
Dialogue 2021

October 29th - November 1st

Yokohama National University and Vietnam National University

Table of contents

1. Introduction and timetable
2. Members
3. Preparation process
4. Presentation by VNU and YNU
5. Comments by professors



Introduction

The 2021 Dialogue in the Faculty of Economics at YNU saw students work with the students and professors at University of Economics and Business (UEB) which is one of the faculties of Vietnam National University (VNU). VNU is the top university in Vietnam. We are all so grateful that we successfully finished the program with them.

The topics were the economic and social impact of COVID-19 in each country. We discussed what we wanted to talk about and divided into two groups; Economic and Social. After about a half year of the preparation, we were ready to attend the Dialogue.

COVID-19 meant the sessions were conducted by ZOOM.

Timetable

Friday, October 29th

Japan 15:30 Vietnam 13:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Ceremony • Opening speech Dean Kiyotaka Sato, Faculty of Economics • VNU opening speech by Dr. Nguyen AnhThu (Vice-Rector)
Japan 15:40 Vietnam 13:40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Introductions • Small presentations about Yokohama and Hanoi
Japan 16:10 Vietnam 14:10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest lecture by VNU-UEB: “Leave no one behind: Vietnam's poverty reduction policies.” by Ms. Nguyen Bich Diep (PhD)
Japan 17:00 Vietnam 15:00 (Finish at 18:30/16:30)	<p><Dialogue Session></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Presentations • 1. Economic Impact of Covid-19 in Vietnam • 2. Economic Impact of Covid 19 in Japan • Q&A Discussion • Wrap up

Monday, November 1st

Japan 15:15 Vietnam 13:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest lecture by YNU: “Impacts of COVID-19 on Global Value Chains.” by Dr. Hiroshi Mukunoki
Japan 16:30 Vietnam 14:30 (Finish at 18:00/16:00)	<p><Dialogue Session></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Presentations • 3. Social Impact of Covid-19 in Japan • 4. Social Impact of Covid 19 in Vietnam • Q&A Discussion • Wrap up
Japan 18:00 Vietnam 16:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YNU closing speech Dean Kiyotaka Sato • VNU closing speech by Dr. Nguyen AnhThu (Vice-Rector)



Economic Group

Reflecting on my experience of the Dialogue

Yuka Shiraishi



I learned the importance of cooperation through the program.

At first, I did not know most of the members, so I was nervous. And I am not good at speaking and listening to English, so I had bigger worries than pleasures. However, as I talked with members, I got less nervous. We met once a week, and discussed the topics. We learned how we research the materials and how we make slides from professors. For me, it was difficult to find out the exact number. For example, the number of people who used “Go-To Travel” and how big the Economic ripple effect of the Tokyo Olympics was. I gave a lot of attention to using reliable sources. Also, I learned that too much information on one slide was not good. My members and professors gave me some advice when I made

slides. When we could accomplish the presentation slides, I wanted to appreciate members and professors. After we made slides, we practiced speech. I was not good at pronunciation, so I was extremely cautious about pronunciation. We practiced the presentation not only at the Tuesday meeting but also at every other opportunity.

At the Dialogue, I had a great time, and I learned a lot of things. It was difficult to understand what Vietnamese speakers said fully, but I tried to get information from them. After the economic group’s presentation, there were some questions. When I was asked the question by Vietnam students, I could not answer the question based on the data. I needed to research more. I felt the difficulty of debate. When I talked with some Vietnamese students and exchanged opinions, I was happy. I could know the situation in Vietnam, and I was interested in knowing other cultures. And I could not listen to speakers well at the Dialogue, so I wanted to improve my English skills. I have studied English conversation online every day from the first year through college. I want to continue the lesson and I want to speak English frequently someday.

Lastly, I want to appreciate everyone, I feel cooperating with each other is very important. I enjoyed the Dialogue because everyone helped me a lot. I had valuable experiences. Thank you very much.

Preparation

Sachiyo Shuto



There are many things that I learned through the experience of this Dialogue. One thing that I want to mention is the improvement of my skill for economic research. Since the beginning of May, my team members and I worked hard to find the best data and information about the economic situation in Japan during the pandemic. However, the pandemic has begun just a year ago and most policies were quite new, so searching for studies and articles was a lot harder than I thought it would be.

For example, I researched about the Tokyo Olympics when it was still not clear whether or not it would be held. Because the Olympics were scheduled for a year later, there were a lot of rumors, fake news and guesses on the internet. Moreover, as it was the first Olympics that was in

danger from an infectious disease, it was difficult to compare the numbers to the other Olympics. It ended in August, so I waited until the reliable data came out.

