

Session: An untapped potential

Aim of session: Have the participants reflect on how to involve returning exchange students in their IRO work, and to share ideas with each other.

Material needed: Flip-charts, markers, post-it notes, green and red small stickers.

Time of session: 1 hour.

Description of session: International students who have returned from abroad can be a great help for IROs. They can join student organisations as volunteers, they can support the IROs directly in the office and many more things. This is a brainstorm session where the participants discuss all the tasks that IROs are responsible for and which of these, if any, former international students could be helpful with.

The facilitator introduces the topic. If he/she has good/bad examples to from his/her own IRO, that is of course very good to bring up.

The participants are asked to split up into very small groups (perhaps 2 or 3 participants) and brainstorm of tasks that can be “outsourced” to former exchange students. They write down the proposals on post-it notes. They should think freely and write down without thinking too deeply about it – this is a brainstorm phase and not a final list of suggestions.

The groups merge into bigger groups with 4-6 participants in each. They bring the post-its with them and discuss them, weighing pros and cons of each. Ideas that are considered bad are thrown away and those that are good are kept.

The facilitator puts up flip-charts on the wall and ask the participants to go up, one by one, and put the post-its with good suggestions on the wall. The facilitator moderates the discussion and, when necessary, groups similar post-its together. Each participant can say a few words about his/her suggestion when posting it.

There are now many different proposals on the wall. Each participant gets a set of green and red small stickers (perhaps 10) and all participants go up to the flip-charts and mark the good ideas with green stickers and bad ideas with red stickers. They do not have to use all the stickers if they do not want to – in particular it might be useful to say that they do not need to use the red ones.

There are now many suggestions on the wall, with hopefully a clear message as to what are good ideas (i.e. marked with many green stickers). The facilitator asks the participants if they agree with the overall suggestions, and if these are likely to work in the home IROs of the participants.

Other notes: If possible, you can invite former exchange students to join the session, in particular the last part, and ask them to share their impressions of the suggestions.