



Social work education crossing the borders: a field education programme for international internship

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ABSTRACT

The demand for setting international social work education standards are on the rise. The increased prospects of global exchange in teaching learning process initiated by different international universities, as a part of their agenda for international collaboration and cross cultural immersion in the profession are major impetuses for the same. Social work interns who participated in international exchanges appreciated the need for knowledge of global priorities and strategies to advance social work education, research and skill development for practice which also has lead to future collaboration between the institutions in these areas. But there are many challenges for the intern as well as the institutions involved, which should be integrated during different phases of the exchange process. This requires meticulous planning from the part of host institution. This paper focus on the need for international social work, the challenges involved in international internship and the process and content of field education provided to the international students based on experience of the author. The intention of the paper is to propose a general model of international field education, which may be mutually shared and agreed by the home institution as well as the host institution.

KEYWORDS

Social work education; international social work; international field education programme; international internship

The social work profession has many commonalities across the globe. Although indigenization has increased in the adoption of varied methods in response to the local problems, globalization has strengthened the professional's awareness of common issues and increased opportunities for communication and exchange, which helps in providing alternatives and choices for practice (Healy, 2008). Global standards for Social Work Education and Training (2004) were adopted by International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) in recognition of these commonalities. Though the emphasis and the core value remains the same in each profession; the cultural sensitivity as well as the influence of social environment in assessment, diagnosis and treatment demands adoption of unique local patterns. It is important to consider international field placements, as it provides a cross-cultural learning experience for the participants and prepares them for international practice. The participants of international field placements get an opportunity to understand different systems of social welfare and also the difference

in approaches to the same problems which they are confronting or likely to confront in their local situations. This paper focuses on the need and importance of international social work exposure programmes, its' challenges, as well as the process and content of field education provided to the international students based on experiences of the author. The purpose of the paper is to propose a model of international field education which may be useful for academicians, administrators and the interns, who are interested in the same. The proposed model is based on the experiences of the author in guiding the international interns in a post graduate programme offered by one of the schools of social work in India. This is a general model which can be useful for the students who aspire for an international placement as well as for the institutions which are preparing their students for the international placements. Host institutions will also gain from the article, as they need to prepare themselves for helping the international students to gain professionally. As this proposed model only gives a general framework of action, the success of the international exchange programme depends a lot on innovations of sending institutions and host institutions in the process.

International social work-need and importance

As per the global definition of social work (Approved by the IFSW General Meeting and the IASSW General Assembly in July 2014),

Social work is a practice based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing (IFSW, 2014).

The global definition of social work recognizes the importance of respecting diversity of cultures. The cultural diversity demands the professional to be competent and it would be more challenging if the culture is totally different from own culture. As there are more opportunities for international social work practice, the literature shows that the exposure during training phase of social work education provided a deeper commitment to the social work profession and a lifelong global perspective (Lindsey, 2005).

'International social work is defined as international social work practice and the capacity for international action by the social work profession and its members' (Healy, 2001, p. 7). International action has four dimensions: internationally related domestic practice and advocacy, professional exchange, international practice and international policy development and advocacy. Professional exchange consists of international placement exchanges of students in the profession, placement exchange of staff members including academicians and practitioners, collaborative research work and publications. When we discuss about professional exchange in the context of international social work, we are in a way contributing to the profession through equipping the social workers to adapt their training and education to infuse perspectives from other cultures into their local settings (Hendriks, Kloppenborg, Gevorgianiene, & Jakutiene, 2008). It is also said that the social work practices can be learned from other cultures and modified to match the need of a practitioner's local population (Ashencaen Crabtree, 2008). If the goal of professional exchange is expected to be mutually beneficial, a host institution in a developing country like India has a lot to gain and to offer to the process.