Working on the economic impact of the Covid-19 was challenging and doing everything in English was extra hard. However, I can say that it was such a great opportunity to learn academic terms in English that I would not come across if I had not joined. I got so much knowledge about Economics, too. Thanks to the professors, we got to check our presentation many times, so I could confidently talk in front of the Vietnamese students.

Overall, I enjoyed the Dialogue. Since I entered the university at the same time as the outbreak of Covid19, I had only a few experiences of interacting with foreign students. VNU students shared what their culture is like and asked us many questions about our life in Japan after we finished the discussion. I hope we will be able to meet face-to-face in the near future.

Reflection on an online study abroad program

Shuta Maeda



We were divided into economic groups and social groups and made presentations. I was on the economic group and gave an opinion on the economic impact payments in the US and Japan's second special cash payment.

First of all, I would like to talk about the reason why I decided to participate in this Dialogue. The reason I decided to participate was because I wanted to improve my English and use English practically. I was not good at speaking and listening in English. So it may feel reckless to attend the Dialogue in such a situation. But I took on the challenge of participating.

Next, I would like to introduce two of the most difficult things in the debate. One of the hardest things was about English. At first, even if I was asked a

question, I couldn't translate my opinion into English, which was a disappointing experience. But that disappointing experience made me feel like studying English further. In order to improve my English conversation skills, I had online English conversations and went to a place to talk to foreigners. Thanks to this, I can confidently say that my English ability has improved compared to before I participated in this Dialogue.

The second most difficult thing was that everything was online due to the influence of Covid-19. It was difficult to communicate with my colleagues online. Also, the timing of flipping slides at the time of presentation was difficult. I overcame this difficulty by practicing it many times.

As such, I encountered many difficulties in the English Dialogue. However, thanks to this difficulty, I learned the importance of "effort" and "cooperating with colleagues." I also felt that I could change things depending on my efforts. I would like to take advantage of this experience and continue to take on various challenges in the future.

English concerns

Keisuke Fukuzawa



My participation in this Dialogue in 2021 has made me realize that short-visit study abroad programs are activities that students who are not good at English should participate in. This is because I myself was a student who was not good at English. I believe that most people who are wondering whether to take this program have a certain level of interest in learning English or studying abroad. However, there are many people who are hesitant to participate in this program because they are concerned about whether or not their English skills are good enough. I believe that such students are better suited for this program.

The level of this program is certainly high. Among the students who participate, many speak fluent English. And all of them have good listening skills. In fact, I couldn't keep up with the speed of the

conversation at all. However, the experience of being in an environment full of such people is very beneficial. Most people may not be able to keep up with the conversations in English that are spoken as a matter of course at first. However, this is why you will receive a lot of stimulation. You will try to catch up with the level of the students around you, and you will be more motivated to study than ever before. And simply because the nature of the program requires you to speak English, you will have more opportunities to produce English.

One thing I can guarantee from my own experience is that the professors and other students will help you when you are in trouble. You will never be left alone. In short, this program is an excellent environment for learning English. It not only provides an opportunity to learn English, but it also motivates you to learn. For these reasons, I believe that this program should be taken by students who are not good at English, but have the desire to learn.

Social Group

The Preparation Process

Rei Kobayashi



This year, there were a lot of difficulties facing Dialogue programs, mainly because of the spread of Covid-19. When the team first met at school, we were not sure whether we could visit Vietnam. As time passed, the number of people infected with Covid-19 gradually increased both in Japan and Vietnam. While we were unable to meet face-to-face due to the Corona pandemic, we managed to prepare for the presentations through using convenient internet tools. For example, we mainly used google-drive for sharing documents and slides and Zoom for smooth conversation.

Moreover, we also tried to make discussion go efficiently in the limited time available through

making some rules. The first is that we always set a goal for our discussion. This rule enabled us to concentrate on the discussion that we are talking about. Second is that we introduce time allocation not to discuss lazily. Third is that we clarified what we needed to do before the next meeting. Deciding what we should do by the next meeting facilitated the start of the discussion. Due to the above measures and repeated presentation practices, we were able to complete all presentations on time.

In this process, I learned two things. The first point is that although there is a worldwide tendency to have meetings online, discussing face-to-face still has many positive merits. There were many difficulties in online meetings, such as loss of audio, intersection of conversation, and simple misunderstandings. I think online meetings should be used for the purpose for which they are intended. Secondly, I learned that it is important to acquire ability to be flexible. Under Covid-19 infections, we had no choice but to prepare in different ways than before. I thought that continuing to prepare in the way that I thought was best at the time would lead to flexibility. In this sense, I really enjoyed the Dialogue 2021 program.

