

# Global Study Program

Cooperative Learning Abroad

2013

Future Agribusiness in Vietnam

Chiba University  
Nong Lam University

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This program aimed to develop proposals for future types of agribusiness, prepared by teams of students from different backgrounds, ages and interests. The students did not need to possess specialized knowledge about agriculture or about business, but just be motivated to actively participate in the conception of innovative ideas.

## Future Agribusiness in Vietnam

Conditions surrounding agriculture continue to change both in Japan and in Vietnam. For example, in Japan the number of deserted farmlands has been progressively growing, while the food self-sufficiency rate is constantly decreasing. On the other hand, Vietnam maintains a high food self-sufficiency rate and the country's output value in agriculture has been increasing. Under the TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership), we will face a new phase of agriculture and business – TPP will bring not only a dramatic mixture of domestic and international agricultural commodities on our dining table, but also an urgent need to be competitive in the world through new and creative ways to engage in agribusiness.

Recently, much attention has been given to the so-called “sixth sector (1 x 2 x 3 = 6)” – agricultural workers are not only involved in crop production but have also moved into food processing and distribution. For example, some Japanese local authorities have found a niche demand and have started to supply a high-value added agribusiness service in cooperation with local farmers. Agricultural fields that apply innovative technology could reveal a lot of dormant business chances.

This program was composed of the following elements: 1) ethnographic fieldwork in farms of suburban areas, and research in the daily environment and people's thinking on agriculture/business in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), Vietnam; 2) lectures about the present situation and future prospects of Vietnamese agriculture by Nong Lam University professors; and 3) design thinking workshops on agribusiness. Students worked in groups and collaboratively proposed new agribusiness ideas including possible products, services and business models.



# Schedule

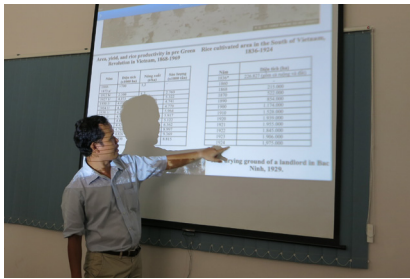
## 1st week

- Mon.** Arrival at HCMC
- Tue.** Project Launch, Univ. tour, Vitamese class and Lecture 1
- Wed.** Field research (Clean vegetable farm)
- Thu.** Cultural exchange, Lecture 2 and Group work 1
- Fri.** Field research (Coconut factory)
- Sat.** Field research (Vegetable and cacao farm in the univ.)
- Sun.** Tour of historical sites

## 2nd week

- Mon.** Group work 2
- Tue.** Group work 3
- Wed.** Group work 4
- Thu.** Final presentation and farewell party
- Fri.** City tour (Museum, Market etc.)  
Departure
- Sat.** Arrival at Narita





We began with experiencing Vietnamese daily life and the differences between Vietnamese and Japanese agriculture through field research and lectures. Students also had a cultural exchange session to introduce their own culture, food, popular music, university life etc. We attended a lecture about problems of Vietnamese agriculture, which produces and exports low-value, raw materials, but imports high-value products. Eating breakfast, lunch, and dinner locally, and gazing through the window of our tour bus during our field trips, made us discern a little more of Vietnam each day.





Field research was one of the most important steps in this project. Students tried as much as possible to gather "facts" that they saw, heard and felt directly by themselves. The motorbike is the most popular mean of transport in Vietnam; of course the roads in the city center of HCMC were packed with motorbikes. When the riders stopped at the traffic light, one lady started to sell daily products, while walking in the opposite direction of the traffic.. We also visited a historical place related to the Vietnam War, the Mekong River, a factory of handmade coconut candies, and a village that was entirely encircled with water.





Actual fieldwork took place at an organic vegetable farm and several farms located within the grounds of Nong Lam University, and producing cocoa, asparagus, dragon fruits, eggplant etc. This experience made students understand the real situation of agriculture in Vietnam. It was not mechanized farming, but still managed by human hands. Vietnamese students from the department of agriculture presented their knowledge to the Japanese and to the other Vietnamese students. We faced strong sunshine, and a clear blue sky, with some occasional squall.






A variety of field research made students become aware of many facts that were considered usual by the Vietnamese students, but had been unheard of in the case of Chiba University students. These facts lead to new findings and the real information which students gathered through touching, sighting and hearing were transformed into future possibilities, foresights for a Vietnam produced out of the imagination of this younger generation. HCMC provided a lot of interesting realities: the large number of motorbikes, the ongoing construction of the subway, the high value of plastic greenhouses, and the export of low-value-added products.