The revised version of the USA's Council for Social Work Education's (CSWE) standards for reaffirmation of educational programmes clearly stresses the need for international social work practice and exposure (Council on Social Work Education, 2004). The standards emphasize the need for 'preparing social workers to recognize the global context of social work practice' (Educational Policy, Article 1.2) and call for the inclusion of international and cross-cultural content in social work curricula. When we analyse the literature related to international placement exchanges in the context of globalization, the recent two decades have seen a considerable increase in international involvement by social work education programmes which is expected to increase (Asamoah, Healy, & Mayadas, 1997). It can be more financially viable for the interns, if the host organization is able to fund part or even the whole of the student expenses, provided the two institutions have mutual understanding agreements in place. This mutual understanding agreement could include the host institution meeting a portion of the expenses for visiting students or appropriate proportions can be decided on considering the currency equivalence which needs to be mutually agreed. This is why 'mutuality in international internship' is so important. Students also have benefited from supporting grants provided by the Government or related agencies through the sending institution or the host institution. In the past decade, approximately 20–30% of all schools of social work in the United States and 40–50% of all schools of social work in Canada reported situating students in field placements outside of their home country (Caragata & Sanchez, 2002; Panos, Pettys, Cox, & Jones, 2004). These rates are believed to be much higher than in previous decades and, given the increased focus on globalization in social work curricula, researchers expect the rates to increase (Dominelli & Bernard, 2003; Johnson, 2004; Lyons, 2006; Rowe, 2000). Regarding the positive outcomes of the exchange, 'the continuous interaction and discourse is likely to build social capital' as studied by Reilly (2001, p. 70) which is considered to be the result of shared understanding and mutual trust. 'The exchange programmes are also keys to develop models of practice which can be adopted for addressing emerging social issues' as observed by Noble (2004, p. 533). There are other studies too which have established the positive impact of the exchange experiences on students as well as teachers. 'Increased self and social awareness, changes in the teaching styles, new dimensions in teacher student relations' are some of the claims made by Asamoah (2003, p. 4). Also, Carlson, Burn, Useem, and Yachimo wicz (1990) report that students who study abroad benefit in many ways, including increased commitment to peace and international cooperation; greater interest in transnational affairs; greater emphasis on international understanding; greater empathy of the viewpoint of other nations; improvements in their general learning style; a greater degree of intellectuality; an enhanced academic style; improved work habits; and greater persistence. Based upon findings from a qualitative study of the consequences from a social work study-abroad programme, Lindsey (2005) identifies several benefits to students as they developed new ways of thinking and improved their social awareness, they were able to appreciate differences in social work practice and the experience also improved their cultural sensitivity. These experiences facilitate more meaningful professional exchanges between the students and social work academics which can result in cross cultural research and publications.

Challenges in international internship

When going through different definitions of international social work in the context of the current paper, a definition by Nagy and Falk (2000), which focuses on certain important dimensions and cultural specifications, should be highlighted. Accordingly, international social work has been viewed as focusing on comparative social development, social problems, social welfare and social policy as well as practice models and methods in different countries; cross-cultural social work has been viewed as focusing on cultural diversity, inter-cultural communication and cross-cultural understanding. So it is imperative that the above mentioned areas need to be focussed during the field placement programmes to minimize issues in the process. The magnitude and nature of social problems, social welfare system in the host nation, scope of social policy, position of social work as a profession and the common intervention models need to be the general frame of operation. The above mentioned areas are very difficult to traverse and the success of the exchange programme depends on how fast the interns are able to understand the multidimensional identities of the clients or the clientele and own self better in relation to the host culture which is termed as 'cultural humility' (Fisher-Bourne, Cain, & Martin, 2015). Special themed sessions and local visits should be included to help the interns acclimatise to their new setting.

Gray, Coates, and Bird (2008) documented the lack of applicability of western notions of social work practice with non-western cultures and recommended the development of 'home-made' conceptual frameworks and practice principles to support a two way exchange of knowledge between indigenous and western cultures. To effectively perform in non-western environments, professional knowledge developed in the context of western paradigms needs to be combined with local knowledge and traditional approaches to helping (Gelkopf, Ryan, Cotton, & Berger, 2008). This could be done with the necessary theoretical inputs during the academic interactions. They should be encouraged to reflect on their theoretical assumptions and their applicability to the indigenous environment. Considering the other way, the international interns should be encouraged to share the theoretical counterpart and its applicability in the indigenous environment. If the students from the host institution are also included during these sessions, the experience will benefit them to critically examine the models and practices which may also motivate them to adopt and then to adapt.

