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Differences as catalysts for professional learning - an insight from international mobility between Sweden and Uganda

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Evaluation of an international mobility programme Karolinska Institutet Sweden and Institute of Allied Health & Management Science, Uganda



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Linnaeus Palme mobility

- The Linnaeus-Palme mobility programme

Linnaeus-Palme is an international exchange programme for teacher and student mobility funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The programme aims at strengthening cooperation between universities in Sweden and developing countries. The last handful of years KI has been involved in about 8 Linnaeus-Palme projects.

- *The Linnaeus-Palme homepage* (<http://www.programkontoret.se/LinnaeusPalme/>)

Gains from a University and teacher perspective:

” The exchange contributes to a long term collaboration between universities in Sweden and likewise in low-income countries.

The collaboration is believed to enhance quality at both universities, and offer nuanced perspectives and possibilities to exchanged experiences between teachers, as well as students on bachelor, as well as masterlevel educations. ”

Gains from a studentperspective as described by the International L-P office:



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” The students take advantage of the teaching the foreign teacher provides from an international, or global viewpoint, while the visiting teachers gain valuable experiences to enrich their own teaching at home with. ”

” It is also a belief that student students, through the exchange, gains added academic values and merits, along with their international experience, broadened understanding and deepened knowledge.”



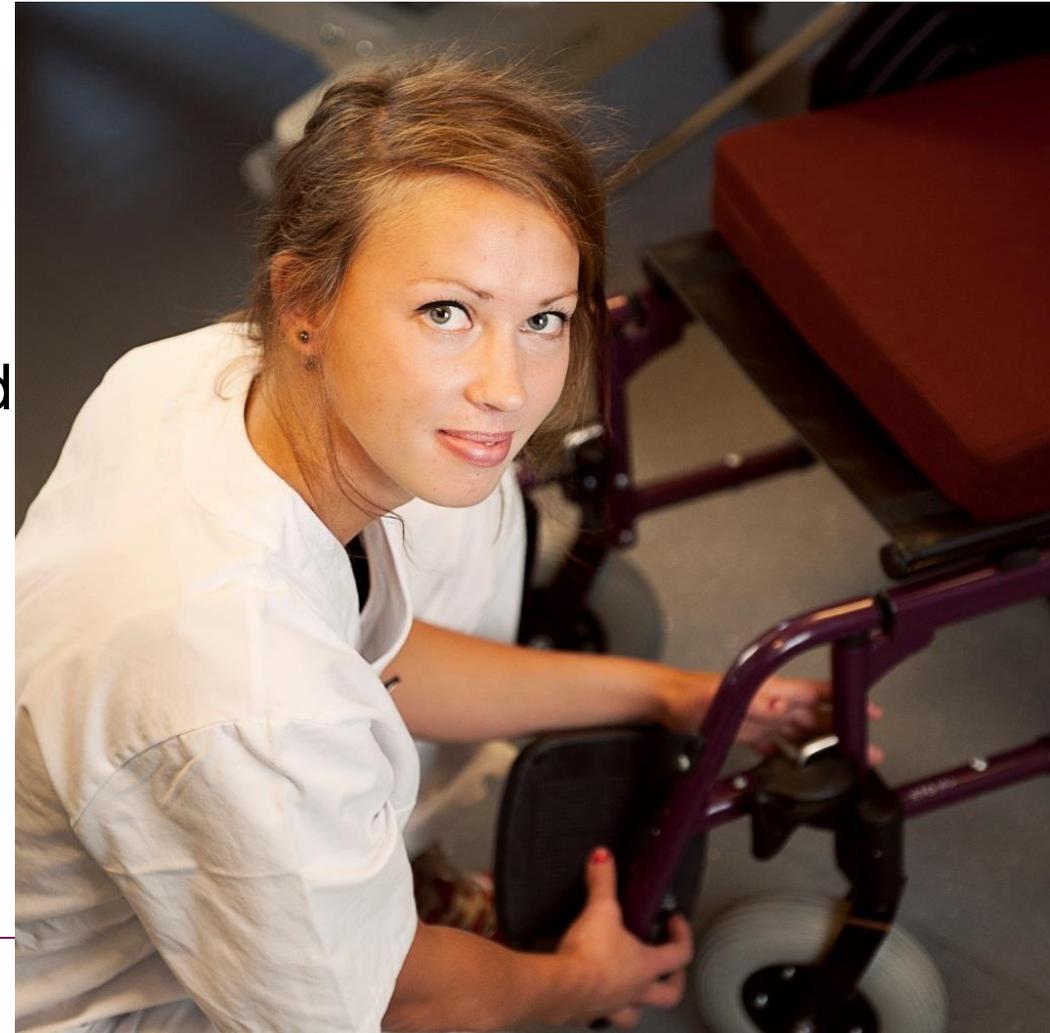
Linneus Palme exchange – The OT programme



