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Institut social de Lille

Opening our Academic training to the World!

Social work in France, unlike many other countries, is not an academic discipline. It is taught in professional schools, and the doctorate in Social work was only opened in 2013 in Paris.

The Institut Social de Lille, one of the Institutes affiliated with the Catholic University, has been a pioneer in the development of European partnerships to foster Academic training at a Masters and PhD level, and to promote research in social work. A European Master's of Social Work opened in Lille in 2008, based on a strong network of partnerships with other contributing European universities through a research network (European Research in Social Work, based in Ostrava, Czech Republic).

To this day, the international dimension of social work remains a major component of our identity and we strive to offer each one of our BSW or MSW students, at different stages in their education, some exposure to international social work. In a context of financial restrictions and competition between schools of social work, our long-term involvement in international projects is a major asset and is determining in many students' decision to join us.

Following and enquiry in 2016, we have realized that « classic » Academic offers to study abroad are not viable for a growing number of our students, due to financial or family-related constraints. However, they have expressed their interest in other forms of exposure, such as international lectures, workshops, or conferences. Lille is ideally located within easy reach of three major European capitals: international exposure « at home » can be easily organized.

Our poster presentation would emphasize our core projects and partnerships involving our students, as well as the pedagogical outcomes of this international dynamic:

- Participation in international symposiums: annual Spring School in Ostrava (Czech Republic), annual international Symposium on child protection with Lille, Antwerp and Breda (BSW), and other occasional events in relation with our European Research Network.
- Field placements and semesters abroad for BSW students: we encourage incoming and outward mobility by organizing one-on-one tutoring and group sessions for students to raise awareness on intercultural issues. We also welcome annually for a semester a group of foreign students enrolled in a Master's of International Migrations with Valencia University.

- Field trips throughout Europe with BSW (annual) and MSW (quarterly) students: lectures and visits in social work institutions.
- Foreign lecturers.
- Overseas partnerships (India, the Congo...)

Through our students' testimonies, we will highlight the outcomes of international exposure in their professional and personal paths. The outcomes are many. Generally, international exposure will raise the quality of the academic training through international cooperation and mutual discovery of theory and practice in a given country.

It allows students to: gain a broader perspective on social work practices and social policies in their own country, through comparative analysis, in order to question widely accepted practices in the social field; to implement best practices; and to foster constructive criticism. Our master's students are required to do a comparative research between two European countries.

In a context of growing individualization of the students' curriculums, our international offer has given us margins to adapt our training to various profiles and career paths.