I. INTRODUCTION

Field trip is one of the most useful learning that provides student understanding problems (environmental pollution, culture, society...) as well as touching the reality life especially in rural areas of developing countries. With that purposes, we had gone to Vietnam from 9th to 18th, March 2006 and had many useful activities for studying and researching.

II. ACTIVITIES AND LESSONS IN TAM GIANG LAGOON AND HONG HA COMMUNE

Tam Giang lagoon runs along the coast of Thua Thien Hue Province, Vietnam, has an area of 22,000 hectares and a length of more than 60 km. Tam Giang Lagoon provides a livelihood, directly or indirectly to about 300,000 inhabitants of 326 villages in 31 communes around the lagoon. Those people who operate fishing gear in the lagoon are both fishermen and farmers. In recent years, aquaculture has expanded rapidly. Fishermen who had traditional access rights to specific areas of the lagoon, such as the fish-trap corral owners have enclosed those areas with nets. In conclusion with commune government representatives, they have been able to secure exclusive rights for aquaculture. Net-enclosures and ponds have proliferated in the middle and south of the lagoon, while shrimp ponds fish pens have rapidly expanded in the northern part. The number of households participating in aquaculture and the number of aquaculture facilities such as fish culture pens per household have also increased rapidly in the last three years. This wave of lagoon privatization has reduced open-access lagoon areas and widened the disparity between those who have enclosed the lagoon and thus have easy access to lagoon resources, and those who were excluded from their traditional fishing grounds. Small-scale, mobile fishers have become increasingly marginalized as resources came under more direct control by the wealthier users or user groups in the community. At present, the natural resources of the lagoon are showing signs of stress mainly as a result of over-exploitation. Therefore, most of people there meet difficulties in earning living, especially the marginalized fishers (the mobile fishing groups). They are classified into the poorest category under the poverty alleviation programs of government. They have to practice fishing further due to the fact that fishing ground is lost or narrowed and aquatic resources become exhausted. In addition, their living condition has also changed. In the past, they lived in the lagoon using the boat as their home. However, recently they have settled on the land, so their also meet many difficulties in the new condition. This made the life of marginalized fishers more and more difficult. Otherwise, we also saw that shrimp
Farming takes a great toll on local environments namely:
- Pollution of surrounding ecosystems and agricultural land
- Reduction of local water supplies
- Depletion of wild fish stocks on which local people rely.

Hong Ha commune is a place where Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry is taking place a project with name “The community-based Upland natural resources management program”. Hong Ha commune is located 40km from Hue city on the main road to the A Luoi district center. It is an area of steep upland, representative of the topography of the upland of central Vietnam. Hong Ha which is one of the 2000 poorest communes in the country and one of 16 poor communes in A Luoi district, there are now different groups of the ethnic minority people living together.

One of the results in project implementation was to create a multi-disciplinary team. Project also used tools of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Farmer Participatory Research (FPR), Participatory Technology Development (PTD) and Participatory Monitoring an Evaluation (PM&E) and the results were more readily and widely adopted by ethnic minorities who has low education and live isolated in the upland. Another result is to build confidence between the research group and the farmers (in other words, that is community-based approach) and the project created conditions for ethnic minorities to have contact with outside communities, provide training and build confidence to make decisions about changing their production systems. Last result is to give a food security and agricultural production for community. For example, after 2 years project implementation, wetland rice yields were increased from 1,9-2,0 tons/ha to 2,7 – 4,3 tons/ha per crop. Cassava yields was increased from 3,0 tons/ha to 7,0 tons/ha.

III. CONCLUSION

After one week in Vietnam, although the time is short but we have gone to many places and contacted with many people. We knew more about agricultural development policy, environmental protection policy, rural development policy of Vietnam’s Government as well as saw many problems about environmental pollution, difficult and isolated life of ethnic minorities community in upland and unsettled life of coastal region resident, conservation of mangrove forest process….Through this field trip, I had an opportunity to study and approach with rural life, meet local people and see what happen to them, how difficulty they are facing, how they solve, use and manage natural resources, how they participate in social issues and rural development program, how their effort to protect clearly environment and built a life richer…. 

References
Le Van An, 2003. A summary of the research project on “Community-based upland natural resources management in Hong Ha, Hue, Vietnam".