the use of internships and other forms of anticipatory socialization in the career management activities of college students.

Furthermore, Binders et al. (2015) conducted a study to ascertain the academic value of internships by comprehensively examining students’ backgrounds, disciplines, and genders. They concluded that the academic value of internships is a career indicator important for higher education institutions and those who advise students on their career plans. Some important points from their findings are 1) internships typically come with benefits and all students across all subject areas are likely to reap these benefits 2) there is, on the whole, surprisingly little variation between advantaged and disadvantaged student groups, thus, encouraging weaker students to take on an internship is not a wasted effort 3) institutions are well advised to consider course-level variability 4) academic benefits may be due to aspects of the non-academic

environment of the internship 5) institutions should consider whether degree courses without internships carry specific disadvantages, and if so, how these could be addressed through specific study support.

The key advantages of doing an internship may be summarized as follows:

1. developing knowledge and skills in a particular field or industry
2. exploring different roles to see what students might want to pursue after graduation
3. getting insight into workplaces and what challenges they face on a daily basis
4. creating a network of contacts
5. gaining valuable work experience that helps find employment
6. acquiring university credits
7. applying the concepts and strategies of academic study in a real work environment
8. improving soft skills and building character

2. Objectives

Project SIMPLE will assess the organization of partner universities' internships in order to improve their quality of content and scope, vis-à-vis students, companies, the platform for cooperation, and the approach to innovation. To complement the objective, the Internship Buddy project was an approach to maximize student competency.

3. Assessment Approaches (Methods)

To acquire important information regarding the situation of internships being carried out by Asian partner universities and to then share with other Project SIMPLE members for future improvements, the EU partners and Asian partners jointly conducted the following activities:

3.1 Field Monitoring by EU partners

EU partners conducted field monitoring at each Asian partner university, as listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Pairing of Asian partners and EU partners for internship evaluation

Asian partner university	EU partner university
Royal University of Agriculture (RUA), <i>Cambodia</i>	Czech University of Life Science Prague (CULS) by Jana Hummelova and Jana Mandikova
University of Battambang (UBB), <i>Cambodia</i>	Czech University of Life Science Prague (CULS) by Jana Hummelova and Jana Mandikova
Bogor Agricultural University (IPB), <i>Indonesia</i>	Ghent University (UGhent) by Carole Picavet, Anne-Marie De Winter
Tadulako University (UNTAD), <i>Indonesia</i>	Ghent University (UGhent) by Carole Picavet, Anne-Marie De Winter
Kasetsart University (KU), <i>Thailand</i>	University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU) by Kerstin Fuhrmann and Bernhard Sickenberg
Prince of Songkla University (PSU), <i>Thailand</i>	University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU) by Kerstin Fuhrmann and Bernhard Sickenberg

The EU partner representatives visited the assigned universities to undertake the evaluations. This consisted of interviews with administrators in charge of internship programs such as associated deans, department heads, participating professors, administrative staff, but also interns and alumni. Visits were also made to the work sites and discussions with employers took place. The evaluations covered the following issues:

A) Key internship information

- Organizational structure supporting the internships
- Academic level of internship
- Types of internship
- Internship process
- Requirements for students
- Financial support

B) SWOT Analysis of the internships at each Asian partner university

3.2 Student Interviews

Interviews were conducted with students who had done an internship or had received practical training by the assigned EU partners. The dates of the interviews are shown in Table 2.

Since students were at different stages of their studies and careers, the number of students varied depending on the situation at each university. Moreover, the interviews were conducted in different ways, i.e. with groups of students or individually at the university offices, or via Skype calls individually.

Table 2 Interview dates at Asian partner universities for obtaining feedback from interned students

Asian partner universities	Interview dates	EU partner interviewers
Cambodia		
		CULS
Royal University of Agriculture (RUA)	29 March 2019	Jana Hummelova and Jana Mandikova
University of Battambang (UBB)	25 March 2019	
Indonesia		
		Ghent University
IPB – Bogor	25 August 2019	Carole Picavet, Anne-Marie De Winter
UNTAD – Palu, Sulawesi	22-23 August 2018	
Thailand		
		BOKU
Kasetsart University (KU)	2 April 2019	Kerstin Fuhrmann and Bernhard Sickenberg
Prince of Songkla University (PSU)	15 November 2018	

3.3 Internship Buddy

In order to assess students' capacity to adapt to cross-cultural situations, and their communication skills, a mentor approach pairing experienced Asian interns with Czech students was arranged between the Asian universities and CULS.

Five to six students from each of the six Asian universities, who have completed an internship, were chosen to go to CULS for pairing with experienced Czech students. There were a total of 34 Asian students mainly from agriculture and the life sciences. The fields of the internships are presented in Table 3.

Each student from CULS was then assigned an "internship buddy" from the list of Asian students to communicate with online to discuss their respective internship experiences. Students were instructed to talk for two weeks then write a report based on their findings, with the help of a format to guide them during the entire process. They were expected to provide a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) about their internship experience, and provide conclusions and recommendations. There were 20 reports submitted in the end.

3.4 Evaluation Sheets and Questionnaires

For up-to-date information, evaluation sheets and questionnaires were distributed to partners to give information on student assessments and feedback from employers.

3.5 Events Relevant to Internships (Career Days, soft skills trainings, field visits)

Field monitoring also included observation and discussion during the events held at each Asian partner university such as, Career Days at UBB, RUA, KU and PSU. University administrators and representatives, and company representatives participating in the internship assessment, are listed in Table 4.

Table 3. List of internship fields of students in the Internship Buddy Project

Country	University	Internship Field
Indonesia	Bogor Agricultural University	Seed production for tomato program
		Seed production for pepper program
		Horticulture
		Fruit trees
		Greenhouse operation and management
		Cut flowers
		Landscape tree nursery
		Greenhouse ornamental propagation / Indoor foliage nursing
		Ornamental plants grown in a glasshouse system
	Tadulako University	Directorate of public diplomacy, directorate general for Information and public diplomacy
		Village economic development
		Agro-tourism
		Economics
		Mental Revolution
Thailand	Kasetsart University	Shrimp brood stock production
		Biological diversity of benthos of coastal ecosystems
		Aquatic animals seed production (tilapia, perch)
		Microalgae cultivation, breeding and nursing of marine animals
		Food production department (pet food and canned food)
	Prince of Songkla University	Shrimp hatchery
		Study of morphological characteristics of genus <i>Labiothenolepis</i> and <i>Labioleanira</i> (Sigalionidae: Polychaeta)
		Ornamental plants
		Orchid production
		Poultry production
Cambodia	University of Battambang	Composting
		Chemical Pesticides
	Royal University of Agriculture	Quality laboratories
		Quality laboratories
		Quality laboratories
		Field surveys
		Field surveys

Table 4 University administrators and representatives, and company representatives participating in the internship assessment