The Dialogue Experience

Sakae Suzuki



I attended the Dialogue to increase the opportunities to use English originally. I was so nervous and I had no confidence when I spoke English. In this program, I had some opportunities to speak English. For example, I spoke English in a presentation and Q&A session. I was so nervous about answering the question from a Vietnamese student, but I could answer it and my group member said, "It was a good answer!" From this, I thought that not being nervous to speak English but being confident to speak is important. By participating in this program, I am less reluctant to speak English than before. I would like to speak the language more and make myself understood more accurately. In order to make myself understood correctly, I have to study more English words and remember many phrases. So, I will study English and practice speaking continuously. In the near

future, I want to meet the Vietnamese who attended the Dialogue in person and talk with them in English.

Also, I would like to study and research the loss of education and the inequality of education what I spoke about in the presentation of social impact on covid-19. At first, I was just interested in Japanese education. However, by preparing the presentation, I got more interest in education. I would like to retain interest in that in the future and I want to do something for that. As above, I can learn many things from the program, not only about English but also education.

In the future, I wanted to go to Vietnam for the Dialogue and experience Vietnamese culture, but I was also glad that I could get the opportunities to communicate with VNU students despite the covid crisis. It was a good opportunity that I worked for more than half of the year and took an endeavor to prepare the presentation in the Dialogue. I am very grateful that I was able to have such a valuable experience. I would like to make use of the program in other activities.

My impressions

Kanon Takemura



Through this program, I got a clue as to what I would like to do in the future. As I know the reality of socially vulnerable people from the actual data, I realized that socially vulnerable people are suffering from the effect of Covid-19 more terribly than society as a whole. I also think about daily life before the pandemic and became aware of the problem of how to change the reality that people are deprived of remarkable opportunities due to external factors such as disability, gender, and economic environment that they cannot control by themselves. In particular, I felt threatened by the fact that people are deprived of employment opportunities and social connections. I wanted to create a system that would allow the socially vulnerable to stand on the same starting line as others and continue to play an active role in the organization. I would like to contribute to solving this problem by combining econometrics and data science, which I am currently

studying at the undergraduate level, with behavioral design, which I plan to study abroad.

Another thing I experienced thanks to this program is expressing myself in English, rather than just speaking English. I've been wanting to study abroad, however, it's not easy to keep motivated and find opportunities to practice conveying my idea in English consistently. The Dialogue is the place I can share various ideas with enthusiastic students in both English and Japanese so that I can stay motivated and practice English before applying for the exchange program YNU offers. I could learn how to handle the economic terms in English and how to communicate with students with different backgrounds. Now I can imagine myself learning abroad more clearly and I am more enthusiastic to study abroad.

Reflections on the Dialogue

Kiho Yoshioka



In the Dialogue, I belonged to the social group. I searched about the impact of the Covid-19 especially on female workers. Through the discussion, I learned that there are more and deeper things which we can know only from actual (even online) discussion with friends. I want to explain about this from two viewpoints.

Firstly, during the preparation period, I learned a lot from the discussion with the professors and team members. It was the first time for me not only to give an academic presentation about economics but also to talk about academic things with teachers and friends in person. This is because in the pandemic situation we couldn't take classes at university and ask questions and discuss easily in the classroom. My attitude toward taking class was a

very passive one. However, in the Dialogue, we set a theme, researched the data, and prepared the slides and script by ourselves with the kind support of teachers. The self-research and information shared by team members broadened my horizon and I got more interested in what is occurring in society. I will take a stance from which I can realize the problems around me.

Second is the discussion with students from Vietnam. I knew the situation under the pandemic in Vietnam before the Dialogue was that they suffered from the rapid increase in numbers of infected people partly due to the late distribution of vaccine. I have never imagined the recovery of GDP growth rate and the resilience of the industrial structure of Vietnam's economy. It cannot be learned from the daily TV news. At the same time, I was surprised at the high quality of presentation by VNU students. They used many economic terms which sometimes I have never heard. From the real dialogue, I thought I should learn English more, the world affairs, and also, economics itself. I got motivated from the presentation and the discussion.

I am very happy to be able to do economic discussion with friends from other countries and realize we can learn even in this hard situation. I am very grateful for such a wonderful opportunity. I would like to say thank you for all who cooperated to hold the Dialogue.

The Preparation Process

The preparation process for Economics

Yuka Shiraishi

The Dialogue this year was held online. We had an interaction with Vietnam National University. Our preparation started from April, and the Dialogue with VNU students was on October 29th and November 1st. First, we chose Economics or Social and we made a group. Our group decided to research the economic impact of Covid-19. We gathered our opinions, but we were worried that there might be less previous research related to Covid-19. We conducted research on some topics, and we selected the topics based on Japanese unique policies. We decided to take a survey related to “Go To Travel”, “Special Cash Payment” and “2020 Tokyo Olympics”.

