



Transforming the Field  
Education Landscape

# INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM AND PRACTICUM

*Presented by*

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January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023

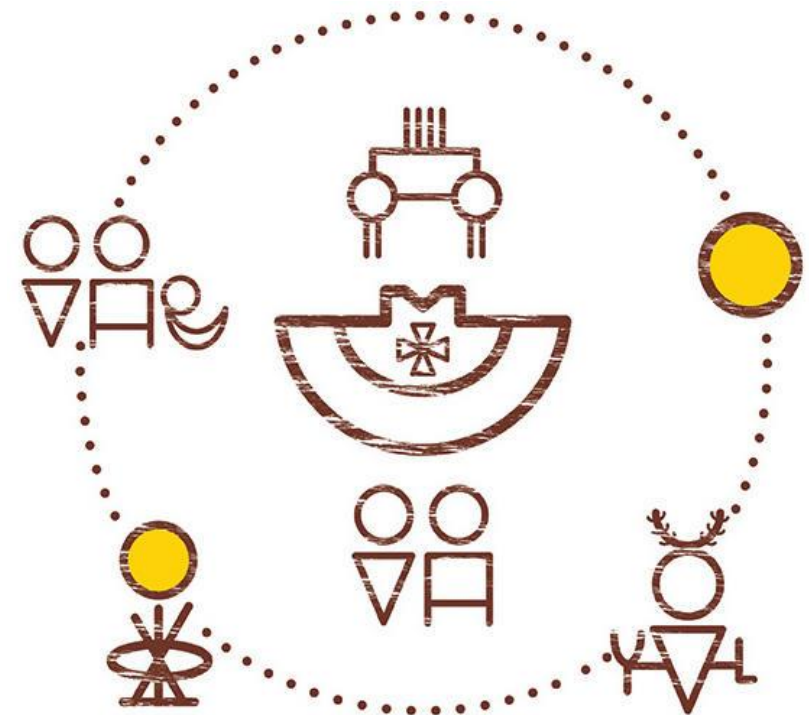
# TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The University of Calgary respectfully acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, a traditional gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples including the Cree, Blackfoot, Metis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway/Saulteaux/Anishinaabe, Inuit, and many others whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our vibrant community.

We acknowledge that people may be joining this gathering from other parts of the world and we respectfully acknowledge the different territories others may be on. If you wish, we invite you to offer your own land acknowledgements.

*L'Université de Calgary reconnaît respectueusement qu'elle est située sur les terres du Traité 6, lieu de rassemblement traditionnel pour de nombreux peuples autochtones parmi lesquels sont les Cris, les Pieds-Noirs, les Métis, les Sioux des Nakotas, les Iroquois, les Dénés, les Ojibwés/Saulteaux/Anichinabés, les Inuits et bien d'autres encore. Leurs histoires, leurs langues et leurs cultures continuent d'influencer notre communauté dynamique.*

*Nous tenons également à remercier les personnes des autres parties du monde qui ne sont pas avec nous à Calgary. Nous aimerions souligner les différents territoires sur lesquels vous vous trouvez. Et nous vous invitons à proposer vos propres reconnaissances territoriales, si vous le souhaitez.*



