

**Relationship-based practice: Promoting the Importance of Human Relationships**

S011-OR-06

**Relationship-building and reciprocity as foundations for sustainability in international student mobility**P. Jones\*, D. Miles<sup>1</sup><sup>1</sup>James Cook University, Townsville, Australia

**Abstract:** Relationship-building and reciprocity are key aspects of international student mobility, but they have been given little attention in the social work literature. International mobility, in the form of both field placements and short-term study experiences, is an increasingly common and valued dimension of Australian social work education. Interest in such initiatives has been facilitated by the availability of government financial support for student travel through programs such as 'Asia-Bound' and the New Colombo Plan (NCP), which focus on travel to the Asia-Pacific. The benefits of such intercultural opportunities seem clear, and have been noted in the literature (Bell & Anscombe, 2012). However, significant critiques of such programs also exist, often highlighting the uni-directional nature of such travel, and the potential for mobility projects involving travel from the Global North to the Global South to reproduce and perpetuate unequal, colonialist relationships (Razack, 2009).

The 'Going Places' research project was funded by the Australian Office of Learning and Teaching (OLT) to explore the issue of international student exchange in Australian social work education, with a research team drawn from institutions in Australia, India and Thailand. The project involved interviews, focus groups and workshops with Australian academics and students, as well as with host institutions in a number of Asia Pacific nations. Drawing on findings from this research project, as well as the authors' own experience in developing and facilitating international mobility projects, this presentation identifies the lack of attention given to building sustainable and reciprocal relationships as a significant barrier to developing an ethical approach to international student mobility. As a response to this issue, the authors present evidence-based guidelines for better practice, and an example of their own efforts to build sustainable, reciprocal and ethical mobility relationships.

**Disclosure of Interest:** None Declared

**Keywords:** International exchange, International relationships, Reciprocity