Second, we divided the task respectively. We learned how to get information from teachers because we needed reliable sources for academic presentation. Therefore, when we research the topics, we were very careful of the source. It was difficult to find out the exact number. For example, the number of people who used “Go To Travel” and how big the Economic ripple effect by Tokyo Olympics was. However, we researched a lot, and we used the

information from formal sites. We wanted to know the real voice around us, so we did a survey. We were thankful to the people who answered the questionnaire.

Third, we had presentation rehearsal three times among the members. Before the first presentation rehearsal, we made slides. When we made slides, we learned how to make easy-to-grasp slides. Too much information on one slide was not good, and a simple slide was good. At the first presentation rehearsal, our group made the slides respectively, so we did not understand each progress. Therefore, before the second presentation, we communicated with each other more, and we checked the progress. Not only the usual session among the members of the Dialogue, but also other opportunity, we practiced the presentation and we made better slides. Moreover, Professor McAulay and Professor Parsons helped us a lot.

In conclusion, I learned the importance of cooperation through the preparation for the Dialogue. When we make the one thing, we need to communicate with each other frequently, and adequate role allotment is also necessary. I want to thank team members, Professors and VNU members.

The preparation process for Social

Kanon Takemura

This year, the given topic was ‘Covid-19.’ During the first few weeks in May, we searched for various kinds of papers and articles on Covid-19 not only in Japanese but English. We gradually found out that socially vulnerable people might be affected by Covid-19 more terribly than the general public, and we decided to focus on the effect on socially vulnerable people of Covid-19. Each of the social members was in charge of a different group; elderly people, children, women, and disabled people, which are regarded as having high social vulnerability on the Covid-19 Community Vulnerability Index defined by CDC, Centers for Disease Control and Preservation in the U.S. We considered the impact of COVID-19 on those four groups of vulnerable people from multiple perspectives. For example, one member considered the difficulties of the elderly people, in terms of both nursing care provider and user. Another member considered the impact of COVID-19 on disabled people, from two points of view; health care access and social connection.

After we decided our own part and what perspectives we focused on, we started making a presentation slide. In this phase, we improved our presentation by referring to the original data, choosing one topic per slide, and adjusting the speaking speed. We also learned how to tell correlation and causation. In addition to this, we learned the way to argue facts and opinions separately. Aside from presentation skills, we learned the cultural differences in a discussion. We have to give an opinion as soon as possible after one person argued. We were not used to stating ideas just after someone shares opinions, so we practiced it in our weekly meeting.

By the end of August, we finished making the presentation roughly. We improved it, getting feedback from teachers and Economic team members. Also, we prepared for the Q&A session by making anticipated questions and practiced answering them.

The contents of presentation

The VNU guest lecture

Rei Kobayashi

On October 29, 2021 we took part in the Dialogue with Vietnam National University. After a self-introduction session, we had a guest lecture by Ms. Nguyen Bich Diep. “Leave no one behind: Vietnam's poverty reduction policies” was the title and she spoke from the perspective of “no poverty,” one of the 17 sustainable development goals of the SDGs set by the United Nations.

First of all, Ms. Nguyen provided data the current state of poverty in Vietnam. The extreme poverty rate in 1993 was 52% and was reduced by 50% in 2016. Most people in Vietnam have access to child education and medical treatment, and good housing quality. On the other hand, they still do not have enough adult education and health insurance. Though some basic services like health insurance are lagging, the rate on a yearly basis has been decreasing sharply, so I hope that everyone in Vietnam will be able to access basic services soon.

Next, she told us about poverty reduction policies conducted by the Vietnamese government. After 1986, “Doi Moi,” which means renovation, was conducted. This measure included transformation into market economy and integration into the

world economy and had high pro-poor growth. For example, as GDP grew 1%, the poverty rate reduced by 0.76% in the period of 1993 to 2004. Moreover, a 1.63% reduction in same condition was achieved in the period of 2010 to 2016. Ms. Nguyen told us that Vietnam’s anti-poverty strategies are in the phase of sustainable poverty reduction. In current phase, there were four main categories for policies of poverty reduction. For example, one of the categories was infrastructure. Thanks to these measures, 99% of commune centers have electricity and 15,000 infrastructure projects were put into use between 2016 and 2020.

The presentation ended by highlighting the recipe for Vietnam’s success. “Program monitoring and progress reporting” was the most impressive recipe. This is because I think that whenever we tackle something, it is important to review what we did and make use of the experience next time.

