

**Social workers without borders:
Challenges to building partnerships.
*Learning from a PNG/Australian
social work education relationship***

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Abstract

Although there are contentious debates concerning the nature of international and globalised social work, there is considerable evidence that Schools of Social Work Education are actively engaged in cross-border collaborations. Whilst this is occurring and although Social work as a professional discipline exists in diverse contexts across the globe, experiences and voices from the South Pacific have had limited attention. Building on 'data' drawn from the literature and a discussion of international social work, this paper reflects on a collaboration occurring between an Australian social work education program and one in Papua New Guinea. We review and describe a model that is based on transparent, collaborative relationships between equal, although different, partners. We continue to work on how to encourage louder voices from UPNG, but we conclude that focusing on long-term outcomes, built on small steps, offers a framework for meaningful and sustainable cross-border engagements in social work education.

Keywords: Australia, Papua New Guinea, international collaboration, social worker, social work education, partnership.

Introduction

Partnerships, including those in academia, typically arise through the interests of like-minded individuals, rarely emerging in any rational or planned way and often with minimal and/or insecure funding arrangements (Butterfield, 2007; Hamrita, 2011; Samoff and Carrol, 2004). Further, Mafile'o (2016) argues that such partnerships are often characterised by diversity, not only in relation to nation, language and culture, but also in relation to the skills and knowledge the participants bring. Seeking to better understand and support cross-national partnerships in social work, we examine the existing scholarly literature about international social work and development partnerships to frame a discussion of a case study of a current collaboration between the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) and Monash University, Australia. The discussion draws together key learning from these two strands of evidence to draw conclusions

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and argue for a long-term focus, not only on the content of the project, but also on the processes of working together, to build local leadership and academic empowerment. The paper is written collaboratively by both UPNG and Monash colleagues and the term ‘we’ is used throughout. We seek to make clear the ideas of each team, particularly where these are specific or divergent. We begin our discussion by providing some framing comments about the nature of internationalisation in social work.

International considerations in social work

The nature of ‘social work’ remains contested, with its definition, theoretical framework and the extent to which it is a profession being regularly debated in the literature (e.g. see Dominelli, 2010). The western origins of social work are, however, well acknowledged, with a trend toward implanting social work into developing contexts (e.g. see Holtzhausen, 2012; Pawar, 2010). Ongoing debates, notably in countries where social work is less established, including Papua New Guinea (PNG), continue to consider ways in which Western models could or should be adapted to respond to local needs (e.g. see Costello and Aung, 2015; Hall, 2012; Holtzhausen, 2012; Lan, Hugman and Briscoe, 2010; Rankopo and Osei-Hwedie, 2011). Lawihin (2016), drawing on Fahrudin (2008) and Sullivan, Forrester, and Al-Makhamreh (2010), argues that there has been a need for social work in developing contexts to cultivate new responses to imported problems but notes that the introduction of social work in non-western settings has seen similar challenges arise, with limited acknowledgement of the profession and inadequate guidance from local professional bodies. Recent research from PNG (Lawihin, 2017: 167) indicates a clear need for strong and localised frameworks: “[in] this way, the professional association can both ‘translate’ and represent the global standards for the local context as well as representing local needs and perspectives in the broader arena.”

Collaborating internationally

There are growing examples, in the literature, of social work educators from one context working with social work educators in another context to develop social work education (for example Brydon et al., 2014; Horwath and Shardlow, 2004; Lan, Hugman and Briscoe, 2010; Pawar, 2010; Sullivan et al., 2010). There are also examples of broader models of collaboration (e.g. see Healy, Asamoah and Hokenstad, 2003), but as argued by Flynn et al. (2014: 439) “Much of what has been written about non-western practice environments has focused on the learning that these contexts offer to western students, including the development of cross-cultural sensitivities or a globalised view of Social Work”. The literature is relatively silent, however, about *how* international partnerships might best be constructed to realise mutual benefit and to avoid the pitfalls of academic imperialism and colonisation (Gray and Fook, 2004; Gray and Coates, 2010). A discussion of international aid and education partnerships provides some broader context and guidance.

International aid and education partnerships

In the past three decades there has been substantial change across the globe in terms of the growing impact of technology and resultant connectedness and movement of peoples, as well as a growing divide between the global north/south; some of these factors are seen to have had a dramatic impact on the conditions surrounding international aid (Matthews, 2003).

