



WORKSHOP

WS09

International Social Work Student Exchange: Facilitating Good Practice, Reciprocity, and Mutual Benefit

Organized by Debra Miles, Nonie Harris, Peter Jones, James Cook University, Australia

The purpose of this interactive workshop is to promote conversations and generate ideas around good practice in International Social Work Student Exchange with a particular focus on concepts of reciprocity and mutual benefit for students and faculty of both travelling and host institutions and organisations. These concepts and others are emerging from the 'Going Places' research project which aims to document, analyse, develop and disseminate exemplary practices in International Student Exchange in the Asia Pacific. Participants in this workshop will have an opportunity to share experiences, critique perceptions and assumptions, offer critical comment and reflections on emerging data and contribute to the understanding of themes and phenomenon. The workshop is designed as a scaffolded interaction with participants, through three tiers of engagement. Firstly organisers will share the background to, and emerging themes from, the 'Going Places' research project. The presentation will proceed from the premise that International Social Work requires graduates who are prepared to work across cultures, in a range of contexts, with a sound understanding of the social, economic and political factors that impact on community wellbeing. Incorporating international student exchange as part of University studies is one means of promoting the international skills of graduates, enhancing their abilities to work across cultures and to work with those who hold different cultural assumptions (Gothard, Downey & Gray, 2012). The organisers will present a case study based on early research findings that exemplifies the issues raised above but which also highlights the risks associated with such programs, such as the potential for international student exchange programs to operate unidirectional initiatives from the Global North that lack reciprocity (Nuttman-Schwartz & Berger, 2012) and reinforce colonial assumptions and "professional imperialism" (Gray 2005, p. 235). Following this initial presentation, participants will be invited to reflect on the emerging themes, share experiences, and explore alternative understandings of the data, in small interactive and collaborative groups. In the final session of the workshop organisers will present the outcomes of the small group work undertaken by participants in a collaborative plenary session thus providing opportunity for ongoing discussion and network building. The implications for good practice and mutually beneficial international social work student exchange will be elucidated as outcomes of the workshop. The manner in which international student exchanges take place raises significant issues for the social work profession, social work educators and educators from other tertiary disciplines seeking to foster truly reciprocal, ethically sound and mutually beneficial relationships with partner institutions. "Promoting Dignity and Worth" is relevant for higher education institutions and particularly social work educators as they seek to develop and embed appropriate curriculum and learning experiences that reflect social work values and professional ethics. Organisers envisage this workshop will be of interest to social work educators involved in organising international exchanges or in hosting exchange students. Students and practitioners who have engaged in international exchange opportunities will also offer great insight as will practitioners who support students involved in diverse international social work activity.

Nonie Harris, Ines Zuchowski, Abraham Francis, James Cook University, Australia

Title: Setting the scene: overview of the Going Places project, early findings and themes.

Synopsis: This session will share the background to and emerging themes from the Going Places project. Starting with an overview of current practice in Australia and the Indo Pacific Region in relation to international social work student exchange, the presentation will then explore the emerging themes and issues around exchange, with a focus on the tensions and dilemmas in achieving good practice.

Piyachat Dhephasadin Na Ayudhaya, Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University, Thailand

Fr. George Puthantharayil Thomas, De Paul Institute of Science & Technology, India

Julie King, Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Title: Tensions and dilemmas illustrated: a case study of student exchange.

A case study will be presented based on the early findings of the Going Places project. The case study will exemplify the tensions in exchange, including the risks associated with exchange, the potential for exchange programs to operate as unidirectional initiatives from the Global North that lack reciprocity (Nuttman-Schwartz & Berger, 2012) and to reinforce colonial assumptions and "professional imperialism". Using a case study to illustrate the scenarios that occur during an exchange, participants will be asked to reflect on the themes, share experiences and visualise alternative futures.

Debra Miles, Peter Jones, Narayan Gopalkrishnan, Elise Howard, James Cook University, Australia

Title: Future directions: Implications for Good Practice

Drawing together participant collaborative reflections on the data, the presenters will explore the implications for good practice and map out future directions. Opportunities for ongoing discussion and network building will be explored.