University	University staff	Employer/Company representatives
Cambodia		
RUA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 university representatives, (Kong Sothea and Noeurn Kheav) - Director of Academic Affairs - Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural Engineering - Vice Dean of the Faculty of Agroindustry - Asikin Yoeu (former coordinator at RUA, currently an officer at Ministry of Agriculture) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ANGKOR MILK - AMRU RICE - Companies at career day
UBB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 Vice-Rectors - 1 university administrative staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representatives of Betagro - Battambang Rice Investment - Misota Cambodian Food Company - International project representatives focusing on agriculture
Indonesia		
IPB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - faculty professors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 stakeholders
UNTAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Head of Sub-directorate of Career Development 	
Thailand		
KU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assistant to the Dean for Administration - faculty professors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manit Farm - INVE (Thailand) Ltd. - Charoen Pokphand Foods PCL. - Hi-Q Food Products Co., Ltd - T.C. Union Agrotech Co., Ltd
PSU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Associate Dean for International Relations - Associate Dean for Academic Affairs - Assistant to the Dean for IT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representatives of the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives

4. Results

4.1 Internship Quality

A) Key internship information

Cambodia

RUA	UBB
<p>Internship organisation and activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internships are obligatory at the bachelor level for 1-2 credits. • Length of internship is at least 1 month (duration of internships usually differ by 1 to 11 months), length of the internship depends on faculty, but is approximately 2-3 months. • Master and doctoral level internships are relevant to the final thesis, thus depend on the topic of each thesis (the final thesis needs 4-6 months for data collection). • Universities offer a wide range of internships in university projects (e.g., projects in the Sustainable Rural Development department), laboratories, private companies, and the governmental sector. • International opportunities are based on long term cooperation: universities offer internships in Israel, and scholarships programmes in Japan. • Internships in Israel – available after the 3rd year of bachelor degree: students can apply for 11-month internship following 5 years of study; 150-200 students / year; after returning, they write a 4-page report; • Organisation of internships - finding an internship is mainly the responsibility of students, though the faculty will help. 	<p>Internship organisation and activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internships are obligatory for all university students • Length of internships is at least 3 months at the bachelor’s degree level • Master and doctoral internships are usually connected with thesis according to the selected topic • Possibility to do internships at different levels: at university (laboratory, field), at private companies (most valuable in perception of students are companies like Betagro, Battambang Rice Investment, Misota Cambodian Food Company), governmental organisations (ministries, etc.), international projects focused on agriculture (e.g., Innovations to Build and Scale Safe Vegetable Value Chains (SVVC) project by USAID (students are involved in the whole process of Safe Vegetable Value Chain: project office; working in the field; with customers), start-up companies. • There are 2 types of practical trainings in UBB: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Obligatory internships in a company, governmental sector, university facility, international project or university earns

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no specific mobility, whole day internships can be conducted only on holidays ✓ only morning or afternoon ✓ possibility to conduct internship also in an afternoon hours half day (after lectures at university) • Different credit systems are used at different universities in Cambodia • Each faculty has different system of recognition and credit transfer. Examples a) Faculty of Agro-Industry b) Faculty of Agronomy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Faculty of Agro-Industry: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some students from this faculty have done internships with private companies. ○ For example: Angkor Dairy Products - RUA alumni work there; approximately 10 students per year receive internships in quality control, or production system management, or as lab technicians. ○ The company prefers students from this faculty, especially 2nd year-students who are available for 2 months. Thus, students can get a high score on the company's evaluation and earn 2 credits after finishing the internship. b) Faculty of Agronomy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Available to fourth-year students. ○ Internships are related to their final thesis, but are difficult to manage due to full-time studies. ○ There is an internship program for curriculum year 2019. Only year fourth-year students are allowed to do internships, which will be at the end of their first semester. 	<p>3 credits (minimum duration is 3 months).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Volunteering in the university – students are working for some department or laboratory in their free time, for free and for no credit, but gets assignments from their professor. Students are involved in the whole process with the university's own food products, from producing to selling. • Training takes place during the academic year, when students attend classes in the morning, and work afternoons or weekends at the company (generally during students' free time). • There are also classes during weekends, so students can do their internship as a full employee in a company. • During internships, students are monitored by a university supervisor, and usually also by a company supervisor. • Some kind of practical training is compulsory for all first-year bachelor's degree students. • Students usually do the internship in Battambang Province. <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company contacts – majority based on personal approach (the professor knows the company from cooperation, alumni, etc.). • Platform for cooperation—long term existing contact, or newly gained contact: best time to create a network is during Career Day. • Internships are selected from private sector companies, the governmental sector, NGOs, or university and international projects.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Representatives of Career Centre introduce the internship program to these students. ○ Fourth-year students from this faculty will receive 1 credit after finishing the internship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communication is face-to-face, or by e-mail, telephone, official letter, or visiting students in the field.
<p>Support for internships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The university offers administrative support, but not financial support. ● Some companies support students with a stipend or travel costs, or accommodation. Or, students may be supported by Project SIMPLE. ● Some companies require RUA to be responsible for health insurance. ● Soft skills trainings, for example, workshops on communication, scientific writing trainings, excursions (e.g., an excursion to a beer-factory for agro-industry students in Faculty of Agriculture.), individual student interviews by companies with potential interns. ● English for Agriculture course for RUA students to improve their language skills before working in a company. ● Every faculty supports “study tours” to companies to get information about their internship requirements either once or twice per year. ● RUA offers laboratory opportunities for students who cannot find an internship (about 40 %). 	<p>Support for internships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students are not supported by the university for costs related to their internship, but they may find an internship that supports them in terms of accommodation, transport or offers a stipend. ● Only companies suited to the student’s study programme may be considered. ● For high quality companies (e.g., Battambang Rice Investment), students have to pass a rigorous selection process.

<p>Selection and evaluation procedure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of internships is based on particular study programme. • Evaluation and forms: each faculty uses different forms for internships and forms for evaluation of internships. The uniform documents for whole university were created at RUA (based on Project SIMPLE templates). • For evaluation form sent to companies, students write 4 page reports. 	<p>Selection and evaluation procedure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student’s internship selection procedure – they may search on their own, or with support from: the university during Career Day, guest lecturers, personnel doing field visits, Alumni and Career Centre of the University, referral by the student’s professor. Very often, placement is due to personal acquaintance between the student and the company. University approval is required if a student finds an internship. • Supervisors – at university level, these are usually professors, supported by trained staff at Alumni and Career Centre, and supervisors in the field (from companies or universities) • External evaluators – Project SIMPLE
<p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companies – main challenges from companies are their policies, secrecy, and lack of time for selecting suitable interns. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concerned about their technologies will be stolen. ○ Many do not need more help. • Universities - in Cambodia it’s very difficult to find internships placement due to limited number of companies. Sometimes it is only possible to get into company through personal contacts. • RUA solves these problems by using governmental organizations (e.g., laboratories, ministries), as they are public. • Capacity problem – increasing number of students outstrips demand for interns. • Some students stay on the faculty because of limited budget (i.e., they are from poor families, they come from other provinces). 	<p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have insufficient knowledge and skills, particularly soft skills. Employers suggest students to improve soft-skills, e.g., self-confidence, ability to work in a group, ability to synthesise and apply knowledge (e.g., in the case of MISOTA, organic chemistry with agro-chemistry and biochemistry) and to apply theoretical concepts comprehensively. Also students should reduce certain social behaviours, e.g., shyness, indecision. In Project SIMPLE, students attended soft skills trainings as special lectures/were trained during project implementation activities to meet employer requirements. It focuses on training programmes and soft-skills development in workshops dealing with communication, social media, and self and time management.