One evident issue is the proliferation of tools to evaluate aid, e.g. quality and equity benchmarks, evaluation tools and annual result-based planning (Swift-Morgan, 2012) and reliance on measurement and the identification of key targets (Coffey International Development, 2012).

What is less evident, however, is whether or how such approaches have been negotiated and agreed between the respective countries, and what processes can aid effective partnerships.

Recent literature examining international aid and education partnerships indicates that processes of negotiation and agreement are vital to supporting such initiatives, with two key findings. Firstly, there needs to be assurance that the approach is not one of unequal partnerships whereby one set of players assume 'expert' status (Bhatta, 2011; Coxon and Munce, 2008; Guthrie, 2012; Hamrita, 2011; Singh, Gumz and Crawley, 2011; Swift-Morgan, 2012). Indeed Mafile'o (2016:20) argues, with regard to research collaborations in the South Pacific specifically, that 'Truly respectful partnerships are central to effective South Pacific social work research capacity strengthening ... Research partners need to value and appreciate the mutual benefits of research collaborations (Redman-Maclaren et al., 2012)'. Secondly, there is a need to be cognizant of local conditions in both their historical and contemporary manifestations (Bhatta, 2011; Butterfield, 2007; Coxon and Munce, 2008; John et al., 2012; Matthews, 2003; Mopoho, 2003; Nikku, 2012; Swift-Morgan, 2012; Thorning, Shibusawa, Lukens, and Fang, 2012; Wallenborn, 2009). The need for local knowledge and local champions is highlighted. There is a strong sense that international aid and education projects require collaborators to attend not only to the content of the project, but also to the process of working together. Good collaboration requires a long-term view, with attention to developing local leadership and built-in evaluation.

In recent years, accounts of collaborative efforts to develop social work in both Vietnam (Lan, Hugman and Briscoe, 2010) and Myanmar (Costello and Aung, 2015) – built on relationships between western universities and local stakeholders – have been published. Whilst the challenges and the need to address the lack of local materials, qualified academics and researchers and institutional capacity are described, there has been less attention given to how this may occur. Sullivan et al. (2010) do, however, share some specific learning from a transnational collaboration in social work training in Jordan. These authors note both the challenges and rewards for those involved, and conclude that collaboration is positive when it centralises anti-oppressive methods and brings a culture of listening, sharing, support and empowerment. To achieve this involves recognising relationships as interdependent, with mutual learning and shared agendas existing across national boundaries. They also note the need to focus on locally determined needs and to ensure decision-making is driven by local stakeholders.

To examine how and if these ideas have been put into place, we now describe an existing, ongoing partnership between the social work departments at UPNG and Monash University.

A case study of a PNG-Australian partnership in social work education

We begin with a brief overview of both countries' contexts BEFORE sketching the outline of the collaboration as developed.

Australia and PNG have a shared and perhaps ambivalent relationship, with PNG being under Australian colonial administration for much of the 20th century until independence in 1975. The relationship is currently dominated by development aid, with contemporary discussion also focused on the off-shore asylum seeker processing centre on Manus Island. Currently, the Population of Australia is around 24.15 million people and during the past half century Australia has become a destination for migrants from across the world, meaning that it is now one of the world's most ethnically diverse nations (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade [DFAT], 2013a). Indeed, the contemporary discourse is one of embracing multiculturalism, but within a context of continued dominance of a white, Anglo culture. Recent years have also seen a rise in nationalist, anti-migration, movements. While in the contemporary context Indigenous culture is

both diverse and strong, there remain significant concerns about Indigenous outcomes on indicators of education, health, housing and employment, which remain well below the Australian average (DFAT, 2013a). Social issues of contemporary concern include homelessness, ageing, child abuse and indigenous welfare (VCOSS, 2013). Other issues which regularly gain public attention include the environment/climate, mental health, and alcohol and drug use – the latter particularly in relation to its connections to broader social problems such as family and other violence and crime. A recent Royal Commission into Family Violence in the state of Victoria was specifically instigated in response to the deaths of women and children at the hands of male partners/fathers.

In PNG, today, the spectrum of society ranges from traditional village life, dependent on subsistence and small cash-crop agriculture to modern urban life in the main cities. Of the estimated 7.78 million population (UN, 2016), around 85% derive their livelihood from farming and population growth is around 2.8% per annum (DFAT, 2013b).