ii' taa'poh'to'p  
University of Calgary Office of Indigenous Engagement

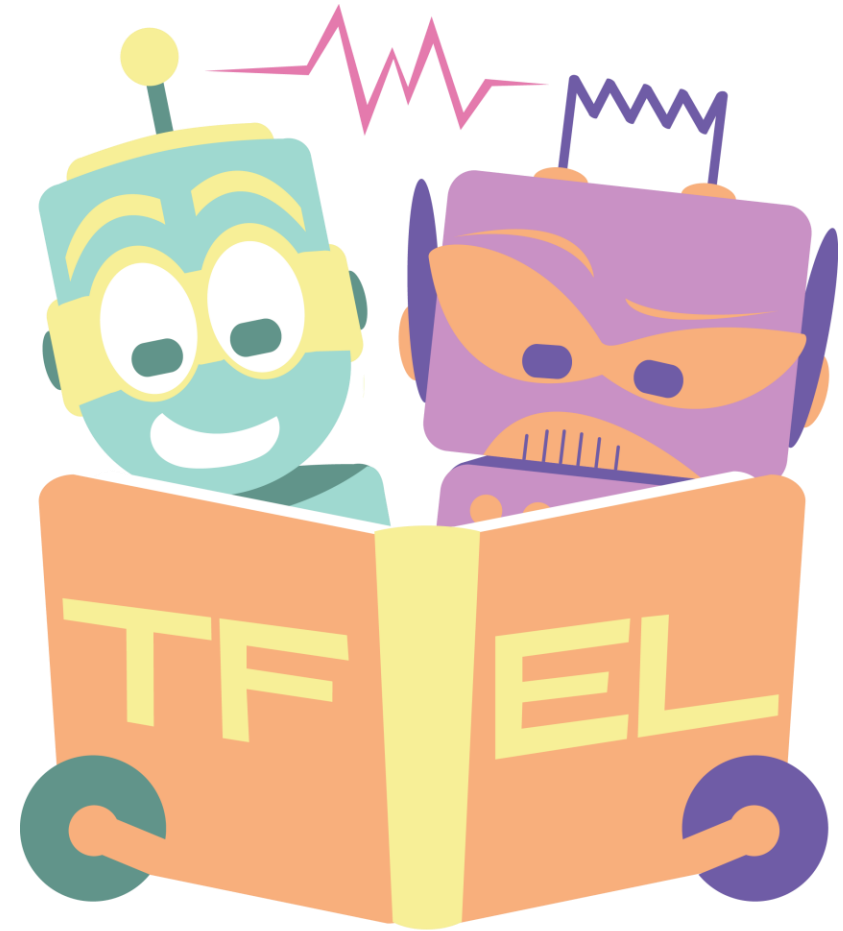
# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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CRSH  SSHRC

# OUTLINE

- Context
- International Community Development
- Discussion
- International Practicum Training Module
- Conclusion



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# INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: CATALYZING FACTORS IN PROGRAM REDESIGN

- Increased inequalities, structural injustices, neo-colonial agenda
- Extensive displacement of people due to wars, conflicts and oppressions
- Require creative strategies sustainable responses from international social work.
- Social work lens to ISD
- Social work practitioners working in local communities are witnessing the intersection of global challenges.
- Flexibility
- Blended Learning



# CONTEXT

- The field of international social work and social development is growing.
- Over the last decade, social work education programs have been called to prepare students to respond to the changing global context by critically questioning colonialism and imperialism, which are perpetuated in development aid programs and influenced by sociopolitical dynamics (Ife, 2010).
- Field education is considered a central and critical component of social work education because it allows space for the integration of knowledge, values, and skills in the hands-on context of the field (CASWE, n.d.).
- The literature shows that individuals trained and educated in international social work practice are needed around the world (Das & Anand, 2014; Pawar, 2017).

# INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Social work educators are challenged to prepare students with innovative and proactive approaches to respond effectively to pressing social, economic, and political realities.
- A committee was established to redesign the graduate program in International Community Development (ICD).
- An ethical and theoretical framework was developed to guide the curriculum redesign and transformative learning approach.
- The ICD program in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary is offered mostly online, with a mix of real time and asynchronous learning.

# FUNDAMENTAL ASSUMPTIONS IN DEFINING INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL WORK/SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT?

- Tendency to present international social work without a critical analysis and attention to power relations.
- We cannot ignore the impact of historical and contemporary dynamics of imperialism, colonization, wars and oppressions and Western hegemony in the 'new world order' (Haug, 2005)
- Our definition of international social work involves **critically examining global neoliberal realities that promote market-oriented ideologies and to question their impacts on transnational experiences of marginalization.**
- An active role of the International Social Workers, activists, civil society organizations in creative policy and practice alternatives in advancing transformative change toward environmentally sustainable and socially equitable solutions.



