



## Qualitative Organised Learning Mobility of Students with the South

**Barbara Van Wijnendaele, Leen Hellinckx**

University College Leuven (Belgium)

[barbara.vanwijnendaele@khleuven.be](mailto:barbara.vanwijnendaele@khleuven.be), [leen.hellinckx@khleuven.be](mailto:leen.hellinckx@khleuven.be)

### Abstract

The Knowledge and Learning Network for International Cooperation North South (ICoNS) of Leuven University College organises and critically researches North-South mobility of students. In most countries and regions in the global North (U.S.A., Canada, Australia, Europe) there has been a dramatic growth in the numbers of students requesting a meaningful cross-cultural experience [1]. Since the late 1980's there has been an ever growing interest in, and support for, organised international learning mobility of students within HEI in Europe. More particularly, over the last decade, one observes an increasing interest in so-called North-South learning mobility, between 'industrialised' and so-called 'non-industrialised' countries in the South. The interest in this particular type of international mobility has been taken up in future European educational policies such as "Erasmus for all" (E4A). 'Erasmus for all' (2014-2020) [2] has been launched by the European commission to facilitate "learning mobility of students with the purpose of strengthening the EU as an advanced knowledge society, with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. To achieve these goals, E4A will increasingly promote learning mobility beyond European borders, with countries in the South.

Given the increased interest in organised learning mobility to the South, there is a growing need for developing sound knowledge and expertise in order to be able to organize this particular type of learning mobility in a qualitative way, assuring it to be a positive and empowering experience for students and guaranteeing that preconceived learning outcomes are achieved.

ICoNS has a long experience in organising and researching North-South mobility and has built extensive expertise within this domain of Higher education. It organises an advanced bachelor in 'International Cooperation North-South' (ICNS) which consists of an intensive two-month preparation of students and a six-month internship in an organisation in the South. Students receive close follow-up during and after their stay in the South and particular attention is given to establishing long-term, sustainable partnerships in the South. Each year 60 students are enrolled in the programme. In Organising the advanced bachelor and being involved in different research projects on this topic, ICoNS has elaborated a coherent vision on North-South learning mobility of young people. It adopts a holistic approach by focussing on what we consider to be fundamental aspects for organising qualitative North-South mobility: a good (substantive as well as methodological) preparation trajectory for students, follow-up of students during and after their stay in the South; and sustainable partnerships with receiving organisations and institutions in the South.

For this paper, ICoNS presents its advanced bachelor ICNS as 'good practice'. Based on its long-term experience, we will also discuss opportunities and pitfalls in organising learning mobility to the South.

### References

- [1] Heron, B. 2011, Challenging Indifference to Extreme Poverty: Considering Southern Perspectives on Global Citizenship and Change, *Ethics and Economics* 8(1):109-119. Plewes, B. and Stuart, R. 2007, Opportunities and challenges for international volunteer co-operation, FORUM (International Forum of Development Service).
- [2] Erasmus for all, 2011, The EU Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport, COM (2011) 787