

DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUE

Cluster: International Health

Location: UM, Faculty of Health Medicine and Life Sciences

Date: Tuesday 4 June 2019, 14:45-16:15

Participants:

Panel: dr. ir. Harro Maat (panel chair); prof. dr. Manfred Wildner; dr. Cristiana Bastos; dr. Kor Grit; Jessica Michgelsen BSc (student member).

QANU staff: P. van den Hoorn MSc

FHML staff BEPH: M. Commers (chair); T. Kuiper; P. Schröder-Bäck

FHML staff MGH: A. Meershoek (chair); A. Helberg-Proctor; G. Klabbers; A. Krumeich

FHML staff MGLEPH: K. Czabanowska (chair); T. Clemens.

On the last day of the re-accreditation site visit of the bachelor's and master's programmes which were part of the visitation of the cluster International Health, a development dialogue was held. This report summarises the questions posed by the programme management and the answers given by the panel members.

Round 1: Bachelor European Public Health

Question: our question is related to the reformed BEPH Curriculum 2020 and beyond. We have provided you with our plans of the reformed curriculum, the new set-up of modules, the profile and competences of a new BEPH graduate, new themes which are emerging in public health, etc. Also we made plans about the assessment system. Could you share your thoughts on this?

Panel: We have briefly discussed your reform at an earlier stage. Overall, we are impressed with the work you are doing for future changes. During the site visit and in your documentation, statistics appeared a problematic part of the programme. We think it is a good idea to integrate the statistics modules with the other courses. We also commented on the trajectory test, which seems to be missing in the current reform plans. We liked the trajectory test very much, because it functions pretty well. Where is this test in the new curriculum? And in general, we wonder: formatively or summatively, how does the level of testing build up?

Programme: the tools we will be using for our assessment are not yet defined. The trajectory tests are likely to be eliminated within the reform. This is due to the addition of very important new content such as two 4-week modules on research methodology and one on policy advocacy. However, we have carefully considered how to maintain the strength of the testing of the longitudinal learning lines within the new curriculum and this is the core of what made the trajectory tests valuable. With regard to the build-up of the programme's assessment: options for assessing the integrating-skills of students will remain. Assignments within the modules will assess students' skills with integrating knowledge from various modules. And of course, the thesis will remain a major opportunity for integration. Integration will be always high on our agenda.

Concerning the themes in the curriculum: the field is continuously developing. There are so many topics to choose from. What do you think about the current themes in the overview of the new curriculum?

Panel: in general, we see all the relevant topics are present. You could always come up with more topics, but in general, it looks good. Some topics we would definitely recommend incorporating in the programme: digitalisation, migration issues, climate change, adding gender-specific factors to demographic issues, and using big data in health care systems. We can picture some of these

topics in the mentioned modules of the reformed curriculum. You might consider incorporating the others in the modules as well.

In addition, you could think about giving the programme a somewhat more global perspective: looking at Europe from a global point of view. This is already an asset in your programme and you can strengthen this even further. For instance, pandemic preparedness and Antimicrobial Resistance are priority areas in the WHO. Health organisations in Europe are increasingly engaged in these topics. You can use these and other cases to widen the students' perspective.

We advise you to continue on the path you took. . Keep in mind that, next to a focus on having all the correct topics in place, the programme needs to be a coherent set of modules in the end. Students need to feel they are studying a coherent programme, with a comprehensible set of corresponding intended learning outcomes.

Round 2: Master Global Health

Question: Our question is twofold. In the partnership with McMaster, Manipal, Thammasat, Ahfad, South East Norway and Rosario Universities we strive for equal partnership; however, for students in Manipal, Thamassat, Ahfad and Rosario it is more difficult to make use of these exchange opportunities due to financial constraints. Erasmus+ plus is not accessible for these partners. Do you have suggestions on how we can improve these opportunities? Secondly, although we do have a rather diverse population of students in the Maastricht MSc in GH, it would be beneficial to attract more students from low and middle-income settings. Do you have any advice on how to realise this?