Ms. Nguyen spoke in detail so that people who never heard of Vietnam could understand from beginning to end. It was a fascinating experience to hear Vietnam’s situation from an economic approach.



Presentation on Economics by VNU

Shuta Maeda

VNU's economic presentation was focused on Vietnam's economic situation during the pandemic, from 2020 to 2021. They talked about (1) Vietnam's GDP growth rate (2) Covid-19 employment crisis in Vietnam (3) Vietnam's trade balance and foreign exchange rate (4) FDI inflows in Vietnam (5) Vietnam's economic perspective and stabilization policies.

Among these topics, one of the matters I thought was serious is the employment crisis. Due to Covid-19, the underemployment rate increased up to 2.98% from 1.19%. Also, it seems that the work of young people was greatly influenced. The younger the generation, the more people wanted to work but couldn't get a job. I think these matters are not only Vietnam matters but also in other countries, including Japan. However, the situation varies from country to country, so it was a meaningful discussion to know the situations and the policies in Vietnam.



The VNU presentation was informative and helped us put the economic effects of the pandemic in global perspective. I was impressed with the research ability, professional presentation skills, and high English competence of my Vietnamese peers.

The presentation on economic aspects

Keisuke Fukuzawa

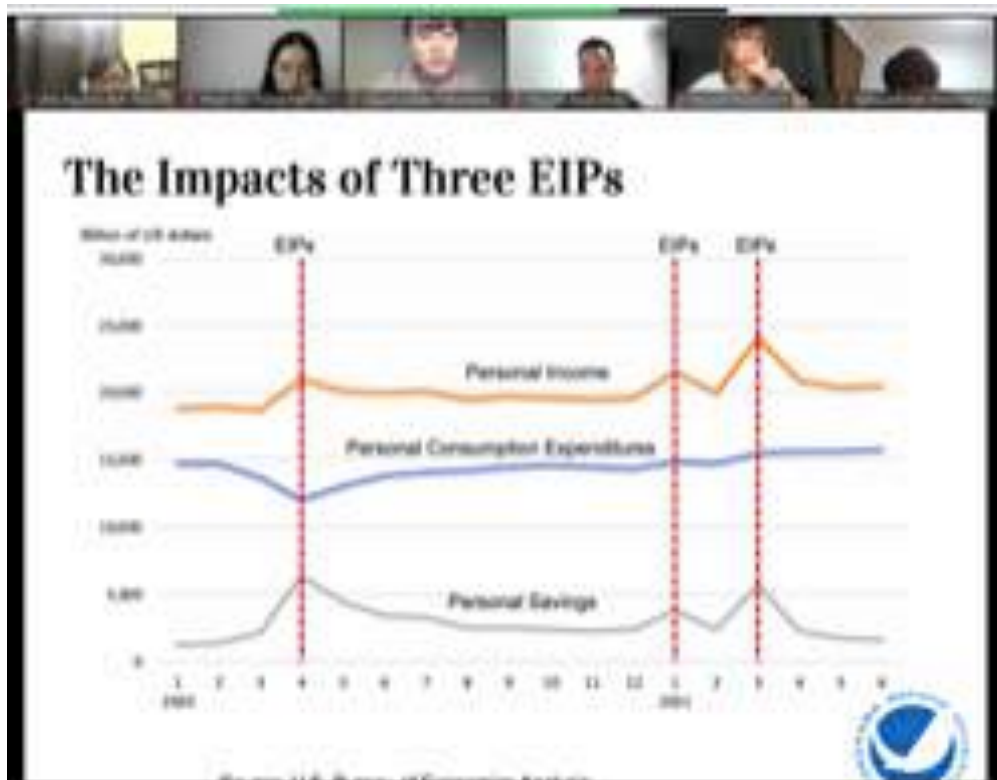
The economic team of Yokohama National University focused on the specific policies implemented by Japan in response to Covid-19 and researched their economic effects. The main focus was on the "Go To Campaign" and the "Special Cash Payments". Finally, we also introduced the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

First, let me outline about the Go To Campaign. This was done to support the tourism and restaurant industries, which have been hit hard, and to stimulate Japanese people to spend more. There were four categories of this campaign, but we did a detailed study on Go To Travel, which had the largest economic impact. People who used it were able to stay in hotels at lower prices and spend less on airfare and other transportation costs. The amount of economic support amounted to at least 4.9 billion yen, and this policy was recognized as having been instrumental in the recovery of Japan's economic situation.