Personal challenges in international exposure programmes include some degree of feeling alone, alienated, lack of acceptance in a foreign country and issues of culture shock. Different socio-cultural environment may trigger the development of: identification, a sense of superiority and judgement, feelings of helplessness, hostility, guilt for being privileged, shame for feeling superior and fear, it is of utmost importance to create a safe environment for students to share and process their concerns, biases and reactions (Magnus, 2009). Physical challenges may also exist including adjusting to the new climate as well as food patterns. Being in a foreign country and new culture, it is evident that interns will take some time to get used to the above mentioned issues. So the host institution has an important role to make the student feel at ease. There can be frequent interactive sessions between the authority of the host institution and the interns. Creating a support system through establishing 'buddies' for the interns has been very helpful. When the survey was done among 15 International Interns from Belgium and USA, they responded positively about the support given by the buddies from the host institution in acclimatizing to the culture of the host area and they were able to share and relieve their concerns regarding the system. The buddies have to be

chosen from the students of same discipline, preferably from the same group in which the interns will be joining for the further sessions.

It is not the sole responsibility of the host institution to provide the students with maximum exposure in a safe environment. But the sending institution need to be able to meet their ethical and legal responsibility of equipping students with the knowledge and skills necessary for coping with such risks, while maintaining the ability to function and learn within a cultural context that is foreign and often threatening (Heron, 2005). So the pre-placement preparation is an important challenge for the sending institution. Expected behaviour, knowledge and the skills to be gathered should be clearly mentioned in the context of the host institution and the host nation. Most of the universities rely on the custom of having a clearly written learning agreement at the initial phase of the placement along with the consent of a concerned supervisor from the host institution. The regular follow up through online system and weekly reporting to the supervisor from the host institution and the sending institution ensures clarity and proper direction for the placement programme. This should be included in the mutual agreement of roles and expectations between the two institutions.

Field education programme

Field Education is considered as the 'signature pedagogy in social work', (EPAS, Council on Social Work Education, 2008) representing the central form of instruction and learning in which a profession socializes students to perform the role of practitioner. Field education is a critical component of international social work education, because it is the place where students integrate theoretical concepts learned in the classroom to actual client situations within an agency setting (Rambally, 1999; Sanders, 1977). Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of programme competencies (Council on Social Work Education, 2008). When the international exchange programmes in social work are analysed most of the programmes focus on field education programmes with more credits than theory courses. As suggested by Lyons and Ramanathan (1999), the skill development model (focus on field based practice and learning) is found to be more applicable for master's level students among the different models of international placements. The profession of social work calls for a theory-practicum balance as complementary requirements. But, as mentioned in the international exchange programmes, the intern in the advanced stage of learning is expected to have an understanding of theory which should be supplemented by a multicultural field exposure by the host institution. It is important to provide theoretical sessions for the interns by the host institution, as cultural differences and ethical dimensions can be incorporated during these sessions.

Content of field education programme for the interns

The content of Field Work was discussed and published during the workshop for faculty development, organized by the Delhi School of Social Work. The literature titled 'Fieldwork supervision: in an Indian school of social work' as early as in 1957, highlighted the importance of field practice in social work education and includes the perspectives from faculty members, students and field supervisors. They outlined the phases and contents of field

work training in general. This framework issued in the current article to explain the process of field training in international internship. It can be summarized as four phases of field training. They are

- (1) Orientation phase
- (2) Placement phase
- (3) Exploration-Assessment-Action
- (4) Evaluation Phase

These phases can be explained with the experience of the author in the international exchange programme run by the Department of social work in a reputed institution in South India. The duration of common international internship varies from 2 weeks to 5 months with different universities across the globe according to the nature of placement. The international exchange programme in the institution has grown over the years, emphasizing the 'mutuality' of exchange. The programme has hosted interns from various disciplines such as social work, management, psychology, development studies and education. The process of field education programme mentioned in this paper is applicable to the longest internship with the Department of Social Work in the institution. This is a general model of internship from one of the universities in USA and represents the general frame of internship for the interns coming from other parts of the world. This framework of placement is applicable in the institution for the international student internships from countries like Belgium, Germany, France, Australia and New Zealand. The duration of each phase in the proposed model differs according to the nature of internship. The planning for the internship starts a year before as the interns needs to be classified according to their specializations of the study. Different phases of Internship can be analysed by taking the example of students, who are placed in the Institution for the 5 months Internship from one of the universities in USA (who are in their advance field practicum). They have two major concentrations as 'Clinical' and 'Management and Community Organisation (MACO)'. Considering their specializations (meant for advanced study) also; the specific groups need to be formed like Ageing, Families and Children, Health, Mental Health and Social Action and Community Development. The specializations may be different across various universities. The Interns are encouraged to provide their specializations in the personal statement which they send along with the request for internship. Some universities allow the interns to do the internship in any of their interested areas with the concurrence of the faculty supervisor in their university. So the plan for the internship contains the maximum exposure to the agencies according to their specialized areas or areas of their interest.