# DEFINING INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL WORK

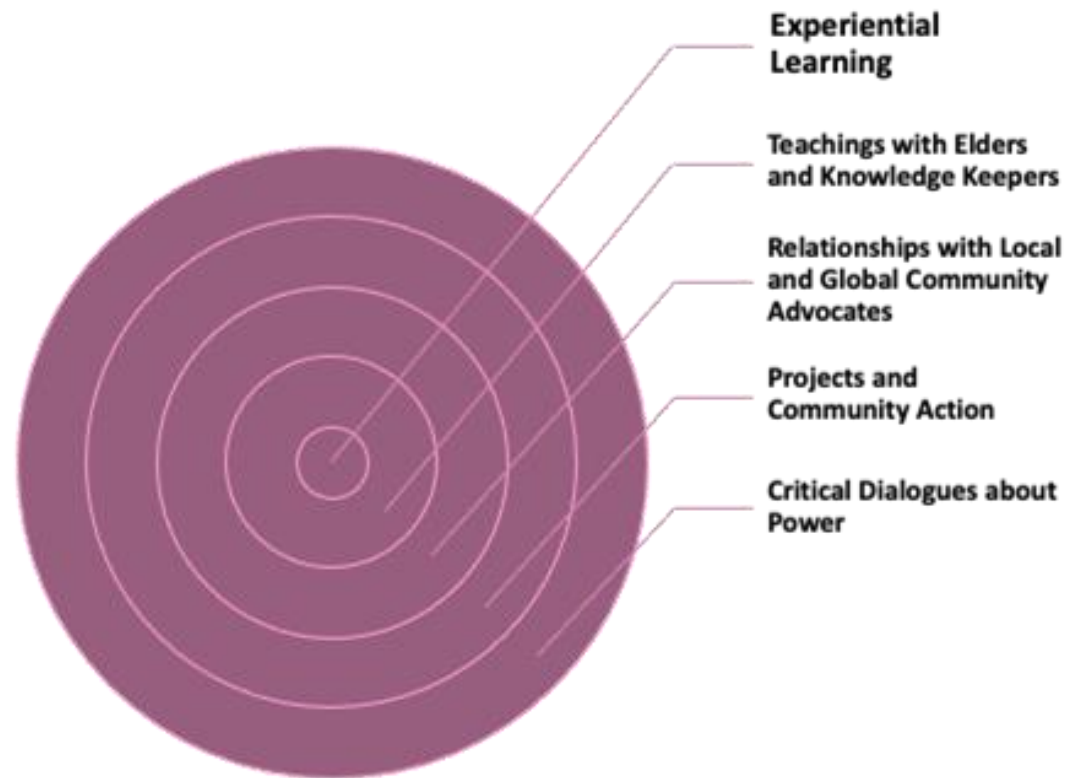
- Blending the values and principles of social work and international social development, international social work can be understood as “international professional action and the capacity for international action by the social work profession and its members to promote human dignity and human rights and enhance human well-being. International action has four dimensions: international related domestic practice and advocacy, professional exchange, international practice, and international policy development and advocacy” (Healy & Thomas, 2021, p. 7-8).

# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Program is  
rooted in  
complementary  
critical and  
Indigenous  
theories and  
worldviews:

- Anti-colonialism
- Postcolonialism
- Transnationalism
- Indigenous Worldviews
- Anti-Racism
- Transnational Feminism
- Anti-Oppression
- Mutual aid

# A TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING PRAXIS



# CURRICULUM PLAN

The curriculum includes four courses that explores policies, practices and advance ethical approaches to working with diverse populations in global and local contexts.

Teaching methods and strategies include mentorship from journey guides, case studies, experiential learning, digital storytelling, community participation/action and international social work practicum.

Centralizing a community-oriented curriculum, critical theories and global social justice approaches blended with creative pedagogical methods, this framework can be contextualized and applied to other regions outside Canada.

- ✓ Theories and interventions
- ✓ International social work in Canada
- ✓ Sustainable development goals
- ✓ International development project
- ✓ Residencies

# INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

- Overview of the scope and nature of ICD that combines theoretical approaches with policy and practice focused frameworks.
- Analyze Social Development (SD) theories and practice models from a historical and critical perspective, focusing on their socio-political-economic dimensions.
- Alternative ideologies and alternative development approaches.
- Ethics, knowledge and skills required for international social work practice in the Canadian context.
- Colonialism and nation-building; power, privilege, systemic disadvantage and intersectionality; migration, forced migration, trafficking and (re)settlement.
- Popular education, experiential and relational learning to promote critical self-reflection and solidarity practices.
- Develop and enhance skills that can be employed in the contexts of community, organization and policy work in Canada.