Indonesia

IPB	UNTAD
<p>Internship organisation and activities</p> <p>In general, IPB offers four types of internships:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For students' final exams 2. Independent internship (own initiative) 3. Collaboration internship 4. Certified internship <p>INTERNSHIP FOR FINAL EXAMS - 6 of the 41 credits must be earned in the last year of B.Sc. studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internships for students who will take the final exam (thesis) by doing a project in an industry (e.g., at a factory or in the field), not at a government office • Duration is usually 3 – 4 months • Program handled by faculty • Validated in credits <p>INDEPENDENT INTERNSHIP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internships for students during holidays • Duration is usually 1.5 months • Program handled by the student; they will find their own internships • Not accredited 	<p>Internship organisation and activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Internships are only available to students who successfully pass exams for at least 100 ECTS of the total bachelor's programme (142 ECTS) ➤ In general: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • executed in the field somewhere in Sulawesi (but an individual internship can be taken on another island or even abroad) • costs involved (transport + housing, food and drink if not offered by the beneficiaries of the project) are covered by the university • duration: one month, to be preceded by a 2-day training at the faculty/university • internships are good for 3 ECTS (formerly 5 ECTS for at least a six-week internship) • Supervision: by a local project coordinator (can be an alumnus) combined with weekly in-situ supervision by the supervisor of the Faculty • scoring: the final score is the sum of: 1) the score for the permanent evaluation by the local supervisor (according to a document available explaining how to score) 2) the score from a written report by the local supervisor 3) the university supervisor's score (fine-tuned after oral presentation) 4) the score from the weekly supervision by the university supervisor. Scores can differ among individuals depending on their personal performance. • Students can express their primary and secondary choices of topic in the list of proposals delivered by the university (this list is updated yearly with new offers obtained through the help of alumni and by contacting

<p>COLLABORATION INTERNSHIP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative internship program with industries/companies • Duration is usually 6 – 12 months • Mostly handled by a Faculty such as TOP program by Agriculture Faculty • Not accredited <p>CERTIFIED INTERNSHIP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government internship program, which started in 2018 • The output is competency certificate for apprentice • Duration is 6 months • Payment is 1.5-2 million rupiahs • Handled by IPB’s Career Centre (CDA) • Not accredited <p>NOTE: Career Development Centre (CDA) is undertaking initiatives for introducing a certified internship in the Bachelor’s degree study programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • former providers evaluating their willingness to renew their offer) • Students can come up with their own internships, but they must be approved by a potential academic supervisor, the Dean of the faculty, the faculty’s coordinator of internships, and the Central Office for Education. • 2 types of internships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Group work: students coming from different faculties to do professional fieldwork in a certain village combined with social activities, such as one day per week of restoration of grain houses, repairing roads, teaching kids, helping with farm bookkeeping, etc. <p>Faculty of Education students are preparing to offer farmers an extension programme on production of vegetables with economic benefits. For the content of their programme and applications in the field, they need help from Faculty of Agriculture students who specialise in production, agribusiness, agricultural economics, food technology, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Projects in the agriculture industry: <p>The only option for students in agribusiness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students have to submit forms for internships. ▪ Students must wear a uniform while doing their internship.
<p>Support for internships</p> <p>University support for internships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with companies that provide internships 	<p>Support for internships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial support: costs involved (transport, housing, food, and drink) if not offered by the beneficiaries of the project, will be covered by the university.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish the internship vacancies to students • Provide training to students on the dos and don'ts for internship students • Monitoring by lecturers 	
<p>Selection and evaluation procedure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University selects student candidates and is responsible for monitoring them. 	<p>Evaluation procedure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scored by local supervisor and university supervisors (as per a document explaining how to score) + the score from a written report by the local supervisor + the university supervisor's score (fine-tuned after oral presentation). • Weekly supervision by the university supervisor. • Oral presentation. • Scores can differ among individuals depending on their personal performance.

Thailand

KU	PSU
<p>Internship organisation and activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is required by the curriculum that all students do a internship. • The internships are organized independently by each department in the Faculty of Fisheries (5 departments). Each department manages its own internship schedule with its own supervisors (contact person), documentation, and contact list of companies. • The faculty assist students by contacting companies, preparing documentation, arranging interviews, and in some cases, providing transportation. However, the faculty does not provide financial assistance to students. • Each department organizes an orientation/presentation for interns. <p>Detailed description of internships / students (Which level of study? How many days/weeks/months?), companies (Do you help with the contact? How do students find a company? Is there a payment for students?).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internships are scheduled for the summer between the 3rd– 4th years for students in every department. They usually take 1-2 months (June-July), depending on the department. 	<p>Internship organisation and activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal internships are known as Co-operative Education. At the Faculty of Natural Resources, regular practical training (called internship in some countries), is compulsory. The duration is 2-4 weeks for the 1st-3rd year students, and depends on the department’s curriculum. • Almost every program at PSU offers Co-operative Education. • Students earn 9 academic credits for Formal Internships. • Possibility to do the internship in domestic organizations/companies and international companies. • All kinds of companies are possible, but Faculty of Natural Resources students may also work at places related to agriculture and natural resource management (for example, marine parks, botanical gardens, and conservation areas). • Activities according to the faculty: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Formal and informal discussions are organized with potential organizations and companies by the Department and Faculty beforehand. ○ Orientation/preparation for soft skills and knowledge before the internship starts. ○ Site visit and personal communication during internship. ○ Formal report and evaluation by students and workplace/companies/government offices.

- Students can select the companies independently (pending department approval) or select from the list compiled by each department. The department will contact and manage necessary documentation for students.
- The faculty also provides information about internship opportunities via website and social media (e.g., Facebook or LINE).

- Communication during internship via phone, Facebook, LINE application, official letter, etc.
- Individual presentation after returning to the department/faculty.
- Selection of best practices to nominate for university internship promotional platform.

Detailed description of internships/ students (which level, how many days), companies (how they were contacted), students' pay.

- Duration: 4 months (16 weeks) for formal internships (Co-op education) and 2-4 weeks for the compulsory regular practical training.
- Level of the students: B.Sc. level
 - 4th (and last) year of study – second semester with good record as per the GPA and individual performance for formal internships.
 - 1st-4th year students - during the term break for the compulsory regular practical training.
- Students in the Cooperative Education or internship program need to apply and make a study plan so they can be at work for one semester.
- A list of companies, private and governmental sector, and NGO's, contracted due to their willingness to accept trainees, is provided to students to choose from.

<p>Support for internships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no financial support for internships from the faculty. However, companies may provide some support such as insurance, transportation and food. The university makes contact, and helps students with passport matters. • Before Project SIMPLE, the faculty did not have any coordinated activities designed specifically for students who are interested in internships. At this moment, Career Day seems to offer a great opportunity not only for employment for 4th-year students but also a good internship opportunity for 3rd-year students. 	<p>Support for internships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Faculty of Natural Resources organizes internship interviews for companies to recruit students. • The internship interviews are also conducted during Career Day, a result of Project SIMPLE's initiation. • Financial support is available for formal internships and the Cooperative Education program for travel expenses at a set rate and insurance from the Faculty of Natural Resources. Passport fees may be provided from departments in case of international internship placement. • Companies may provide a supplemental living cost.
<p>Evaluation procedure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The faculty staff often visit students during internships. However, due to the large number and remoteness of some locations (more than 30 locations around the country) some locations may never get visited by faculty staff. • An internship report is required. In most cases, a group presentation is required. • KU has graded (non-mandatory) and non-graded (mandatory) internships. Non-graded internships (1-2 months) must be completed before graduation. Graded internships (4 months) are optional. 	<p>Selection</p> <p>Students apply for the formal internship or Cooperative Education program through their departments using the Cooperative Education application form. Criteria include GPA and personal performance.</p> <p>Evaluation procedure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site visit and personal communication during internship. • Orientation and preparation in soft skills and knowledge before internship begins. • Formal report and evaluation by students and workplace/companies/government offices. • Individual presentation after returning to the department/faculty. • Selection of best practice to nominate for university internship promotional platform.

