Experiences from web-exchanges

LISA EKSTAM, SARAH MCGINLEY, JACKIE FOX, KRISTINA ORBAN, JESSIKA VAMMERLUND, CIARA KELSEY, IRENE MORRISON & ANITA FRIMPONG
The overall aims of the web-exchanges were to:

- use projects as a vehicle for engagement in and discussion of occupational issues that promote a deeper understanding of the theoretical concepts associated with occupational therapy
- engage with the international community to strengthen and deepen professional identity
- facilitate the development of intercultural skills to support the increasingly diverse populations in all three countries
- stimulate debate and discussion about new solutions to similar occupational issues for individuals, groups and communities.
The general setup of web-exchanges

• The web-exchange was carried out in mixed University groups during a 10 week-period.

• The students engaged in discussions regarding how an occupation-focused perspective might support vulnerable and excluded groups in all three countries.

• Each of the Universities developed learning opportunities where groups of students had the opportunity to meet and engage with a vulnerable and excluded group/community e.g. older adults, those with visual impairment, and those with mental health concerns.
The students met over five sessions focusing on the following themes to facilitate and energize rich discussions:

1) introduction – getting to know each other
2) occupational injustice
3) what an occupational perspective can add
4) sustainability
5) preparations for presentations.
• Learning the format
• Integrating virtual meetings into the timetable
• Accommodating existing modules
• Technical support

Web-exchange 2017
Feedback, Reflection and Learning....

Positives

"The students' movies were good and informative"

"I feel more passionate about my role as an occupational therapist"

"It was good to exchange with other people who are speaking the same occupational language about issues and helps you to think about the bigger picture"

Suggestions

"The sound and technical difficulties made it hard to understand"

"Be at the same stages within our projects"

"It was challenging to have to complete extra work on top of an already packed programme"
• Introduction of teaching materials
• Improving technical issues
• Weather alert!

Web-exchange 2018
Example of a presentation in 2018: Supporting children who undertaking carer roles

NUIG- Hannah, Kim, Grace, Catherine
Lund- Patricia Ezzi Larsson, Marie Ekdahl, Malin Friman
Southampton- Adrian McIntyre, Meg Selmes, Olivia Langford, Elena Foulkes, Emily Watson, Michelle Pagett
The organisations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Galway</th>
<th>Southampton</th>
<th>Lund</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Carers Ireland (Carer's Association Ireland)</td>
<td>Romsey Young Carers Project</td>
<td>1. Socialttjänsten Lund (Social service in Lund)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support young carers:</td>
<td>Working with children and young people aged</td>
<td>2. Malmö stad - anhörigkonsult (Relative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information &amp; advice</td>
<td>5-25 who support family members with long-term</td>
<td>consultant in Malmö city)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>conditions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Occupational Needs Globally

- Awareness and information
- Occupational balance
  - Meaningful activities
  - Play activities
  - Social activities
- Counselling
- Feel comfortable with their family
- School support
- Sense of coherence
Study on Young Carers (Fives, et. al, 2010)

• 56% live with one-parent families
• 10-14 hours per week was the average length of time spent caring
• 10% care for more than one person
• 25% care for a sibling with a disability
• Young carers are more likely to be not in education, training or employment
• Young carers living with a parent with mental ill health are two and a half times more likely to develop a mental health issue than their peers
### Occupational Injustices evident in our groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational deprivation</th>
<th>Occupational alienation</th>
<th>Occupational marginalisation</th>
<th>Occupational imbalance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children missing out on activities particularly play &amp; leisure activities</td>
<td>Children being isolated from society</td>
<td>Children unable to make their own decisions</td>
<td>Children spend more time carrying out caring activities rather than on leisure, play etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children feel ashamed of their relatives - don't have friends round to play</td>
<td>Children viewed as &quot;troublesome&quot; in school due to lateness or absences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children viewed as different</td>
<td>Some children can't take part without parent's consent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of awareness/support in schools, making children feel even more isolated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## How the countries and organisations are meeting the occupational needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Galway</th>
<th>Southampton</th>
<th>Lund</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legislation:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Legislation:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Legislation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• National Carers Strategy 2012 aims to increase awareness about young carers</td>
<td>• Section 17 – Childrens Act 1989</td>
<td><em>SoL 5 kap 10§ - Offer support to ease for careers to relatives with Illness, Elderly or Disabilities.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Republic of Ireland, the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 aimed at children in primary and post-primary level education</td>
<td>- Places a duty on local authorities to assess whether a young carer in the area needs support and what those needs are.</td>
<td><em>HSL §2g - Particularly pay attention to children's needs for information, advice and support if the parent or some other adult in the child's life has 1) Psychological disorders or psychological disability, 2) Physical disease or injury or 3) Alcohol or other addiction</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Organisation</td>
<td>• Both organizations:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Liaising with local schools to prevent Occupational Alienation</td>
<td>• Active recruitment and information/education to school nurses/teachers, adult psychiatry, collaborations, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Weekly sessions to combat the occupational injustices experienced</td>
<td>• Available for individuals to seek out themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Offer interventions to support the children's individual needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Due to resources – they both did a great effort to support the children's needs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How can an Occupational Perspective add to those organizations'?