# LESSONS LEARNED THROUGH THE DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

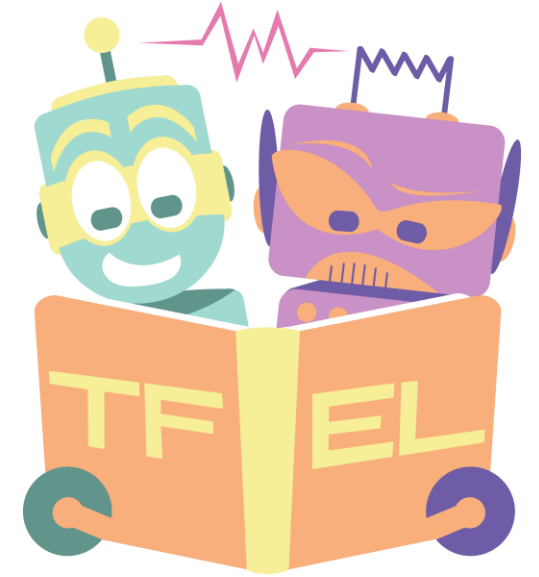
- The importance of international social development programs for social work
- The impacts of neoliberalism on higher education
- Global pandemic & the transition to online
- Implication of design restriction on class management & student engagement with the material
- Balancing between helping students interrogate the politics of development work and gain necessary skills and techniques to facilitate international development practice
- Opportunities and challenges of international practicum
- Residencies

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02615479.2022.2090538?journalCode=cswe20>

A photograph showing several hands of different skin tones reaching up to touch a small globe of the Earth. The globe is centered in the frame, showing blue oceans and green landmasses. The background is a solid yellow color. The text 'International & Community Development' is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font.

# International & Community Development

## DISCUSSION



# INTERNATIONAL PRACTICUM TRAINING MODULE

PART TWO



# CONTEXT FOR INTERNATIONAL PRACTICUM TRAINING MODULE

- The international practicum study was designed by the TFEL team to learn about international field placements, or international practicum, using a mixed-methods online survey.
- Social work field education coordinators and directors in accredited social work programs in Canada were invited to respond to the survey. The survey was developed to better understand the current content of international practicum including placement models, logistics, resources, and perceptions and experiences regarding international social work field practica.
- The study found that Social work education programs in Canada are experiencing significant multi-layered challenges with delivering international practicum experiences for students.
- A training module was developed by the members of the TFEL project after learning and understanding the current context of international practicum including placement models, logistics, resources, as well as challenges and experiences from field education coordinators and directors of CASWE-ACFTS accredited social work education programs across Canada.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

## MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRACTICUM SUBCOMMITTEE

- Yunna Al-Ademi (Wilfred Laurier University)
- Kelly Allison (The University of British Columbia)
- Julie L. Drolet (TFEL Project Director)
- Amy Fulton (University of Calgary)
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- Sheri M. McConnell (Memorial University)
- Vina Sandher (York University)
- Shella Zagada (University of Waterloo)

## CONTRIBUTORS OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRACTICUM TRAINING MODULE

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- Mohammed Nurudeen Musah (PhD Student Research Assistant, University of Calgary)
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# INTERNATIONAL PRACTICUM TRAINING MODULE

- The training module is divided into three parts:
  - I. Overview of international social work
  - II. International practicum preparation
  - III. Supervision and use of technology

# OVERVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL WORK

- The profession of social work is engaged in addressing complex global challenges including the structural injustices and neo-colonial agendas that have contributed to increased inequalities worldwide (Jamal et al., 2022).
- Poverty, social inequities, racial injustice, environmental degradation, impacts of climate change, climate hazards and disasters, and forced migration are global issues increasingly seen and managed by social workers in their practice.
- A practicum abroad allows social work students to address global social challenges in an international setting and prepares them for international social work practice (Jönsson & Flem, 2018; Matthew & Lough, 2017).
- International practicums are defined as social work field placements that occur abroad in another country, where students experience social work practice in diverse practice contexts, multicultural settings, and learn about the values of international social work (Askeland et al., 2018; Engstrom & Jones, 2007).