B) SWOT Analysis

Cambodia	
RUA	
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students are awarded credits • students who pass internships are highly motivated and appreciate the skills obtained • possibility for students to be involved in university projects • offer of international internships • field visits for students • opportunities for students are provided by the university (e.g., organisation of Career Days, promotion of internships) • new opportunities for internships are offered via social media for ease of access • soft skills trainings and language lectures to prepare students for internships 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a lot of companies in the province do not accept interns because of the know-how drain • students are not able to use theoretical knowledge in practical ways • companies complain about lack of soft-skills in students (interns / alumni) • students get only 1-2 credits, no matter if their internship is for 1 to 4 months
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the university could set aside a period of time without classes during the academic year for students who must do internships, with more options for students to do long term internships • inviting more guest lecturers from companies would motivate more students to do internships • better promotion of international and regional internships • active teaching – working in groups, development of projects • students who have done internships can promote them and recommend activities and / or companies • more courses on QA at RUA 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students do not take on internships during academic year to avoid overloading • financial problems

UBB

Strengths

- students are awarded credits
- students who pass internships are highly motivated and appreciate the skills obtained
- possibility of joining international projects
- for top internships, students must pass the company's rigorous selection procedure
- the university has facilities (e.g., laboratory, own products)
- opportunities for students are provided by the university (e.g., organisation of Career Days, promotion of internships, field visits)
- new opportunities for internships are offered via social media for ease of access
- soft skills trainings and language lectures to prepare students for internships

Weaknesses

- students are sometimes overloaded (and tired)
- a lot of companies in the province do not accept interns because of the know-how drain
- students are not able to use theoretical knowledge in practical ways
- companies complain about lack of soft-skills in students (interns/alumni)
- many internships conducted only at the university

Opportunities

- the university could set aside a period during the academic **without classes** specifically for students who must do internships so they do not get overloaded
- more **guest lecturers** from companies would lead to more places for internships, which would in turn motivate more students
- better promotion of **Project SIMPLE platform for cooperation** among students would lead to more internship places in the area
- an active approach to teaching (i.e., involving students would lead to **active teachers**, which would in turn lead to active students)
- students who have done internships can **promote** them, and recommend activities and / or companies
- establish cooperation with BM Consult to enhance **soft-skills** of students and alumni
- include more student fields visits

Threats

- students do not take on internships during the academic year to avoid overloading
- students enjoy working in a company more than studies and so quit their studies
- students are not motivated enough to find internships suitable to them, as they are in the 1st year of studies, so often do not know what they will do in the future
- students lack time to do internships
- financial problems
- companies lack interest for various reasons (2 examples: students' weak soft skills means they do not communicate well with farmers, and companies are concerned their image will be tarnished from having interns)

Indonesia

IPB

Strengths

- B.Sc. students are highly interested in a compulsory internship, taken as a course in their standard study programme.
- During the Bachelor's degree studies, and if applicable during the Master's thesis, students have first training / internship experience in a research lab from the university or another institute, or in a professional environment (see attached list of thesis topics offered)
- Many students are taking the initiative (but on request, a university staff member will help) to do at least one (extra) internship during their semester holidays and / or after their Bachelor's studies. Some students are taking as many as 4 internships in different domains of own interest: from (extra) research to industry and entrepreneurship in a national or international environment.
- The experiences gained during the internship after their Bachelor's studies motivate some graduates to continue their studies at the Master's level before joining the job market.
- For graduates going abroad for an internship on own initiative, university (through one of its departments) can procure a loan in order to help them with the preparatory logistic costs (purchase of ticket, visa, travel and health insurance, etc.). Graduates can pay off the loan gradually, after they start getting paid for the internship.

Weaknesses

- Doing an internship on one's own initiative is costly, even if they receive a monthly stipend by the internship provider.

Opportunities

- Reorganize the course programme of the Bachelor's and Master's studies and insert in each programme a standard course called internship, with a value of some credits to take during a few weeks (1 week per credit, minimum 4 weeks). Internships should be organized by the university in collaboration with a group of internship providers (non-IPB departments). The evaluation of the student (end score) for this course should be based on the weekly report provided to the internship provider's supervisor, plus the end report delivered to the university supervisor and the in-situ supervisor, plus an in-class Power Point Presentation followed by question time, attended by all classmates (multiplication effect – sharing experiences), and the 2 supervisors.
- Diversify and expand the group of internship providers (more professional sectors plus government services).
- Better professionally prepared graduates for the job market.

Threats

- Financial costs of organising the internships (transport, housing, etc.).
- Extra work for the university's internship supervisors.
- Unwillingness of the professional world to offer internships
- Some internship providers are disappointed at seeing no benefits to having had interns come to work with them. They consider "time is money" and that the time and money spent training interns amounted to wasted money.

UNTAD

Strengths

- Positive outcomes as perceived by students, alumni, supervisors, organisers are objectives that were successfully realized: That students' positive internship experience will become an asset for independence. (See testimonies below.)
- Student: "real life experience was much broader than expected. I realized during my internship 1) that how to put theory into practice is not obvious 2) working in a multidisciplinary group is learning to respect each other, and one should be always aware that problems have unique solutions, so one should be creative in finding solutions. (3) Arriving at a consensus in a discussion requires time and leadership. (4) How to lead a group of employees is not obvious: it requires more than just the knowledge and know-how of the field you are working in."
- An alumnus: "The internship experience and the suggestions given by the supervisors after the evaluation of the internship facilitated me in fine-tuning my decision regarding which type of job I wished to apply for. I started my first job in the same environment as my internship."
- A supervisor: "Students return to the class as more mature persons, knowing which direction they want to take in the professional world and are more critical during the last courses of their Bachelor's degree. Questions for clarification of what they were learning were more directly linked to the use of it in the professional word."

Weaknesses

- Due to the growing number of students, internships can no longer be taken individually; they must be taken in groups.
- Senior students who are not competent in English have no chance to do international internships
- Offers coming from the provincial government are more social and development driven at the village level. Exceptionally strategical offers (policy – development of new projects – project management – etc.).

- Quality offer of internships: There are many quality internship places that are of interest to students. No financial constraints: Financial support by the university covering all costs involved in an internship.
- Curriculum course embedded in the programme.
- Organised at the right moment in the programme.
- Good preparations means students and supervisors are clear about their tasks, thus avoiding logistical problems.
- Supervisors are motivated supervisors, so give enough time to their responsibilities.
- Stakeholders appreciate the opportunity to work with the university.

Opportunities

- Professors update the content of each of their courses ensuring their relevance, in a world of changing job opportunities.
 - The educational commission of agricultural bachelor's programmes continuously update their programmes according to real world demands (i.e., knowledge and know-how).
- Extension of the period spent in internships (thus increasing the ECTS) as students noticed that the time given was not enough to successfully meet the specific objectives set at the start.