While PNG is seen by many to be one of the most troubled countries in the world today, it has also experienced more than a decade of sustained economic growth. This growth has not, however, translated into equitable allocation of resources or development outcomes across the community (AusAID, 2012). There are ongoing health concerns including maternal and child health (Lepani, 2008); HIV (Dundon and Wilde, 2007); and communicable diseases, such as tuberculosis and malaria (WHO, 2014). Socially, family violence is a significant problem (Kwa, Howes and Lin, 2010; Lepani, 2008), along with high rates of community violence particularly in the capital, Port Moresby (Interim Working Group on Urban Safety, 2009 cited in Goa, 2012).

From the perspective of social work education, in Australia there is a well-established professional body in the form of the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW). That association prescribes a range of aspirational standards to guide social work practice and social work education. By contrast there is not a similar role played by a professional association in PNG. In PNG, the professional association has been dormant for a lengthy period of time, although current efforts are underway to revive this group. As a result of inaction, however, there are currently no local standards based on common principles and values that guide either practice or social work education (see, Flynn, Kamasua and Lawihin, 2016). This latter reality is quite consistent with most other countries in the Asia-Pacific region (Fahrudin, 2008; Nikku, 2010; Pawar, 2010). The lack of a guiding professional body is thought to have obscured the social work professional identity and its role in social development in PNG. The following is an outline of the collaboration between the social work departments at UPNG and Monash University in which we have been engaged.

UPNG-Monash social work collaboration

Our collaboration was initially established under the auspices of the Group of Eight Universities (Go8) in Australia with funding from AusAID². The original brief sought academics from Australia to volunteer to teach at UPNG for one semester, with the aim of strengthening academic offerings in four key areas, of which social work was one (the background and establishment of this project has been discussed in detail elsewhere: see Brydon et al., 2014). Whilst this arrangement offered a broad framework for the development of some cross-national connections, it did not prove to be a sustained initiative, due partly to short-term funding arrangements and also subsequent changes to the structure and focus of AusAID.

² In 2013, AusAID (Australian Agency for International Development) was integrated into The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (AusAID, 2013).

From a Monash perspective, early efforts to engage with stakeholders in PNG, prior to any face-to-face meetings, met with limited success for three key reasons. Firstly, shortcomings in technology meant establishing communication between the two teams was difficult. Secondly, although not discussed in the development of the project, an unequal donor-recipient relationship was at least implied, with the resources and services of Monash staff (along with other Go8 universities) being sought to aid UPNG. Monash staff are of the view that failure to confront this issue contributed to a lack of shared and agreed understanding of the project. Finally, there was a lack of understanding and knowledge about the project by key UPNG staff 'on the ground'. At the initial face-to-face meeting in Port Moresby in April 2010, it appeared to Monash staff that the day-to-day stakeholders at UPNG (teaching staff/academics), with the exception of senior staff, had minimal, if any understanding of how the project had been formed, what its objectives were, or how to proceed. It seemed that the project had been primarily constructed on a 'top down' approach. It was only at a much later stage that Monash staff became aware of the depth of the (mis)understanding when one of the UPNG members laughingly commented about the initial meeting: "We thought you had come to tell us what to do" (Face-to-face discussion between the Teams, June 2011).

From the perspective of the UPNG team at the time, where the current Strand Leader had been recently appointed and was planning for a review of its courses, –the arrival of team Monash and its participation in the ensuing collaboration was timely. Team UPNG was in fact interested right at the beginning, although not well informed of the purpose and objectives of the partnership; yet acknowledged that these would become – knowingly, clearer as we progressed into the partnership. Team UPNG viewed this lack of awareness as an administrative oversight; a key challenge for international social work education collaboration, which if not clearly addressed can hamper effective partnership (Crisp, 2015). This subsequently led to team UPNG's misunderstanding, alluded to by Team Monash above, because of a lack of documentation and of awareness about the partnership among the strand staff before the arrival of Team Monash; and this situation was perpetuated by the less developed information technology infrastructure in PNG. Setting this misunderstanding aside, team UPNG saw this collaboration as an opportunity for learning and as a resource to draw on for further development of the UPNG social work program. For example, Brydon et al. (2014) indicate that Team UPNG initially saw the UPNG – Monash educational partnership as an opportunity for meaningful collaboration and exchange. One of the key best practices in the process is the Monash Team coming to UPNG with a focus on UPNG's program and to identify key areas needing strengthening – these areas are discussed in Brydon et al. (2014).