# BENEFITS OF INTERNATIONAL PRACTICUM

- Intercultural experience and competency
- Gain knowledge about international social work
- Gain global perspectives
- Student interest in international field work
- Gain linguistic skills
- Gain knowledge & experience with Indigenous communities
- Choice-based model
- Understanding structural forces
- Critical reflection
- Understanding the effects of colonization & Western perspectives
- Opportunity to gain international social work practice experience
- Mitigating competition for placements due to the high numbers of students in Canada
- Encourage diversity & intercultural richness

# CHALLENGES OF INTERNATIONAL PRACTICUM

- Affiliation agreements are difficult to secure
- Building long-term partnerships for international practicum
- Establishing student interest in international field work
- Distinguishing between the student's desire to travel versus desire in an international practicum
- Time constraints and zone issues
- Program and technological barriers
- Lack of resources and supervision
- Processing & confirming practicum placements are a lot of work
- Meeting standards of accreditation
- Language barriers
- Health & safety of students while abroad

# INTERNATIONAL PRACTICUM PREPARATION

- It is critically important to prepare social workers to practice in an international context and to adequately address the global challenges.
- “The idea that promoting international exchanges in social work requires little more than an adventurous spirit, a willingness to endure discomforts, and a large dose of good intentions is widespread but naïve and is likely to result in frequent cultural misunderstandings” (Hokenstad et al., 1992, p. 21).
- Canadian students are exposed to more ethical challenges and dilemmas in international field placements compared to students who complete their practicum locally (Jönsson & Flem, 2020).
- The inclusion of a critically reflective framework that facilitates an understanding of how culture shapes a person’s explicit values, beliefs, and worldviews is integral to international exchange students’ critical preparation process (Jones et al., 2018).

# INTERNATIONAL PRACTICUM PREPARATION

When considering an international practicum, there are several questions students should ask themselves prior to its pursuit:

- Does my post-secondary institution or program offer the option to do an international practicum?
- Am I a suitable candidate for an International Practicum?
- Why do I want to do an International Practicum?
- Where do I want to do an International Practicum?
- What are my learning goals for practicum?