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The occupational therapy programme at Karolinska Institutet have had an ongoing, mutual teacher-student mobility exchange since 2005.

During the years of exchange, the two coordinators Julius Kamwesiga (Uganda) and Susanne Guidetti (Sweden) have been accompanied with six teachers from the two educational settings of whom two have been clinical teachers.



Aim

The aim of this study was to describe student experiences from an international mobility program in relation to learning and professional development.

The interview question was:

- *Describe your experiences from the international mobility programme.*



Method

- This study derives from focus group evaluations with 12 students who enrolled in a 12 weeks international mobility program between the two occupational therapy programmes during the years 2007-2013.



Findings

Four themes emerged during the analysis of the data.

- Learning to cope with unfamiliarity
- Differences as catalysts for professional learning
- The importance of peers for beneficial learning
- Learning related changes in professional identity & own persona



Learning to cope with unfamiliarity

- Face other challenges than those expected
- Observed frailty of service and living conditions
- Realize; our ways not always being the best way
- Have time versus taking the time – investments for future gains

” But eventually you know. Children are just children. No matter how ill they are, you can still play with them. So those contrasts were evident, that you not always have means, but you can make a difference on other levels. Make them happy at least”.

Swedish students: *Books provide deepened context.*

Ugandan students: *Internet as a fantastic resource.*

Both: *Finding literature demands a critiquel reflective approach.*



Differences as catalysts for professional learning

- Differences create confusion and initial sense of lack in power
- New perspectives challenge taken-for-granted care
- Differences in conditions call for enhanced professional creativity
- Taking responsibility in developing the profession

“When I arrived to the clinical placement , they had not taught us about cultural sensitivity yet. So, after an incident, I had to realize I have to be sensitive. Not everybody has to shake hands when greeting another”.

The student-driven learning approach was Unfamiliar for Swedish students.



The importance of peers for beneficial learning

- Supervision lead to increased trust in the profession
- Feedback from the environment strengthen trust (colleagues & clients)
- Learned that peers contribute greatly to others learning; both within and between professions

*"My experience was really good.
I copied some types of behaviours.
Like they way the relate to clients".*

*" I learnt to aquire internet surfing.
Now I have been surfing to know what
I can do and make it applicable in my
own setting."*



Learning related changes in professional identity & own persona

- Changed views of ones own professional competencies
- Being contributors to change for individuals and communities
- Experienced a transfer of learning towards a sustainable lifelong learning style
- Experience increased trust in own potential and use that strategically (e g in marketing)

"When I came back home, I had a better strategy. I had realized that once I had understood the culture of the person , I can easily intervene and give a positive impact".



Konklusion / Conclusion

- Analysen visade att studenterna lärde sig att hantera ovana företeelser, som en viktig komponent i sitt utvidgade lärande.
- Att de tvingades möta skillnader mot de traditionella skapade viktiga lärande vinster i det att de utvecklade nya professionella strategier.
- The findings showed that students learned to cope with unfamiliarities, as an important competence. The fact that they face differences provided important learning effects, in that they developed new professional strategies.

“I taught them how the hand is best positioned and how to put bandages to preserve a functional position.”





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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!