Although formal support and funding from the original source has been discontinued, the partnership continues, primarily through regular email communication. This format has proved to be a useful and sustainable mechanism through which ideas and resources are shared. This includes basic information about upcoming conferences or publication and funding options, but also, importantly, has allowed the development of seven publications to date. Four of these articles/book chapters have been jointly authored by representatives from both UPNG and Monash (Brydon and Dunstan, 2013; Brydon et al., 2014; Flynn et al., 2014; Flynn et al., 2016; Lawihin, 2012; Lawihin, 2016;) (although it must be acknowledged that lead authorship has been carried primarily by Monash staff) whilst one was authored solely by a member of the UPNG team (Lawihin, 2016). This has been acknowledged by both team Monash and UPNG as a matter of intellectual and academic integrity – but also extends to reflect the greater capacity of team Monash – in terms of access to resources and time to carry more of the weight of the work. However, concerned UPNG staff who participated were given equal voice in these publications and have shown a high level of professional commitment in the process.

We have also produced one innovative audio-visual production (Cameron, Flynn and Brydon, 2013) – a documentary focusing on positive social work practices in PNG. Academics from UPNG have attended higher degree research seminars and presented to higher degree students about the state of social work in PNG and there have been four visits to PNG by Monash staff. Our efforts have also been recognised by a social inclusion award at Monash. These are all small but concrete steps towards building a sustainable cross-national relationship. We continue to work on research areas of mutual interest: criminal justice and social work education.

Furthermore, from the viewpoint of UPNG staff, the partnership has been both academically liberating and empowering in terms of outcomes as well as the processes of collaboration. For instance, in material terms, at the program level, two junior UPNG academics have completed pathway programs to bridge to post-graduate studies; one of these (Author 2 UPNG) has just completed a Master of Social Work (Research). There has also been an exchange of innovative ideas and resources – which have grounded and shaped our joint publications. In turn, there has been a positive ‘flow on effect’ for staff morale, as well as social work education and practice in PNG.

... the fact that we are still collaborating on projects even after the lapse of funding is a very good sign indeed”. (Author 3 UPNG)

[this] has greatly enhanced my research skills and improved my teaching - lecturing and tutoring. I am wishing and hoping that this collaboration continues (UPNG staff member).

An aspect of the UPNG Social Work Program that benefitted immensely was the Fieldwork Program – the development of the Fieldwork Handbook has strengthened the systems and pathways of planning and delivery of field education. As noted above, the partnership provided an avenue to lead and coordinate what Team UPNG had to bring into the partnership. On a broader context, this collaboration has facilitated an indirect awareness in the Pacific region that (UPNG) social work (in PNG) can make a good contribution to the promotion of professional social work education and practice in the Pacific. Similarly, there is also wider sharing in the social work community of PNG issues, knowledge and learning and teaching models and approaches.

At Monash, the partnership created an opportunity for two graduates to spend a semester at UPNG as teaching associates. There have been clear benefits to teaching and research, including the opportunity to contribute to knowledge about issues of social work internationalisation/localisation; this has directly informed teaching, a particularly important factor given the changing nature of the social work student cohort in Australia, with considerable growth in international students. There has also been the opportunity to contribute to research about field education – social work’s ‘signature pedagogy’. The presence of a UPNG academic as a graduate research student at Monash has had a more difficult to measure impact. Indeed, much of what has transpired cannot be quantified. The head of the social work strand at UPNG (Author 3 UPNG) sums it up: “For [those who have had access to further study], their lives will never be the same again. That is the heart-warming thing about the Partnership that probably won’t be written about”.

The question of whether we should seek future institutional support for the program presents as a paradox. On the one hand the absence of a secure institutional footing accompanied by secure funding and formal instruments to moderate our work is a limitation. As others have noted, there is a clear need for institutional support over the long term (Butterfield, 2007; Hamrita, 2011) but this has to be balanced against the risk that there will continue to be domination of the developing nation, by the developed nation, embedded in a backdrop of dependence on former colonial administrators (Swift-Morgan, 2012) – the view this collaborative project acknowledges

and subsequently address throughout our partnership through empowerment, in an equal and transparent manner.