Next, I will consider the Special Cash Payments. This is a policy that provides a cash benefits of \$909 to all Japanese citizens. This was done to stimulate consumption and to support deprived households. According to a study conducted by a private research institute, the economic impact of this policy was about 3.45 trillion yen. However, considering the size of the budget allocated for this policy, the cost-effectiveness was considered to be low. Similarly, in the U.S., where cash benefits were implemented, the benefits were used for savings, not consumption, and could not be said to have helped stimulate the economy. Therefore, the conclusion was drawn that lowering the value-added tax rate would be a better way to stimulate the economy instead of providing cash benefits.

Lastly, we looked at the Tokyo Olympics. Originally, it was expected to generate a large amount of consumption and employment, but due to the pandemic, it was decided that there would be no spectators, so there was no purchase of tickets or consumption of food, drink or accommodation. As a result, while the economic ripple effect of the Olympics was \$15.1 billion, the economic loss was estimated at \$19.9 billion. It can be said that Japan faced a great economic loss due to Covid-19.

We were able to present smoothly and received an encouraging response from the audience. We had a sense of satisfaction about our achievements.



The guest lecture by Professor Mukunoki Sachiyo Shuto

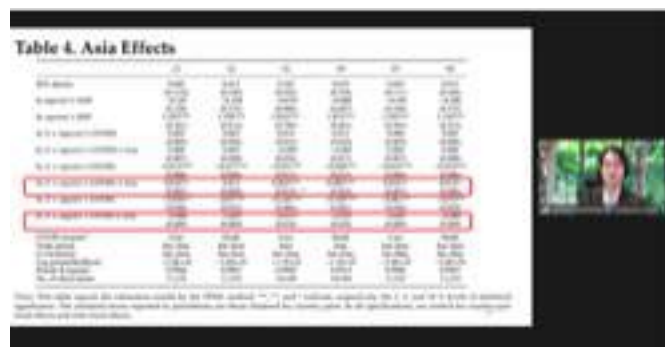
Dr. Hiroshi Mukunoki conducted a lecture on “Impacts of Covid-19 on Global Value Chains.” I will briefly summarize what he taught us.

Various effects have been witnessed. For example, a Japanese affiliate in Mexico is forced to switch the input sources from China to South Korea. Also, the decrease of imports from China decreased production in ASEAN countries. Because of the troubles in importing from Asian countries, a Japanese firm switched the input source to domestic suppliers. The delay of imports from China and Malaysia stagnated production in Indonesia. As Covid-19 expand around the world, people’s earnings dropped due to the loss of jobs by lockdown measures. Moreover, less mobility in retail led to the aggregate of the importing country going down. The productivity of suppliers has dropped, and the supplies of parts have decreased.

Dr. Mukunoki showed us the mathematical formula of the empirical framework and then broke it down into three parts; output effect, demand effect and supply-chain effect. A graph of “Trend of Trade in 2020 Relative to Trade in 2019” described the decrease of the machinery trade. It was 30% lower in May 2020 compared to June 2020. The table of “Robustness Checks”

described the economic impact on imports in the pandemic and compared the Covid measure during trade period and the Covid period. In the end, he explained the largest negative impact on trade which is found in supply chain effect.

Dr. Mukunoki’s lecture was engrossing and insightful. It provided many talking points for our discussions with our Vietnamese partners.



The image shows a screenshot of a presentation slide titled "Table 4. Asia Effects". The table contains data for various countries, likely comparing trade or economic indicators before and after the pandemic. The table is partially obscured by a video player interface on the right side, which shows a small video feed of a person. The table has several columns and rows, with some rows highlighted in red.

The Social presentation by YNU Kiho Yoshioka

In the social presentation, we analyzed the influence of the Covid-19 from the viewpoint of four social groups: elderly people, children, women, and disabled people. This is because we thought by narrowing down the target based on social vulnerability, we got able to know the potential impact of the Covid-19 which doesn’t appear in the financial figures.

The first topic was the impact of the Covid-19 on elderly people. To prevent the infection, the nursing care offices which support the increased number of elderly by providing the nursing care service, closed nationwide. Some of the users also voluntarily refrain from using care-related service. These problems will result in the decreased chance of doing activities for the elderly, and the disfunction of the certification process of the nursing care.

Secondly, we presented the impact on children. All children lost opportunities to get education in the pandemic because of the school closure policy. They had to move to the online education. However, there were those who couldn't shift easily because they didn't have enough money to prepare good internet environment and didn't have the adequate devices with which some of the private schools provide students. These children couldn't get a good quality of online lecture.

The next was the impact on female workers. The gender gap in terms of economy is one of the big issues in Japan. However, the speed of widening was accelerated by the spread of the Covid-19. There are three factors which have made job opportunities for women worse. The first one is demand in the services industries and sales industries decreased whose sectors employ relatively high numbers of women. The second factor is non-regular

employment which were easily cut due to the hard business situation. The third factor is that e-commerce and telework get more and more popular, which need physically strength and are mostly occupied with men.