Generally, the whole placement programme is divided into five phases (with four phases as mentioned above along with a pre placement phase). The content applicable to each phase is discussed further.

Phase 1-pre placement

Engaging with another culture entails absorbing and appreciating the other by enacting the principles of acceptance and a non-judgmental attitude. Before leaving for the host country, students would undergo a study abroad orientation at their home university. A typical orientation would cover the study abroad schedule, academic expectations, costs, staying safe while abroad, health and evacuation insurance, lodging and adapting to the

local culture. Each student will be assigned the responsibility to read widely on the host country – its history, people, mores, customs, music and language. Meeting with students from the host country who are studying at one's own university is a great start (Social Work International Opportunities for Academic Credit, Suggested Guidelines for Study Abroad Programmes developed by CSWE Council on Global Learning, Research and Practice). Alumni members (if any) will be invited to share their experience to help with potential interns' orientation to the proposed new country and setting. This phase is important as the interns without proper preparation have found it difficult to adapt to the host culture even after a considerable amount of time.

Phase 2-orientation

The orientation phase consists of introduction to the curriculum (both theory and field placement), field settings and framing of field practicum agreement. There are other international programmes where the students studying for their bachelor programme in social work/social studies are coming from Belgium, Germany, France, Australia and New Zealand in which they need short term field placements alone. In that case even, they are given a chance to familiarize with the curriculum followed in the host institution through discussions and assignments. This is appreciated by the interns during evaluations, as they could contextualize some important concepts like empowerment, poverty, participation and social structure.

Another aspect needs to be clarified is the process of recording, supervision and formative evaluation, which is spread throughout the placement. The legal formalities which the interns need to uphold in the host country would be highlighted by the host institution.

(a) Introduction to field, curriculum and to the agency/area

Orientation phase in the Field Education programme starts with a bridge programme for a week. The intern needs to be equipped with the local language as the majority of interaction at the clientele level happens with the local language. Those in 'helping professions' (e.g. social work, nursing, education) need to develop a skill set that includes a deeper understanding of other cultures (Merrill & Frost, 2011). The bridge programme (focused on identifying learning goals, anticipating personal challenges, and clarifying personal value systems) is was found to be effective which influenced the learning outcomes, as per the evaluation reports of the interns. The introduction to the host language and the local culture would contribute to social work students' degree of engagement in the whole process.

Sessions on the general political scenario, food and related issues, legal systems, social policy, social welfare and social development, family system and marriages, environmental issues, energy conservation, waste management efforts, socio-cultural dimensions–religion, festivals, art forms, customs, rituals and health policy and programmes needs to be discussed at this stage in the context of state and national scenarios. The prime goal of these sessions would be to give an overview of different aspects which they are going to experience and confront afterwards. Discussions with the faculty mentors on the selected courses and the field practicum schedule needs to be done at this stage and should result in drafting a mutually agreed field practicum agreement. The field practicum agreement contains the goal and general objectives, level of involvement, logistics, outcome expected

and the assessment plan. The mutuality of this document extends to the supervisor from the international university also.

(b) General visits to social work settings-institutions/communities

General visits to social work settings could be conducted in the orientation phase. Visits are arranged with the general goal for providing an overview of different settings, target populations and typology of communities. The exposure should be balanced with the learning in administration and management of Government Organizations (GOs) and Non Profit Organizations (NPOs), NPO run projects and Government funded projects in the socio economic and cultural contexts. These visits give an opportunity for the interns to prepare for the challenges and possibilities for practice as well as to acclimatize to various settings before their specialized placements. When the intern visits an agency, areas like its structure, aims and objectives, historical background, financial position, service delivery, area specific strategies, beneficiary selection, major programmes and issues needs to be explored. As the interns are exposed to various communities, the focal areas for exploration will be the community's history, composition, resources, organizations and problems. Special attention would be paid to get information about social problems and social work interventions, the western nature of practice and education in most non-western host countries and the absence of their own culturally relevant social work education and practice (Kreitzer, Abukari, Antonio, Mensah, & Kwaku, 2009; Nikku, 2010).