There is ample evidence that institutional supports, which often see one partner become dominant, may also undermine a relationship that has been constructed as being between equal partners rather than Monash as the foreign 'experts' (Bhatta, 2011; Coxon and Munce, 2008; Guthrie, 2012; Hamrita, 2011; Samoff and Carrol, 2004; Swift-Morgan, 2012). As asserted by Coxon and Munce (2008) aid relationships centrally involve a power relationship which can impact significantly on small nation states. Interestingly, Mafile'o (2016) suggests that systemic support is needed for such partnerships, with a focus on institutional, not just personal relationships. Yet, what we have found is a little in contrast: that it is the individual relationships that drive this partnership and make it productive. Although this does perhaps depend on what is defined as 'good outcomes', for us, this may be captured by a desire to keep working together, a genuine celebration of our joint and individual successes, and solid relationships which mean we 'go the extra mile' for others in the team. The lack of formal structures leaves us in a position of reliance on institutional goodwill, rather than institutional input, regulation and oversight. Arguably, this reality has enhanced the capacity of the players 'on the ground' to determine both the priority needs to be addressed and to agree the appropriate strategy to meet these needs. Both teams hold a view that the partnership ought to be sustained.

Discussion: integrating ideas, research and practice

In their discussion of the pathways of African nations from colonial to independent status, Samoff and Carrol (2004) argue foreigners and foreign aid often play a contradictory role when they insist that nations develop national goals for development but then periodically insist that particular objectives or practices be included on that national agenda. Where an unequal relationship already exists, this approach reinforces that inequality and undermines the capacity to build partnerships between equal, albeit different, stakeholders. Subsequently they claim:

A partnership ought to be an arrangement that goes beyond technical assistance and external support – to be something other than foreign aid a partnership must involve a collaboration that can reasonably be expected to have mutual (though not necessarily identical) benefits ... partnerships involve mutual learning ... to create understandings that permit learners to transform their situation (Samoff and Carrol, 2004: 115).

This is an idealised concept of partnership in a context in which the conditions experienced by the respective partners may differ significantly, as is the case when reviewing our respective country profiles. Nevertheless, and although the project was funded by an aid agency in its early phases, Monash staff gave considerable thought to their approach. The framework selected was based on knowledge and understanding of key social work approaches, notably working in partnership, key ethical requirements concerned with anti-oppressive practices (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2010) and insights gleaned from another experience in internationalisation (Brydon, 2010) that suggested a good understanding of the socio-political context of the 'target' country was imperative for forming collaborative and sustainable relationships. Within this context Monash staff were keen to avoid the mistakes of emerging from a position of power and of pre-setting the agenda (Swift-Morgan, 2012) and to emphasise cooperation and understanding from across a range of players (Pawar, 2010).

From the UPNG perspective, this was the first experience of a collaborative partnership that focused on learning and development for both staff and program. A critical issue for UPNG, operating under severe resource constraints, while also managing heavy teaching loads and

administrative loads, was to realise that such a partnership could give added meaning to work being undertaken. More specifically, the partnership offered an opportunity to 'breathe'; to take stock of program activities and to consolidate efforts in strengthening social work education and practice in a culturally diverse and changing context. In particular, the partnership offered staff in leadership positions an opportunity to actively participate in and benefit from the partnership, for example through conference participation and presentations. This includes the opportunities that academics from UPNG have taken to participate in and present at conferences in Australia, and participation in higher degree research conferences; and to lead and shape a documentary focusing on what is working well in social work in PNG. In essence, members from both teams have reached a position of feeling integral and equal partners in the project. One of the positive examples is the inclusion of junior academics from UPNG, who have benefited from coaching and supervision in research, publications and teaching. From the team UPNG perspective, this partnership was and is a partnership of two "worlds" of social work – yet both worlds adapted themselves to a common "round table" of greater concern for the social work profession, underpinned by the principles of integrity and transparency. This partnership has blossomed into a "special relationship" that has gone beyond funding and institutional arrangements to collaborative work involving members of both teams, driven by values of shared learning and professional development.