Lastly, we gave the presentation about the situation of the people with disabilities. Disabled people were suffering from many factors even before the pandemic. Social distancing policy made it harder the daily life of them. For example, blind people cannot ask shop staff to guide them, and the hearing-impaired has trouble with communication which is confounded by the wearing masks. Furthermore, most of the physically disabled people at home are aged over 65, so these people are susceptible to the infection both for the disabilities and for their age.

Social impact is more difficult to measure, compared with economic impact. However, by paying more attention to the social group, we realized due to the spread of the Covid-19, the potential social problems got revealed and spotlighted, such as the vulnerability of the nursing care service, the limited use of ICT education, the relatively high percentage of non-regular employment, and the existing difficulties of disabled people. No doubt these are just examples.

The Social presentation by VNU

Sakae Suzuki

They firstly showed us a video about the Vietnamese social and economic impact on covid-19. They explained the Vietnamese social impact from the viewpoint of “lifestyle” and “education and working”. First, they spoke about the increase of Internet use during the time issued social distancing measures by the government. The number of people who used the Internet, and the time using the Internet have increased. Also, the number of visiting websites such as Google and YouTube were increased. Online games were prevailed and have been played widely in Vietnam. In regard to the off the Internet lifestyle, during the pandemic, they have chosen to stay at their home. They spent their time cooking and decorating their home. Before the pandemic, they have little time to stay with their family but they could spend time with their family by refraining from going out. The way of shopping was changed by the covid-19. Only 18% of Vietnamese used online shopping before the pandemic, but after the pandemic, 43% of them have used online shopping. They bought food most through online, and e-commerce has been spread.

Second, they explained about the online education conducted during the school closure. Vietnamese online education had many

shortcomings such as quality of education and teaching method. Vietnamese think that equipping the stable and speedy Internet is important for effective online classes. Also, they spoke about their working. In Vietnam, there were many problems about this, for example, unemployment and no income during the pandemic. Many people and many sectors were affected seriously. During the lock-down period, they worked remotely. Although some disliked the remote work because they could not concentrate on their work, others enjoyed the remote work since they could work comfortably and save their time to go to the office.

As above, in Vietnam, the Covid-19 epidemic not only affects the health but also the society. It changed the way they live and the way they work. However, the covid-19 accelerates the digital transformation such as games, online shopping, online learning, and remote work.





Comments by professors

Reflections on an Online Dialogue

Professor Alexander McAulay



In 2021, the Dialogue with University of Economics and Business at Vietnam National University was held in unprecedented circumstances. The international education program in the Faculty of Economics, ‘Global Studies in Economics,’ has in peak years run four shorter term study abroad (including Dialogue) programs. There is the summer intensive at University of Edinburgh, and Euro-Japan Dialogue at two European campuses, most recently in Croatia and Slovenia in 2019. The

Dialogue hosts one or two Chinese partners, and finally, GAEF carries out intensive project-based learning with an overseas collaborator, which saw us go to Poland in 2019. In 2021, the crippling pandemic meant that the online exchange with VNU was our only Dialogue, which gives some indication of our much-reduced circumstances under Covid-19. We started the academic year in April with hopes that we would be able to

visit Hanoi and then host out VNU partners in Yokohama, but it quickly became apparent that online was our only option.

With so much uncertainty around, one cannot criticize students who do not sign up for study abroad programs at the beginning of the academic year. Having said that, the eight students who did sign up deserve respect and gratitude for taking the bold and courageous step of committing to the Dialogue while still unsure how the program would pan out. As the short articles in this report show, the students have reaped the rewards of that decision, managing to accrue benefits in terms of academic skills and knowledge, as well cross-cultural communication experience.

I have been taking students on short-visit study abroad trips since 2008. A paper soon to appear in *Economia* details how many students have reflected on these sojourns as a ‘life-changing experience.’ I did wonder when we started the Dialogue in April 2021 whether or not a similar impact could be achieved. I think it is important to state clearly that the online experience of study abroad is not equivalent to visiting the overseas location. If you go to Vietnam, you see and hear the country, but you also taste, smell and touch it. The students I have taken abroad in the past have an academic experience, but also a social one, and a touristic one. No online exchange can match that, and

we have to be wary of any claim that says it can. Such claims will be made with a view to cost-cutting and nothing else.