- Use activities as an aid (Occupation based occupational therapy) to help children
- OTs are good at seeing people as a whole as well as part of a group
- Awareness of the person's social situation and how a person's illness can impact on the rest of the family (e.g. educate teachers on strategies using assessments)
- Facilitate groups using skills we have as OTs
- Reduce the stigma around carers & raising awareness in other services (e.g. schools)
- Can apply occupational models to inform our practice (e.g. VALMO)
ValMO-Model (Value and Meaning in Occupations Model)

(Persson, Erlandsson, Eklund & Iwarsson, 2001)
Sustainability

**Educating**
Teachers and caregivers regarding the stress these children are under. Teachers & caregivers on identifying when a child requires help and support.

**Collaboration**
Linking in with other organizations that provide supports to children dealing with these situations e.g. In Ireland - Barnardos- who actively campaign for the rights of children.

**Advocate**
Time to be with friends and to take part in sport and other activities or interests. Help with school work and timetabling from teachers.
What have we learned from one another?

- Different countries have different approaches, legislations and interventions.
- It is important to look to other countries and cultures for different approaches on interventions. We have a lot to learn from each other.
- The services available to carers
- About the lack of financial support young carers have
- How young carers are identified and looked after in different countries
Aon Ceisteanna?

Any Questions?

Har ni några frågor?
Web Exchange 2019: Broadening Horizons
Working with new partners: 2019

- Lund University, Sweden
- National University Ireland, Galway
- University of Southampton, UK
- University of Vic, Spain
- Bournemouth University, UK
- Riga University, Latvia
2019 Themes

Community Organisations and services for:

- Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)
- Dementia
- Mental Health and/or Learning Disabilities
- Children and/or young carers
- Refugees
Similarities & Differences 2017 - 2019

Similarities:
- Preparatory activities used to suit needs of institution
- 5 web-based discussions
- Zoom/Skype

Differences:
- Virtual poster room
- Discussant assigned to each theme
Staff Experience of 2019 Web Exchange

"I was dreading this.......2019 was my 1st experience of it......the organisation and technology demands felt too great – but it was absolutely worth the effort!"
(UoS Program Lead)

"It is no secret that the web exchange was something very new for both us and our students....the biggest problems during the exchange was with the technologies. However, this also helped students to develop their problem solving, time management and other soft skills."
(Riga University Lead)
Staff Experience of 2019 Web Exchange

"One of the challenges of the web exchange as a new partner, was around not having access to all the materials that the main partners could see, i.e. the developing e-posters. Having administrator rights as well would have allowed all partners to support students as they pulled their work together"

“Taking on a discussant role was very new for me. I was daunted by facilitating discussion across 6 different sites, and conscious of our partners for whom English was not a first language. The skill will stand to me in future events I have no doubt” (NUIG lead discussant)
Staff Experience of 2019 Web Exchange

"I want to comment on the great organization of the project by the University of Lund.....It is not easy to coordinate in a virtual way six institutions. Our warmest congratulations. Regarding the participation of our students, it is necessary to comment that due to the different levels of English, and also of the confidence with their linguistic abilities, they have lived the project with enough anxiety".

(Vic University Lead)

"I think our students did a great effort to invite and include the Spanish students in the discussions. I agree on the language barrier. However, I think the students solved it in a proper way. In the future we need to reflect on how we can bring students together in joint discussions even if language skills differ".

(Lund University Lead)
Learning Toolbox for ePosters

• Learning Toolbox LTB is a software platform that allows sharing knowledge for conferences and for education/training.  
  
  http://support.ltb.io/  
  
• We searched for - and found a technology platform that could support students and staff from six universities in working together across countries. Ideally this technology would allow the students to interact, build, present, share, discuss and further develop their intercultural skills and learning.  
  
• The Kubify team worked with the MIROTS staff to support this activity by providing 3 webinars involving all MIROTS partners, training staff in using the platform. All six universities were trained to provide the local support.  
  
• The webinars were recorded and possible to get access to for all staff.
Learning Toolbox for ePosters
https://api.ltb.io/show/BBHGB

MIROTS: Children with occupational needs in Sweden and Spain

The focus of our project is the group of children with occupational needs. Specifically, children of parents with alcohol- and substance abuse, mental illness as well as children which have migrated.

[QR Code]

https://api.ltb.io/show/BBHGB
The student experience
Occupational Science
Leading Role
E-posters
Conference
Integration with occupational science module

Helpful framework
Structure
Timeframe
Timing
Academic recognition
Leading Role

- Group sizes
- Responsibilities
- Professional skills
- Structure
ePosters

- Manageable
- Examples
- Relevance
- Standards
Presentation

- Technology
- Problem-solving and professional identity
- Online and in-person mix

This Photo by Unknown author is licensed under [CC BY-NC].
THE MIROTS LEARNING EXPERIENCE 2019

BY ANITA AND IRENE
• People with Learning disabilities and mental health issues
• Young carers with occupational needs
• People with dementia
• People with acquired brain injury
Diversity  Eye-opening  ENRICHMENT
Perspective  Challenge  Without borders
THANK YOU
• The use of a Technical expert is advisable to support student communications and Virtual Conferences to ensure audio and visual outputs.

• It is essential to timetable test-sessions into the planning and preparation of the exchange for them to run as smoothly as possible.

• The use of an innovative and intuitive web-based programme to support student development and output was invaluable.
• Even though independent, self-directed learning is encouraged, students need ongoing support to manage technical difficulties, differences in understanding between the student groups, and guidance towards their presentations.

• Consideration should be given to the placement of the web-exchange in the semester. As it involves 6-10 weeks work for students, interaction with busy times of the semester and/or exam periods is not advised.

• Where students are using a second language more time should be included in the schedule to allow rest periods and processing time during discussions.