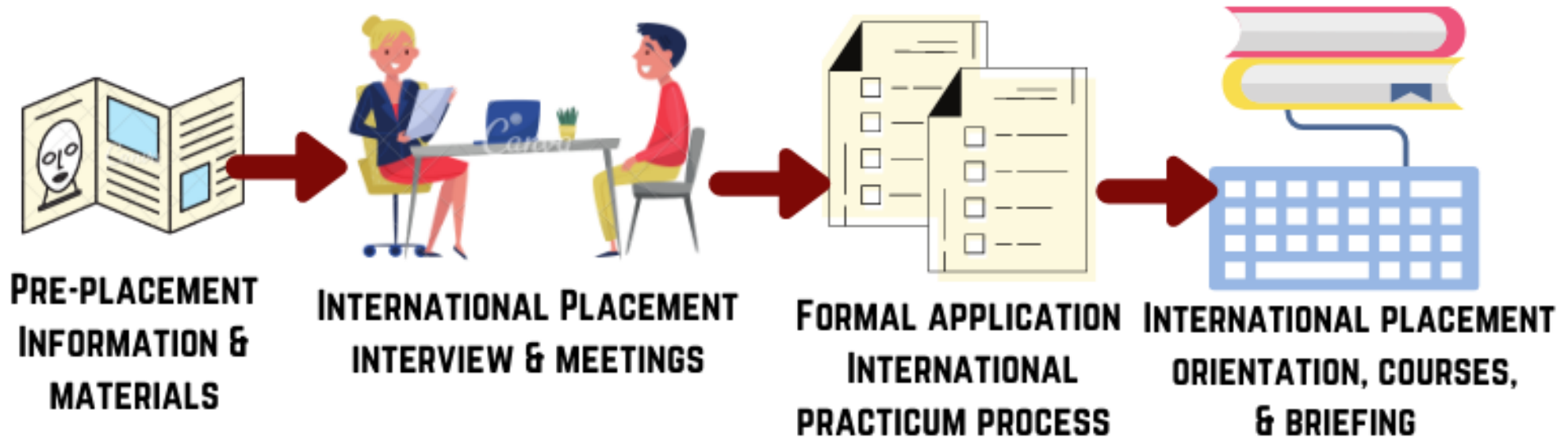


# INTERNATIONAL PRACTICUM PREPARATION

Preparing for an international practicum takes considerable planning and coordination to ensure that students have a successful and meaningful experience. Key elements for considerations are:

- ✓ Good academic standing
- ✓ Completion of all core courses
- ✓ Application or proposal for international practicum
- ✓ Inquiries go through field education coordinator
- ✓ Interview
- ✓ Review and approval by field education committee
- ✓ Student requirement to find placement and deciding location of placement
- ✓ Pre-departure seminar
- ✓ Language efficiency
- ✓ An overview of the host country and culture and general research on the country's social systems.

# INTERNATIONAL PRACTICUM PREPARATION



# PLACEMENT MODELS

Currently, the most common models of international practicum include the on-site model, one-time model, the reciprocal or exchange model, and the neighbour-country model.

- **On-site model** - involves an on-site faculty member who acts as the field instructor and liaison between the home university and the host agency (Cleak et al., 2016).
- **One-time model** - focuses on a student's interest and relies upon informal linkages that are often facilitated by family members or personal contacts (Fox & Hugman, 2019).
- **Reciprocal or exchange model** - involves an affiliated agency in another country and an exchange relationship with the home university. Thampi (2017) proposed that a two-way exchange model between the host and the home institution can facilitate a meaningful exchange of knowledge, especially when students are trained with professional expertise in the Western practice context.
- **Neighbour-country model** - consists of neighbouring countries in close geographic proximity and is often chosen by students who are citizens/residents of that country (Fox & Hugman, 2019; Pettys et al., 2005).



## Made it to Rift Valley Children's Village

September 28, 2022



Hi Pals,

I made it to Rift Valley Children's Village! Last night I stayed at a lodge by the airport as it was too late to travel the 4 hours to the village. I had an amazing lamb curry for dinner and even tried a Kilimanjaro beer that was delicious. This morning I was picked up and we started our 4 hour journey to the village. Didas, the driver, was incredibly kind and taught me lots about the different areas that we drove through. We even saw zebra's and baboons! We finally made it to the village and I had all the emotions happening at once.



## Last Day

November 22, 2022



<https://practicumtanzania.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2022-09-28T09:54:00-07:00&max-results=7>

# SUPERVISION

- The most common models of supervision include: online, in-person, individual, group, peer-supervision (Ketner et al., 2017)
- International practicum students can be supervised by an individual field instructor or members of a team, including:
  - A faculty member of their home university
  - A faculty member of a university in the host country
  - A social worker at the host agency
  - A non-social work staff member at the host agency
  - A combination of the above

# FACILITATING INTERNATIONAL PRACTICUM

International practicum can be better facilitated by:

- Partnering with other universities
- Access to schools that have international practica
- University exchanges
- Adequate staff and supervisors
- Funding for international practicums
- Group international practicums

# CONCLUSION

- Locating international social development within social work programs acknowledges the challenges of rapidly changing sociopolitical situations around the globe and the dynamic and critical role of social workers in uplifting principles of social justice and human rights.
- The ICD curriculum includes four courses with interrelated components that might be strategically implemented in international social work and social development programs in diverse contexts.
- It is important for social work field educators to prepare practicum students in advance through course work, preparatory seminars, and pre-departure planning. Preparing for an international practicum is essential to creating a successful and meaningful experience prior to arrival at the field education destination.
- Knowledge of the on-site model, one-time model, reciprocal model, and neighbour-country model is important as each model may require different considerations during the preparation, arrival, practice, and return phases of the international field experience.
- There will continue to be a need for international practicum opportunities for students to gain international experience and skills to address global challenges.