Threats

- Organizational problems, work overload. Why: Growing number of students require more internship offers, more hours of supervision by the academic staff, and consequently more financial inputs.
- Competition among universities on the island for the same internship offers.

Thailand

KU

Strengths

- Quality of companies - because the university visits some of the companies.
- Faculty provides information about internships opportunity via website and social media.
- Compulsory – internship is part of the curricula, and students have to submit a written report.
- Positive outcome – students appreciate the opportunity to gain practical experience.
- The faculty has a list of companies interested in students.

Weaknesses

- International internship rate is not high.
- Students with low income cannot cover the costs to go abroad for an internship.
- Not all companies are vetted by the university.

Opportunities

- University should try to support the students from poor families to go abroad.
- For the internship program: find more companies, link the internship with university research projects, increase diversity workplace in the future.
- Improving the quality of the lectures because of the company visits.
- For the students: opportunity to get a full-time job after graduation, chance to get new professional contacts for the future.
- To connect the internship program with career building activities.

Threats

- No financial support of the internship program.
- Rapid economic and technology changes that will shift the job market pattern.

PSU

Strengths

- Quality of companies because of company visits
- Long experience according to the internship program (more than 10 years)
- Most curricula contain internships
- Internships are linked with research projects in many cases with consultation between department's professors before internships begin
- Good evaluation system
- Compulsory – students have to submit a written report
- Increasing number of places that want interns accept only 2 departments, namely the departments of Agricultural Development and Pest Management.

Weaknesses

- Governmental sector is not strong.
- International internship rate is not high (one reason is the university's requirement that students pass a language test in order to receive funds from the university.)

Opportunities

- Private sector prefers to have students for a long period.
- For the internship program: find more private companies, link internships with university research projects, increase diversity workplace in the future, more cooperation with the private and governmental sectors, improve the quality of lectures because of company visits
- For the students: opportunity to get a full-time job after graduation; chance to get new professional contacts for the future
- To connect the internship program with career building activities.

Threats

- Less financial support of the internship program.
- Change of the Thai governmental system (difficult to fill out so much documentation).
- Reduced number of teaching staff due to the university's policy changes. However, student number is also declining.
- Students' family prohibits children from going far away to work.
- Proportion between genders: companies in Thailand generally prefer the male applicants, though the number of females is increasing.
- Rapid economic and technology changes will shift the job market pattern.

4.2 Feedback from Internship Students

The interviews performed by EU partners with students at all levels which varied depending on university setting and programmes. The interviews were conducted on different dates, which spanned from 22 August 2018 to 25 August 2019, according to suitable times of both the Asian and EU partners. Main findings can be grouped into five categories (details as listed in Table 5):

- Academic preparation for job market/future career
- Soft skill development
- Network development
- English language improvement
- Organization of internship

Academic preparation for job market/Future career

Almost all students from the six Asian universities appreciated the internships for several reasons. The most highly valued experience is the practical skill of how to put theory into practice in a real situation, which is crucial in preparing students for the job market. The opportunity to learn and gain knowledge, as well as new interests, was mentioned by several students. They learned from different activities starting with the orientation and training that understanding the internship organization led to understanding their assigned tasks. Being able to plan and work on their own, with advice from supervisors and colleagues at the companies/organizations, and to make decisions regarding their tasks, was valued highly as it helped build the confidence needed to step into the job market. Another important positive impact was an understanding both their preferences and their potential for a future career. This is because internships in combination with many real activities and responsibilities opened up students' perspective, guiding them to career possibilities about what they would love to do after graduation.

These internships exposed students to real work situations where they were treated as employees who must handle hard work and difficulties, thus influenced students' decisions about their career path. Despite being offered employment during the internship, some students turned down the offers, in order to study for a master's degree. This is the case for Kasetsart University where 12 of 13 students who did an internship plan to get a Master's Degree either within Thailand or abroad. IPB and RUA students who are interested in international internships and study abroad possibilities expressed similar thoughts. In the case of UBB, most students would like to have their own businesses. All Asian partner universities have several interns who were offered jobs after their internships: at least 3 at UNTAD, 3 at PSU and 4 at KU. Most of the PSU

students did their internships overseas, then returned to Thailand, with some going back abroad to start work.

Soft skill development

It is well known that soft skills such as personal behaviour, adaptation to organization rules and regulations, ability to work in teams, managerial capability, manners, responsibility and disciplines are equally important as the academic knowledge and training for graduates to be successful in their careers. The interview results reveal that students' soft skills improved. Examples include taking more responsibility, greater confidence, huge development in communication skills and personality, more inclination to learn independently, learn to make relationships and adapt to others, learn to be out of their comfort zones and work in teams, learn work life and company rules, learn to respect their superiors and supervisors, and accept criticism and suggestions.

Building confidence is an important character for almost all Asian students whose culture and family upbringing is to be humble and not assert themselves much. Most students thus exhibit different degrees of shyness. Some graduates stated that their internships trained them to be less shy and improved their communication skills.

Working in groups is a challenge for people generally; this is even more stressful for young students who have no experience in real work situations requiring soft skills. It gets more complicated the more people there are with their own ideas, necessitating more time to achieve goals. However, they learned to cope with the situations and came to really understand teamwork. It is notable that, because the interns knew they were taken on as employees, they realized well that they had to work under pressure and deal with unexpected issues. Some students felt more confident after such experiences.

In addition to many other concerns that students had to cope with, they learned how to respect their superiors/supervisors as well as accept constructive criticism and suggestions, which are very important skills in any organization. As a general rule, some students do very well academically, but may not be successful in their careers if they do not know how to behave at work.

Because there are various facets of the work environment during (especially long-term) internships, students develop the necessary character and professional qualifications beneficial for future employment. Some UNTAD, Indonesia students stated that the skills they acquired during their internship helped them substantially to perform better on psychological tests, and during their first job interviews.

Students who did their internships overseas, very much appreciated having had a wonderful time abroad. They learned new things, balanced work and the rest of life, and adapted to new people and an unfamiliar culture, regarding it all as a good cultural experience. For example, a PSU student who went to a company in Malaysia mentioned learning about Malaysian culture and traditions.

Network development

A hidden benefit of internships is the opportunity to create a network or simply make new acquaintances, which may be useful for future employment. There can be no doubt that students will have to work with new groups of people at all levels including peers, managers, administrative clerks, and support staff. Some students may have an opportunity to meet top executives if their internship provider is small or has a policy allowing interns to receive messages from such high level executives.

Several students reflected on their exposure to new environments, meeting many new people, and making new friends, affording them opportunities to improve their communication skills. Some overseas students spent free time after work talking with and socializing with Malaysian co-workers, allowing them to practice speaking English. In addition, they learned some Malaysian language and experienced a kind of culture exchange.

English language improvement

Among the six Asian universities, at least 10 interviewed students did their internships overseas. This group of graduates stated that they now had a better command of English. They learned how to communicate in English in business situations. Being more confident in English brings them the ability and confidence in cultural exchanges with other countries, such as the case with PSU students. They had meaningful cultural exchanges in the Philippines with Filipino friends. PSU students also took the opportunity to learn some Bahasa Malayu language in Malaysia.