**Agribusiness:**  
Farming near the window



Do you think that you need large farmland for farming? It's just image. You can start farming near the window of your house. This kit of private vegetable garden needs sunlight, water and liquefied manure, so it doesn't need soil. This is monitored and improved by many people on SNS. Each house has each window. To realize this project, it is essential thing to collect lots of data. Open source makes this project succeed. we are always consumer, but in this project, many people can relate to produce. It's important for them to connect consumer and producer.

VERSION 1.0

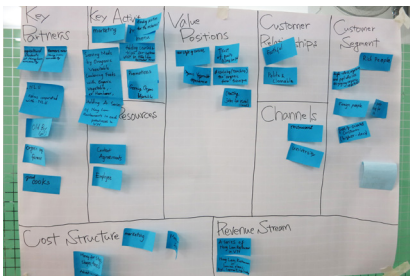


Add improvement to improve through open source

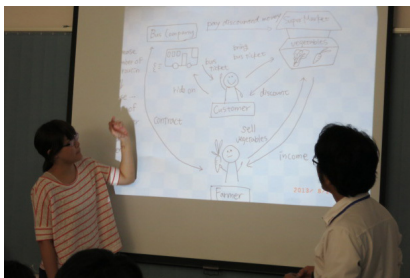
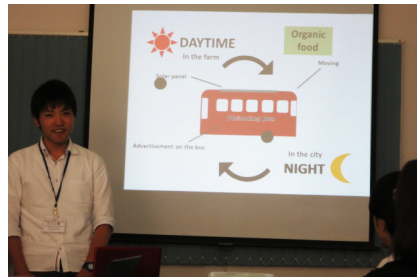
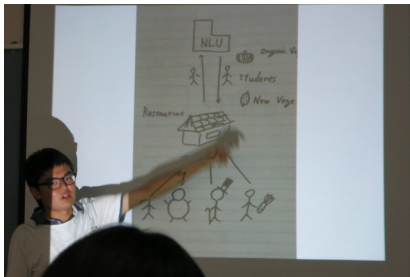


For their preliminary assignment, students made "material sheets" that described interesting topics related to three themes: agribusiness, business and regular life. They found 5 topics for each of the themes, by searching on the Internet, magazines and newspapers, and arranged them in an appealing manner, with a catchy title, pictures and short descriptions. Then every student selected approximately 10 from the total of 150 topics brought in by all students, and discussed these with his/her team. These discussions had the objective of extracting the reasons why these topics were deemed interesting enough to be selected. Each group then combined the different reasons discovered in the discussions and tried to come up with a new topic that was based on the combination of those reasons. In other words, combining into one topic the reasons, which had originally made distinct topics interesting, was a task that played the role of triggering the expansion of ideas beyond individual powers of imagination.





A lot of proposals were generated by the crossbreeding of two categories of ideas, which had been assembled and identified through the process described previously. The first category of ideas included aspects related to the present or future of Vietnam. The second category was composed of ideas found around the world and which currently seem extreme, but could become common in the future. Each student then voted for the best five ideas using four criteria: his/her own recommendation, social impact, recommendable to one's family, and feasibility. Using the number of votes as reference, each team decided on the idea that they would keep and present at the end of the program. Finally, a business model canvas was used to help students brush up and increase the feasibility of their ideas.



One team presented for example the idea of a "bus ticket" that could be used as discount coupon to buy local agriproducts. This proposal attempted to bring solutions to two problems faced by Vietnam today: one was to create the incentive to use public transport instead of motorbikes (and thus avoid environment pollution), and the second was to contribute to the economy of local agriculture.

At the end, each team presented their plan for a future agribusiness which they had developed throughout this program. Students were encouraged to focus on discussing their business model in teams, rather than spending time on preparing beautiful powerpoint presentations. As a result, one common characteristic of the presentations was that handwritten sketches often appeared several times on the presentation slides.





## Participants

### Chiba University

Tsuyoshi FUKIAGE (1)	Dream (Team)
Yumi HANDA (3)	Dream
Shunsuke KORIKAWA (1)	Candy
Taigo KURIYAMA (M1)	Balloon
Yike LEI (1)	Alien
Takuya NAGASAWA (3)	Dream
Natsumi OKUMOTO (1)	Balloon
Yusuke OTSUKI (3)	Balloon
Shun SAITO (M2)	Alien
Rika SATO (3)	Candy
Kanna YOSHIDA (3)	Candy

### Nong Lam University

Khanh HOANG DUC	Balloon
Vy HUYNH LE	Alien
Truong HUYNH NHAT	Alien
Thach NGUYEN NGOC	Dream
Vi NGUYEN TU	Candy
Anh NGUYEN TUYET	Dream
Hang TRAN NGOC DIEM	Dream
Phuong PHAM MINH	Alien
Manh PHAM NGUYEN	Candy
Thu PHAM THI MINH	Candy
Ngoc VUONG MINH	Balloon

