



Co-Operation for Development as a Way to Internationalize Universities

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Abstract

One of the possible lines of action for the internationalization of universities is that of international co-operation for development. This definition generally implies a concept of aid to the so-called third countries: the thesis here supported is that co-operation for development should have criteria of reciprocity, made possible above all through exchanges. International institutions promoting exchange programs tend not to foresee an attention to the dimensions of potential change within people and organizations which happens as a result of contact. In accordance with the UN development objectives (Millennium), with the UNESCO report (Our creative diversity) and with the definitions of global ethics of the European Council, we think that the conceptual and practical tools offered by intercultural relations' literature and praxis should be used and disseminated not only among students, faculties and staff, but also embodied by local communities in the perspective of shared responsibility. The intercultural dimension of exchange and co-operation is, in our vision, a key to the internationalization process: it is necessary to stabilize, through adequate reflection, all the practice of change in order to open the traditionally closed systems of higher education. This paper will try to identify areas of application of good practices which emerged from international research on students', faculties and workers' exchange and on change agency with intercultural sensitivity, which is at the basis of a new concept of co-operation for development.