From our analysis of the literature, aspiring for equal partnership was noted as of particular importance. We also noted a concern regarding the capacity of aid-driven projects to be disempowering (Bhatta, 2011; Buchert, 1995; Coxon and Munce 2008; Guthrie 2012; Hamrita, 2011; Matthews, 2003; Samoff and Carrol, 2004; Singh et al., 2011; Smith, 2005; Swift-Morgan, 2012). Secondly, there needs to be a focus on capacity building and sustainable development outcomes (Aikman, 2010; Butterfield, 2007; Hamrita, 2011; McConkey and Mariga, 2011; Matthews, 2003; Samsoff and Carrol, 2004; Smith, 2005). Thirdly, there is a potential for academic partnerships to be conceptualised as allowing participants to become 'development actors' while noting that curriculum developed in one context cannot be simply transported to another context and expected to succeed in the absence of detailed consideration of local conditions and culture (Butterfield, 2007; Coxon and Munce, 2008; Gervedink Nujhuis, Voogt and Pieters, 2012; Guthrie, 2012; Nikku, 2012; Singh et al., 2011; Swift-Morgan, 2012). Fourthly, there is a need for local champions (Butterfield, 2007; Nikku, 2012). Fifthly, there is a need for active participation by those in the 'recipient' country within a context of downward transparency as a necessary condition to achieve sustained commitment (Jackson et al., 2011; Samoff and Carrol, 2004). To put this another way, it is a matter of building the partnership through careful negotiation that reflects both a strong commitment to collaboration and mutual respect for each other.

Horwath and Shardlow (2004) indicate that trans-national educational projects are frequently dependent on developing effective communication, while also noting that at times this is made more complex by the requirement to use interpreters. These authors also note that trans-national educational projects also need to be developed in a way that involves explaining the meaning of ideas rather than a literal transmission of shades of professional practice. However, relevant to these suggested concepts, they do not adequately reflect the depth of analysis required to underpin such projects or the question of who needs to assume the 'driver's seat'.

The key to our partnership is been that it is been built on foundations of honesty and transparency, embedded in social work values and principles that respect difference. In particular, there has been space for the project to evolve in a fashion that emphasises building capacity rather than being funding-driven and having pre-determined outcomes. We have been mindful to avoid the notion of directly transporting ideas and concepts from one context to another.

Instead, the sharing of ideas has occurred within a framework of paying careful attention of the ‘goodness of fit’ of any particular idea or concept. As for local champions, for both teams there has been institutional support at senior levels, although the ‘championship’ is yet to extend beyond the institutional walls.

Within the work units from which the teams have been drawn, there have been different levels of commitment and enthusiasm. At times original players in the collaboration have moved to other roles and have been unable to maintain their involvement; this has been the case for both teams and we honour the input and insights those team members have contributed. For Monash partners there has been a critically reflective journey of applying foundation social work ethics and values, drawn from practice, to a different kind of social work relationship. We have been mindful of the need to adopt anti-oppressive approaches and to not assume the position of ‘expert’. For the UPNG team there has been a blend of enthusiastic younger academics seeking direction alongside more experienced academics with a range of commitments other than the partnership, thus presenting challenges for managing and driving the project from that perspective. However, none of us who have been involved has any question that this is worthwhile.

The future

As noted by Samoff and Carrol (2004: 156) the promise is powerful and the problems perhaps equally so. However, it is not suggested that international academic partnerships should be avoided but rather that the challenges need to be openly acknowledged and discussed (Samoff and Carrol, 2004). It is our view that we have been able to openly acknowledge and explore immediately apparent differences in our respective positions. Our different contexts, including historical trajectories, different resource bases and different levels of development have been openly acknowledged and discussed. However, we have been less able to explore more nuanced differences such as the implications of the project being originally vested within an aid framework and what that implies for respective roles, position, status and power; the differing day-to-day realities such as barriers to UPNG staff being able to attend conferences that Monash staff attend with relative ease; and ongoing struggles for the respective collaborators to maintain the dream in the face of diminishing institutional support. Of particular interest is our apparent silence in actively exploring these more subtle aspects. It may be due to the tyranny of distance but there may be other less obvious barriers including the extent to which any of us can truly transcend our own cultural lens and political contexts.

In the realm of contemporary debates concerning the nature of international social work and international social work education we believe that this is an emerging model of how cross-national partnerships might unfold in a fashion that avoids claims of professional imperialism and silencing of indigenous voices. We do not claim to have a definitive model but one that remains a work in progress.

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