(c) Recording, supervision and terminal evaluation

The recording and supervision for the field education is a very important aspect, as reflection reinforces learning. International Universities have their own system of recording and reporting including the 'Electronic Field Note' system in one of the universities in USA. The frequency of reports depends on the need of sending universities. Some universities want the student's updates once in a month or some universities encourage terminal summary reports after each phase. But weekly reports either in sending universities' format or the format from the host institution was found to be useful, which integrated the contextual inputs in reflection. Weekly meetings with the faculty supervisor also help the intern to clarify concepts and integrate theoretical underpinnings. Here, the faculty supervisor should be able to appreciate the contextual differences in the concepts and willing to provide necessary inputs and clarifications through individual or group field supervision meetings. According to Thangavelu (1975), regularly scheduled meetings, both individual and group, are essential in the supervisory relationship with joint responsibility (of students and supervisors) for agenda and meaningful contributions to the discussions. Monthly formative evaluation should also be conducted wherein the interns are encouraged to present their progress with the open discussion on relevant matters of concern, including logistics.

Phase 3: placement

The placement phase consisted of two aspects i.e. short term placements and related work assignments.

(a) Short term placements

In the third phase of field education programme, the interns are placed in multiple agencies and different projects, which provide them a holistic view about the field. The

placement should be based on the different fields of specialization and is for a short term, usually for a week. Some of the universities from Europe encourage this type of placement as the interns get a varied experience with different target groups especially in short term placements of two months duration. The goal of this phase is to provide an overview of the legal framework for service provision, policies related to the field, the multiple client system, Government programmes and schemes offered, involvement and support provided by the nonprofit Organizations, cultural and socio economic context of development, stakeholders in the process and their nature of participation.

(b) Work assignment

Work assignments are important for the interns based on each agency and project. It should be framed on the basis of the expected indicators mentioned above and agreed by both faculty and agency supervisors. This would make sure that their reflection is comprehensive and might motivate them to overcome the language barrier to explore more. As highlighted in the literature, the effectiveness of field learning is enhanced when the triad of students, faculty supervisor and field instructors work in harmony and communicate goals and expectations continuously (Fernandez, 1998). Work assignments would be given according to the nature of agency. It could be case studies, group sessions with the target group, developing project proposals, qualitative or quantitative assessment of data, organizing development communication experiments in association with the field agency staff members etc.

Phase 4: exploration/assessment/action

The fourth phase calls for an intensive placement where exploration, assessment and action take place. The interns would be placed in a particular agency or a project in which the intern feels he/she could contribute according to their particular knowledge and skills. The process of selection of the agency should be supported by the faculty supervisor. Need-resource identification, programme development, assumption of social work roles and professional involvement takes place at this stage. Ethical dilemmas would be resolved and culturally specific interventions needs to be framed with the help of supervisors. Ethical decisions should be taken by considering the standards of National Association of Social Workers -Code of Ethics and International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work- Ethics in Social Work. The key ethical dilemma includes developing and maintaining a professional relationship with the client till termination of the placement. These situations are much more complicated because there are cultural and societal factors to be considered. Special emphasis would be given to the 'direct social work practice methods' and its recording. Individual conferences, group conferences, field work seminars, ongoing assessment and perspective guidance should be carried out to strengthen the process. At this stage, the interns are matched with faculty supervisors and given assignments on various dimensions like comparative studies, developing conceptual papers, documentation of their experience in the placement, with an objective of possible publication. Some universities like, Vives University in Belgium have a defined structure for this for students to undertake research or action projects.

Phase 5: evaluation

The formative evaluation is carried out every month on the process as well as the outcomes. The final evaluation would be done by the faculty supervisor, agency supervisors and by the intern. The contents of the evaluation include summary records and other related documents, personal qualities and professional skills, capability of relating theory and practice and the efforts for cross cultural comparison. The core competencies of the student's country of origin which are the measurable practice behaviours comprising of knowledge, values and skills (Council on Social Work Education, 2008), which need to be evaluated. Evaluation indicators differ across the universities and countries as they follow either the university policy in assessment or follow the regulations and standards set by the regulatory authority in their country. When in international placements, students are expected to increase their professional knowledge and cross-cultural competence, their understanding of how global issues affect local society, their open-mindedness about others and their use of knowledge from other traditions to enrich domestic social work practice (Abram & Cruce, 2007; Healy, 1990; Webber, 2005). The evaluation outcomes need to be discussed between the host institution and the sending institution. Based on the evaluation, strategies need to be revisited and continued for the placement to be more fruitful.

