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Train the trainer : student experiences in remote and rural areas in Asia and Africa.

Marc Velghe

Arteveldehogeschool, Gent, Belgium

Students in Occupational Therapy Education have to develop and increase their competences in practical situations. Therefore every educational programme organises practices and clinical experiences.

Students who have the opportunity to spend part of their practice in remote rural areas in different continents are confronted with totally new areas of competence.

During many years we send our students to some projects in India, Thailand, Malaysia, Bangla Desh, South-Africa, Senegal, The Gambia, Zambia and other African countries.

Students have to work in remote rural areas. Suddenly they are confronted with an urgent need of problem solving abilities, creative thinking and cultural awareness and competence.

Because of other priorities, lack of material, other values and habits they have to discover, develop and enhance some personal and professional competences.

Different examples of projects in these areas highlight the personal and professional growth, the limitations, challenges and pitfalls during the training.

However local staff is mostly available, sometimes they lack the necessary education, organisation or management.

Without the use of 'Western import strategies' students have to learn to share their expertise, to be part of local educational programmes, to respect local values and to communicate on a mutual trustful base.

These 'train the trainer' initiatives not only benefit the local projects, but are an added value in the personal and professional development of the students.

Some research during the last years shows evidence of the impact of this methodology on students education and the local initiatives.