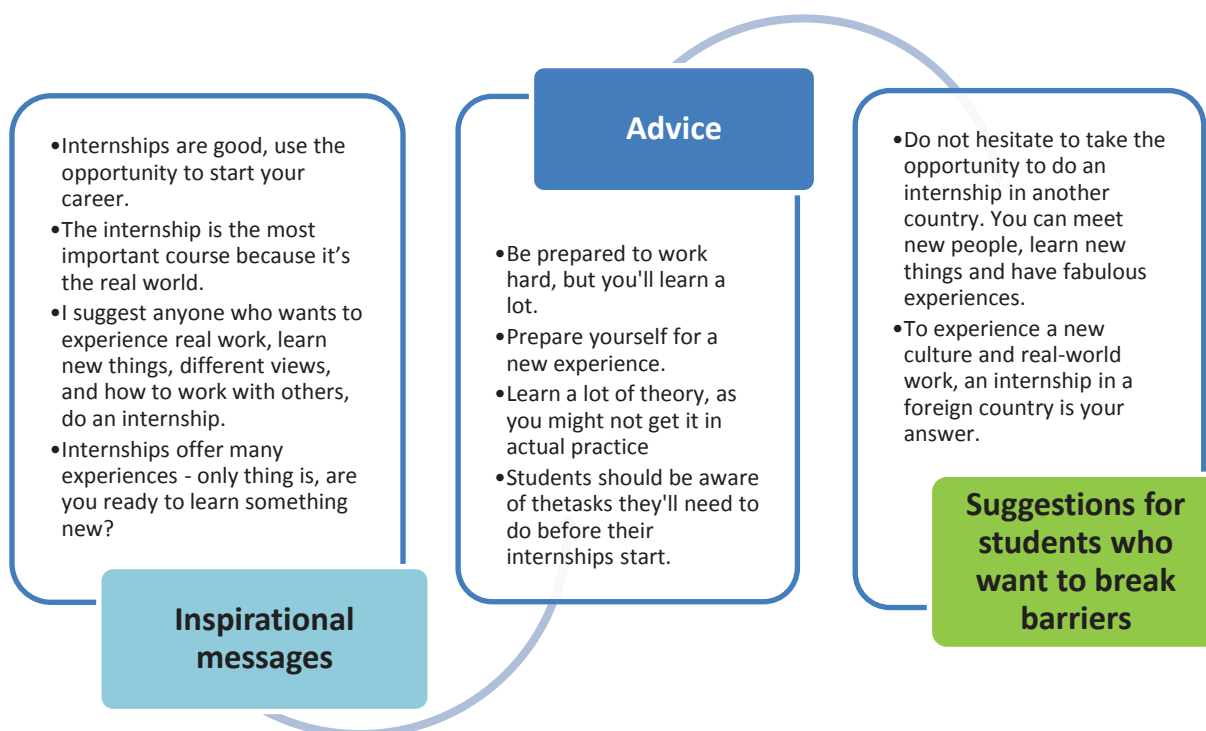
Organization of internship

Internships are organized differently among the six Asian universities. UNTAD internships are limited to one month, and students complained that this was too short to complete all the planned activities. At RUA, internships are usually conducted in groups of interns from the same faculty, thus may not prepare students individually for future careers.

From experienced students to in-coming internship students

The internships at different Asian partner universities have been such positive experiences that students would like the next generations to have the same opportunities, (details as listed in Table 5).

Inspiring messages, advice and suggestions from students who have done an internship are presented in the diagram below.



The messages were also meant for the universities to better organize and manage the next generations of internships. For example, there is the need for universities to provide internships outside of the students' usual research environment. In all cases, the universities should train or inform students about practical tasks so that they are ready to work.

Table 5 Feedback from internship students at Asian partner universities (RUA, UBB, UNTAD, KU and PSU)

Topic	Positive impact	Negative responses / Organization of internship	Recommendations
Academic preparation for job market/future career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - My internship helped me to learn some practical things. - Students can learn how to work. - Saw how a business really works and learned more than the university taught. - Gained knowledge. - The company let me find out how it works – they wanted me to try it out first. - It was good to see how things are in companies. It was a good chance to put the theory into practice. I worked in every department at the company. - Got some good practical experiences, learned how to work on my own. - Got good practical experiences which can be used in the future. - It is hard work but you will learn a lot, and will be treated as if you are a "real worker." - Student gained lots of technical knowledge, did a job rotation, and learned other procedures & techniques, found new interest, time during the internship helped them know what to do after university studies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internship influenced this student's decision regarding work. He did not want to start work yet, so instead he went on to do a Master's degree. - Internships are usually conducted in groups of interns from the same faculty. - Complaints about the need to look themselves for internships (i.e., no lists available to students of internship providers). - Students must bear the financial costs of taking an (extra) internship, and that they do not get credit for the internships, are limiting factors for many students. - Reports made during the internships are only sent to the internship provider's supervisors. - The duration of the internship was limited to one month. They could not complete all the planned activities. 	<p>For students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students should be aware of the kind of work they will do on the internship. - Keep in mind that the work could be hard, so you should be ready. - Prepare to hard work, but you will learn a lot. If you are in a remote area and need to drive to work, it is best to use a motorcycle or bicycle. - It is important for you to be well-informed before starting your internship. - If you would like to go beyond your <i>imagined</i> limits, experience a new cultural and real-world work, an internship in a foreign country is your answer. - Internships offer many experiences - only thing is, are you ready to learn something new? - The internship is the most important course because it's the real world