The above mentioned phases are important for the international field education programme as omission of the different phases has resulted in failure of the internship programme. The duration of each phase depends on the duration of the programme. In one of the placements, where the orientation phase was omitted because of the paucity of time, the intern was found to be disconnected from the clientele as the intern was not able to accept the importance of their traditional religious values. The intern was provided with necessary input by the field supervisor which clarified the dilemma. There are instances where the frequent supervision sessions with the supervisor were not done. This resulted in confused ethical decisions in the interaction with the client. The weekly conferences were established which resulted in building the self confidence of the intern. In one of the internships the host institution was forced to change the field agency, as the intern was confident to contribute more in another agency which she visited during the first phase of orientation. As per the intern: 'I feel, I will be able to contribute more to the agency "X" than "Y" and I have made a wrong decision by choosing "Y" for my intensive placement'. The request was assessed and approved in consultation with both the agencies and the supervisors. The outcome affirmed that the decision was appropriate.

Implications for social work education, research and practice

International field placements require the host social work educational institutions to prepare well. The teaching and learning process needs to be very open to integrate the international perspectives. The methodology of teaching and learning demands the educators as well as the students in the host institution to be updated as well as displaying cultural humility. Cultural humility is the 'ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the person' (Hook, Davis, Owen, Worthington, & Utsey, 2013). Cultural humility is an attitude, and a process oriented approach to the term "cultural competency" (which is more commonly used) and it is regarded as lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and

self-critique (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998) in relation to the new culture in which the intern is situated. This attitude of openness motivates a social work professional to learn from the clients by setting aside stereotyped bias and perceptions (Ortega & Coulborn Faller, 2011).

The universities need to promote ‘international social work’ more as an integral part of their curriculum. The presence of the international interns will add new perspectives to the discussions which will enrich the host students. There are instances where the students in the host institutions were motivated to do the international placement abroad by interacting with international interns. Also, the presence of international interns in different projects encourages the project management to think in a global perspective. Experience shows that international interns have positively contributed to the placement agencies like preparing modules for the target groups in lieu with global standards, introducing new models of intervention and evaluation, technology assisted service provision, initiating the documentation system in the agency and mobilizing international funds for the agency.

The reflections of the participants in various international exchange programmes were consolidated by the NASW international committee in 2013. The reflections showed positive outcomes as quoted below

‘Viewing another culture’s interventions enabled me to consider aspects of my practice and while not wholly importing techniques, it provides the opportunity to review, evaluate and modify my own practice.’

‘Going to a different cultural context allows one to see things from a different perspective, which in turn strengthens and straightens one’s own.’

‘Intellectually, I was amazed how similar the services are, I had expected huge difference that did not occur. However, the techniques are clearly different due to cultural differences and sensitivities about family rights.’

The home institution as well as the host institution needs to motivate the international interns to create practice based evidence and disseminate the same, which will be a relevant contribution to the social work literature. In the process, the home institution will also benefit in providing diversity to the students in teaching and learning process and updating themselves regarding professional practice in the host country.

Conclusion

Effects of globalization have propelled many western universities to make informed decisions regarding the international placement opportunities for the students. Tasks and responsibilities of social work professionals vary from country to country depending on the needs and structure of the society. Outcomes in terms of learning objectives, proper standards and methods for supervision and curriculum updation are some of the pertinent issues which need to be addressed. The host institution needs to be equipped in all means including a resourced library and quality supervisors (Council for licensing the supervisors is yet to be formulated in India). Networking with different NGOs and Government departments is another essential requirement from the part of host institution. Many of the social work institutions in our country have initiated ‘live labs’ of their own or in collaboration with the Government Departments. The live labs provide students with the opportunity to enhance knowledge and sharpen their skills which they acquire during their study. These labs help students to put theory into practice and be equipped in the field to serve the

community. The host institution mentioned in the article also have practice wings of the Social Work Department called as live labs namely Outreach extension department (have projects on waste management, child care, elderly community care, migrant labourers and women empowerment), Family Counselling Centre, Adoption Agency, Training Centres for personnel (working with children under age five and mothers as well as adolescent girls), Research Institute and Child line centre for child care and protection. These live labs serve as agencies for short term as well as intensive placements and ensure avenues for volunteerism, thereby providing extra credits to the interns. The idea of 'professional exchange' mentioned in the first part of the paper should grow beyond the exchange of students, thus providing the opportunity for educators and practitioners to learn and practice by their involvement in these types of international placements.

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