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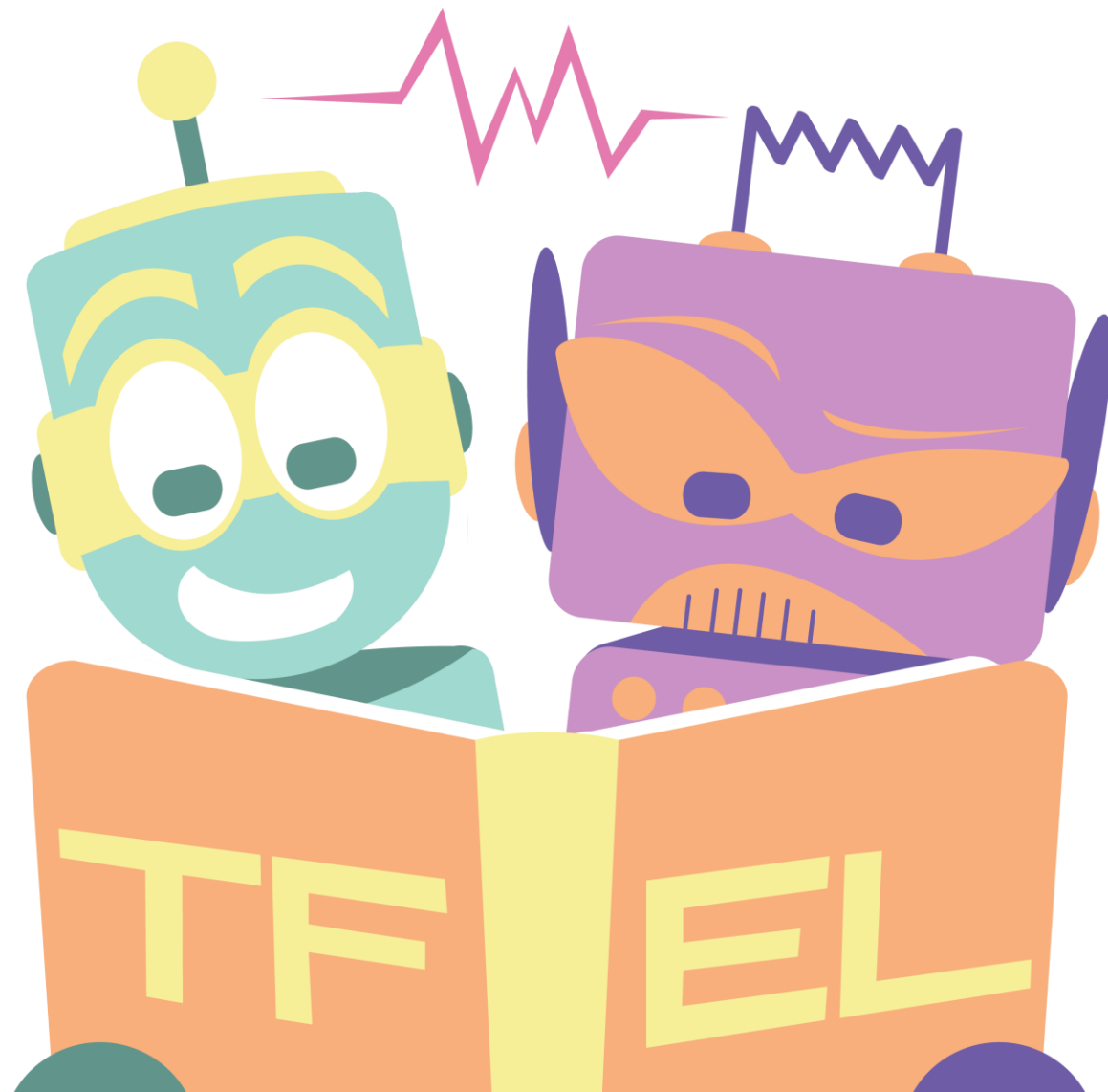


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# DISCUSSION



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For more information  
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