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The internship showed her that she really loves other cultures and languages. - Learned about new techniques, got the chance to put her theoretical knowledge into practice. - Experienced the real work world, and learned how to cope with unexpected issues. - I felt confident after doing well on my internship, because I learned valuable things before applying for work. - My internship gave me great experience, for example in aquaculture. Many things from my internship have been applicable to my job. It was very useful for work. - I've adopted some techniques and knowledge from when I did my internship. - I was doing real work and gained knowledge of production and support, problems in the production process, managing problems, and am now ready to make decisions. In addition, I learned about marketing, and to be responsible and punctual. - Gained lots of technical knowledge, did a job rotation, learned about Standard Operation Procedure to achieve excellent results, and learned a lot of new things. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - before you graduate. - Prepare yourself for a new experience. - I'd suggest all students take the chance to intern overseas so you can meet many different people and learning a new culture. - Do not hesitate to take the opportunity to do an internship in another country. You can meet new people, and learn new things and have fabulous experiences. - I'd suggest an internship to anyone who wants to experience real work and not just the classroom, learn new ways of thinking and different views, and how to work with others. - Learn a lot of theory, and apply it practically. - Internships are good, do them. Students should start their careers with one. In 6 months, you can learn a lot. But 3 months is too short. Before you start, it is good to have info about your internship and a list of responsibilities directly from company. - Find an internship within a reasonable distance from your home.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After my internship, the company immediately offered me work after I graduate. This is equal to passing the assessment. - I have gained a great deal of new knowledge and experience, which I am applying at work and while communicating with co-workers in other branches overseas. - Doing real work opened a new world for me. I reviewed everything that I had studied and knew what I needed to study more. I learned work systems, e.g., how to prioritize, solve problems, technical equipment that I'd never studied in the classroom, logical thinking, and most importantly, realizing for myself what I can and want to do for work, including self-development. - I appreciated the internship – gained a new perspective on my future and learned a lot. In class, it was all theory, no practice. My company provided some money for transportation. - Most students would like to have their own businesses. - This will have a positive impact on my future career. Students can learn a lot from other people. The positive aspects were the practical skills, teamwork, language, and communication. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommendation to all students is to learn a lot of theory, as you might not get it in actual practice. <p>For the universities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The need for the university to organise internship outside of the students' usual research environment. - Universities should train and inform students about practical tasks so that they are ready to work.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We students got interested in international internships and study abroad. - Internships enhanced our flexibility, practical creativity, social skills, and know-how (how to put theory into practice in a real situation with limited tools) - Internships were the optimal way to prepare us practically for the job market. - We were offered jobs in the fields of our internships. 		
<p>Soft skill development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I am more responsible than before - New experience; good cultural experience. - Learned a lot of good things for life. - Huge development in my personality and communication skills. - Learned to think independently. - Learned not to be shy, learned a lot of technical things, and personal skills like communication, and got a good start to thinking on my own. - I now understand working under pressure and unexpected issues that might occur. I also felt confident after the internship. - I learned to make relationships and adapt myself to others, how to plan and solve problems at work, and traditions 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - and cultures in Malaysia. - I had such a wonderful time. I've really learned to push myself and to value teamwork. - I experienced many things including work and living with others. - Doing an internship helps learn to apply your life to real work, because I was like other employees who must follow the company's rules. - Working in a group was a challenge because it is more difficult than working alone - the more people in the group, the more ideas you have to deal with, and the more time thing take. - We learned to respect superiors / supervisors and accept their criticism and suggestions for a better performance. - The skills we acquired during our internships helped us a lot in performing better on psychological tests, and during our first job interviews. 		
<p>Network development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I improved communication skills with new people. - I have many new friends. - Chance to get outside and meet new people. - New people and new cultures. - I spent my free time after work to talk 		

	<p>and socialize with Malaysian workers, allowing me to practice speaking English. In addition, I learned some Malaysian language and had some culture exchanges.</p>		
<p>English language improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - My English is much better now. - I can use English much better than before. - Learned how to communicate in English in business situations. - My ability to express myself in English has enhanced. - This experience made me dare speak English and learn a new language (Bahasa Melayu). - Improved my English communication skills, and learned and exchanged Thai and Philippine cultures. 		

4.3 Career Days' Contributions to Internship Programs

Observations and interviews by human resource recruitment representatives during Asian partner universities' Career Days (supported by Project SIMPLE), revealed that new contacts were established that strengthen cooperation, particularly for choices of internship providers. Examples are ANGKORMILK and AMRURICE, which informed RUA about the requirements for applicants. Some companies offer training to students as employees with a subsidy of up to USD100/month for a full-time intern.

Usual ways of matching interns with companies are either through the department or faculty, or direct contact using the teaching staff's personal network. Positive responses and information are then conveyed to students. Communication between companies and universities is either by telephone, e-mail, or formal letter. Having Career Days is very helpful in connecting students with potential internship providers, for job placement, and for the actual internship training. This is because of the large student community where companies can do the interviews during Career Days, so are able to choose carefully appropriate students for the job positions they want to fill. At the same time, companies can consult regarding important issues such as soft skills, practical knowledge, and English proficiency. Moreover, they also give recommendations to universities for better internship management so as to better serve students in areas such as implementation of IT and social media for on-line registration, and other data collection systems which help save time and are eco-friendly.

4.4 Internship Buddy Findings

Internship: Skills for the Future

All students who participated in Project SIMPLE internships finished with long-lasting positive effects that they perceived as invaluable for their futures. Internship experience is regarded as an important factor that contributes to the overall competency of students as future employees, entrepreneurs, and experts in their respective fields.

Although the fields of internship vary, and some students did their internship overseas while others did theirs more locally, all reported gaining broader knowledge, deeper understandings, and practical skills that would not have been possible without the internships. Students were given ways to apply theories and knowledge they learned in classes to practical situations with different sets of challenges that helped them to better understand their fields and develop technical skills. This, and daily interaction with experts and others who have extensive experience in the field during internships, gave students a lot of insights, and for those who did their internship in rural areas, they better understand real life challenges that small stakeholders in their fields have to face.

The students also appreciated that the internships exposed them to other relevant areas that they found to be very interesting that complemented their practical understanding and helped them to branch out after graduation. Also noteworthy is that internships introduced them to important stakeholders, thereby creating a multidimensional experience that helped students to consider more than one perspective in their respective areas of work. Furthermore, soft skills such as time management, communication, the ability to adapt to different cultures and work environments, better work ethics, and data-driven decision-making are also reported by the students as important skills that they gained from the internship that could help boost their employability.

However, since the students were all from Asian countries (Cambodia, Indonesia, and Thailand), their experience differ between those who did their internships in foreign countries and those who did their internships in their own countries. Students who did their internship abroad mostly worked in big institutions or companies and found that the biggest challenge was to adapt to a fast-paced work life rhythm and to a different culture. They found that work is more demanding than what they were used to as a student and that the different culture and language made it harder to adjust. Meanwhile, students who did their internship locally had to face problems such as lack of government support, lack of infrastructure, and lack of community involvement that would have been so useful since they mostly worked in the field of agricultural development in rural areas.

Most students who did their internships overseas reported a delay in implementing the knowledge and skills they gained. This is due to very different conditions in the countries where they did their internships and their home countries. For example, those who did their internships in plant treatment or production in the United States, jobs that are heavily dependent on weather, reported no use of what they learned after their internships ended because their home countries do not have four seasons as the United States does. On top of that, some students state that the internship was rather short; they did not have enough time to develop knowledge and skills very deeply. Some reported difficulties in grasping some concepts at the very beginning of their internship, and that once they did understand, there was not enough time to get deeper. Cost was also a problem, especially for those who did their internships abroad, with a few reporting that travel and accommodation costs to be rather high.

This being said, students reported that they found the internships very beneficial. It gave students the opportunity to build networks and relationships with experts and stakeholders they met that may last for a long time to come. This provides resources for

students who are looking for other similar opportunities in their fields, or even to branch out from their previous interests. The combination of skills gained and opportunities provided by the internship experience has given the students more confidence and the feeling of being better equipped to compete in the labour market.

5. Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

Despite differences in internships through Asian university partners, we have learnt major lessons as depicted in the Figure 1.