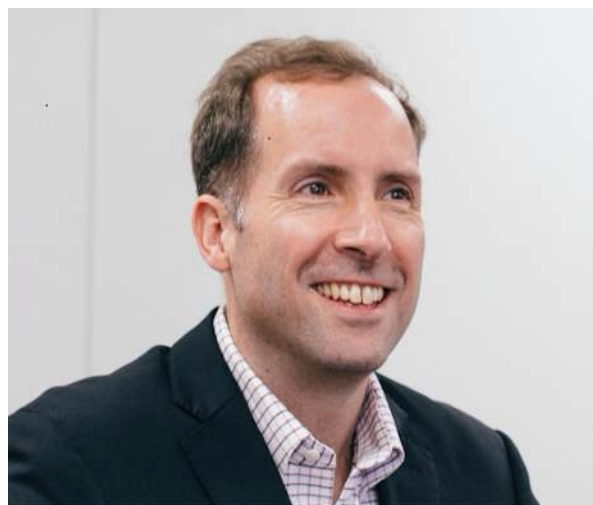
The real question then is: How much can be achieved in online exchange? Reflecting on the Dialogue with VNU, my honest answer is, ‘More than I thought possible.’ During the preparation, I was impressed by the level of research and commitment from the cohort. Their efforts more than matched any previous cohort who had the guarantee of traveling abroad. When the exchange took place, they engaged fully with the process, presenting to a high standard and making strenuous efforts during the hardest part of any Dialogue, the discussion that takes place post-presentation. In the critical reflection session and in this report, the students show they have absorbed the learning points and I feel confident they will build on them in the future. More than anything else, my one hope for this exemplary cohort is that they get the opportunity to use what they have learned on the global stage at some point.

At times I confessed to Professor Parsons, who ran the program with me, that I had a tinge of regret that we could not take this cohort overseas. That sentiment is testimony to the confidence and belief that they generated through their outstanding efforts. The pandemic is a tragedy but one of varying degrees. As a middle-aged man in academia, I am hardly

impacted by Covid-19, but the current generation of university students are affected far more harshly than anyone else. I find myself thinking how I would have reacted had a hole been punched in two years of my undergraduate experience. Would I have had the resilience and foresight to sign up for a virtual exchange in a foreign language? Whatever happens post-pandemic, I will always find the memory of the character of the Dialogue 2021 cohort extremely moving.

We are grateful to Dr. Nguyen Xuan Dong and his colleagues at VNU. Their collegiality, professionalism and meticulous preparation helped us achieve all our aims for the Dialogue. Their insight helps us going forward as we try to improve the experience of YNU undergraduates engaging in academic English exchange online with their peers. The 2022 Dialogue will once again take place with Vietnam. We hope to arrange reciprocal visits, but if that is not possible, the VNU Dialogue gives us a formidable framework to make the online exchange experience enriching and rewarding.

The Dialogue and the YNU Alumni Network Professor Craig Parsons



This year I had the great pleasure to join the Dialogue from beginning to end. Though it spanned two semesters, it seemed over just when the students had found their “groove” and things were coming together. This is not to say a lot was not accomplished. I was able to see the students mature so much, not only linguistically, but across the board (greater awareness of economic and social issues, greater awareness of good data and data use, and so much more.) As Prof. McAulay remarked elsewhere, it truly was a shame that the students could not travel to Vietnam (and vice versa) and interact with their international counterparts outside of the classroom. Such was the price of Covid this year. But the students certainly made the most of it, and they really took the topic and the Dialogue to heart. I was very impressed with the gains made and

hope I can be a part of it again next year.

This Dialogue was also special in that this year's partner was Vietnam National University-UEB and its students. VNU-UEB is one of the top universities in Vietnam. We could really see the caliber of the students (which was matched by our own) there. VNU-UEB and YNU

Economics forged an important partnership several years ago and this partnership has been cemented and continued by the excellent working relationship we have with their Vice-Rector (Dr. Nguyen Anh Thu) and several of their faculty, including Dr. Nguyen Dong Xuan, who expertly led his students in the two days of the Dialogue. Both Profs. Anh Thu and Dong Xuan received their MA and PhD degrees from YNU Economics, so it was wonderful to welcome them back, albeit virtually, to YNU. Thank you for all your hard work!

We also had the great fortune of having Prof. Hiroshi Mukunoki as the guest speaker on the YNU side. Dr. Mukunoki is a Professor at Gakushuin University in Tokyo, but his undergraduate degree was from YNU-Economics as well. He thoroughly enjoyed the chance to "give back" to YNU Economics. We were very fortunate that he could share some of his recent, frontier research on the effects of Covid-19 on Global Value Chains. We could not have found a more appropriate guest speaker for this year's topic. While I certainly hope next year's Dialogue can involve international

and in-person meetings, everyone made the most of this year's Dialogue. Many valuable lessons were learned which will make next year's that much more successful, regardless of the format. Looking forward to it!