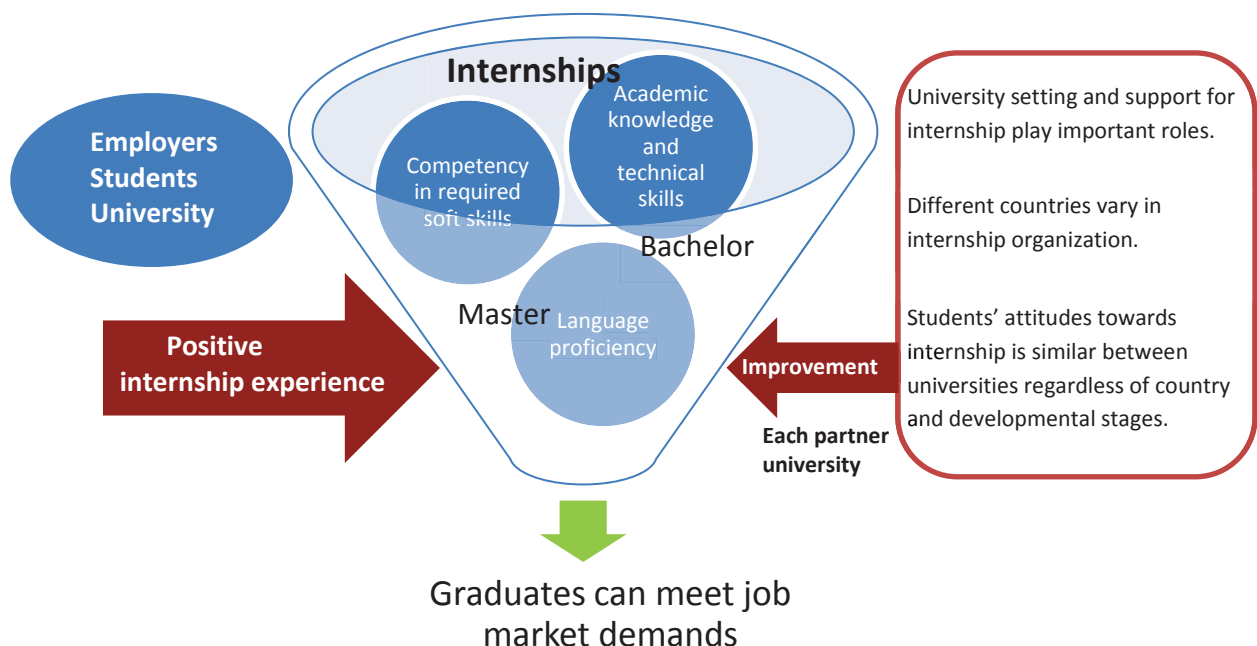


Figure 1 Lessons learnt from the internship assessment in Project SIMPLE

Recommendations

This section deals with feedback and recommendations from participating students and EU observers regarding the main points of the internship program. Some universities have already established a good comprehensive system, such as PSU and KU, which follow the university and national policies and guidelines. Some Asian partner universities still need to improve an all-inclusive system to help students in all aspects of the internship program. Students suggested more clarity about activities and projects that they are expected to do along with closer supervision of their progress in the activities and projects. Students wanted to discuss the progress, challenges, and setbacks they encountered during their internships. In the beginning, students generally did not clearly understand the responsibilities and scope of their tasks, so it would be

better for them to have the chance to change internships once they do understand. However, this would create problems for the internship provider due to complexity of business, and would harm the program as a whole. Students recommend that the universities without a long-term internship programme, extend the duration of the internship so that students can develop adequate understanding and skills.

For internships in foreign countries, students recommended providing help with the visa application, and perhaps an orientation that would help students improve their language skills before they depart. If possible, setting up a buddy or intern partner would be good, hoping this would ease the adaptation to the new environment. A few students find re-adaptation and reintegration to their home countries difficult. They recommended a program that would help understand how their newly gained knowledge and skills can be applied in their respective home countries. This would show commitment to continuing the internship, making it more fully beneficial to the communities and universities.

There were suggestions to make the internship program easier to apply to. It should be expanded to allow more students to have the experience. Alumni and Career Centres can serve this purpose by supporting and increasing the quality of internships through organising Career Days. This is a good opportunity for students to meet company representatives and attend guest lecturers' presentations in order to learn the requirements of the job market. Universities should consider support for travel and accommodation, which students would appreciate, particularly those who have financial difficulties.

Recommendations for each country

Due to the fact that partner universities in each country use distinctively different internship organisational systems, recommendations should specify the target country in order to conform to their situation.

Cambodia

University roles and support: Students should have opportunities for classroom discussion, working in groups, and peer-to-peer learning. For example, having students read and process scientific articles on different topics and present their own conclusions. Also, attention should be paid to combining students' knowledge gained in classes and seminars that focus on practical aspects with a relevant task. In addition to

such practices, more guest lecturers from the professional sector should be invited to speak, allowing for a period to let students talk with them. Teaching staff should connect students with these activities and motivate students to participate in the internship program. Despite the huge burdens, more opportunities to study abroad (e.g., in the EU) should be provided so students may broaden their awareness of different systems of education.

In relation to students: Students should think about their future career from the very beginning of their university studies. They should actively get exposure to the professional arena by speaking with representatives of companies when there is an opportunity, such as during guest lectures at the university and by contacting employers on their own by using the SIMPLE platform. Doing so will maximize their options.

Contributions from the professional sector: it will be beneficial for both parties to host guest lectures by professionals/companies/government organizations to motivate more students and to have more cooperation with alumni (AC) and career centre (CC) to let students and university know about alumni and internship qualification needed for employment at their organizations.

Indonesia

Information obtained from IPB and UNTAD differed to some extent which may be due to the size and policy of the university. IPB is the national agricultural university with a large number of faculties and students, which can make internship organization and management difficult. On the other hand, UNTAD is a smaller university in the region where culture and nature of organization is slightly different. Our EU assessors reflected positively on the internship at UNTAD with only a few suggestions.

In general, the structure of UNTAD's study program for agricultural students should be adjusted by introducing in the last year some optional courses for a number of credits and reducing the number of standard courses. One of the optional courses should be an intensive course in English in the first semester combined with seminars in the second semester discussing in English current topics in the professional world. The content of other optional courses should be fine-tuned with the help of professionals from the future job environments of the students, trying to answer the shortcomings they perceive in the study programme. While fine-tuning the Programme, increase the number of ECTS awarded to interns.

In order to decrease the workload for the academic supervisors of the internships, one could reorganise their supervision in the field to two unannounced visits during the

whole period of internship and by a weekly check-in through Skype. It is also advised that the internship period be increased as their students are regretting the limited weeks they spent during internship, which would be an asset for independence and opening the door to better job opportunities.

Thailand

As the internship system in Thailand is well promoted at the national level, both KU and PSU are doing a good job. That said, the following would benefit students: a budget that would make it possible for low-income students to do international internships; more activities like special events for interns offered by the university; more university courses to improve students' English skills. Also, equalizing the number of men and women doing internships should be considered in the future.

6. Conclusions

Internships performed at Asian university partners differ greatly according to each country's national policies, culture, and university policies, and management factors. In spite of the differences, all stakeholders appreciate the internships particularly the long-term internships. It is common to find gaps between what students learn in classrooms and the reality in the field. Internships help fill these gaps and contribute to their future employability. The overall impact of the internships on participating students was positive. They highly appreciated the many things they gained during their internships: new skills, practical knowledge, ability to adapt to different working environments, time management and decision-making skills, intercultural communication skills, improved language skills, and interpersonal relationships. Cooperation between the university and the professional sector is highly appreciated by the students, teachers and companies. They recommend continuing and enhancing this cooperation between the academic and professional sectors.

Amidst overwhelmingly positive perceptions of the internship program, we are determined to improve the establishment and operation of the program at each Asian partner university, aiming for ever more high-quality internships. Improvements include the internship credit system, enhanced organization and management of the program, increased international internship opportunities and support, and strengthened cooperation with professional sector. One important approach is to cooperate with other universities to learn successful practices and techniques. Heightened attention to these dimensions would contribute to a better organized and managed, higher-quality internship program, which would ultimately result in positive impacts on employment opportunities for graduates.

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