Panel: There are other ways to facilitate international student coming to Maastricht University. For instance, the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam attracts students through scholarships.

Programme: The university provides 40 scholarships in total. We have to share this number with all other faculties at the university. This means that we can grant 8-10 scholarships in our faculty. We are trying hard to expand this number. In order to solve international health problems, we are going to need students with a diverse background. We are also thinking about collaborations with corporations. They might be interested in facilitating an international student to be educated at UM. In return, they get a student who can disclose cutting-edge information about the field and is able to provide the organisation with advice on their business.

Panel: We think this is a great idea. You shouldn't underestimate multinationals like Philips, Heineken, or Unilever. Currently, they pay close attention to emerging challenges like sustainability, the environment and the health consequences of their production processes and products. We think that those companies will definitely be interested in your education programmes and your students.

You can also think about setting up arrangements with the particular universities you mentioned (Manipal, Thamassat, etc.). Another way to facilitate international students could be your alumni. Your alumni network could set up a fund for students who wish to enrol here. We talked to a student today who indicated that, as soon as she has graduated, she wanted to setup a fund for aspiring students to provide more students the opportunity to study at UM.

Another solution might be to match local students with the thesis work of your current students. We have seen many of your students working on various places across the globe. These students can be matched to local students there. For instance, match a student from India to one of your students who is doing research there. This could provide a co-learning situation: both students can share their knowledge and skills and discuss the latest developments in the field. The local student

can help the UM-student with finding his/her way in the area, translating documents, or facilitate in a different manner. Of course, depending on resources, the reciprocal character of this partnership might differ per country/institution, but it will definitely bridge economic and social divides in the global community.

Having said that, you can be proud on your Global Health programme. The programme has a highly innovative character and we think you should convey that message outside this university more. Especially the partnerships deserve to be advertised more. For example, you could write a special issue together with your partner universities, publish about your experiences with them (and share do's and don't's) or share your programme as a research paper (turn experience into analysis).

Round 3: Master Governance and Leadership in EPH

Question: There is a growing concern that students feel insecure on their study choice, report a lack of confidence to enter the labour market after having completed an academic master programme, and combine multiple master programmes in order to 'stand-out'. We wonder: how can we best prepare students to enter the employment market with confidence and competence? Our current philosophy, which is very student-centred, does not always aid students to picture themselves in the larger context or the so-called eco-system. Students are often competitive and afraid of failures and we, the academic environment do everything to protect them. How can we help them to better move from ego-to eco, while maintaining high academic standards in our programme?

Panel: first of all, today during the site visit, we saw several students who already completed a master's programme and chose to do an additional master. But these were not all GLEPH students. We think this is a general phenomenon, and this is not related to your programme. Students experience so many opportunities, they find funding or side jobs to pay for their study fees and carry on studying.

The move from ego to eco can be a hurdle, however. The concern for your programme could be that people might be educated too broadly. Therefore, they don't feel prepared to do a specific job. Students feeling hesitant about entering the labour market, usually are not well-informed about their options. This is not a programme-specific problem; it is a consequence of higher education. Academics are often not educated for a specific task or job. They are provided with a broad set of skills and knowledge, to be able to work in a range of settings. Providing insights in their options can help the students overcome the initial hesitation to enter the labour market. Investing time in alumni networks, symposia, and career days might help. Just to give them an idea about their options.

You can start preparing your students during the programme. Ask your students regularly about their plans for the future: do they already know what kind of job they want? Especially pay attention to this during conversations about placements and the thesis. Please use the internship not only to have the student answer his/her research question(s), but also look at the long-term possibilities of such an internship. If a student knows his/her career plans, an internship that fits those interests will definitely help the student in their future career. To summarise, if you want to prepare your students more, you can be more active in this respect, throughout the whole programme and especially when the students start gaining work experience through placements.

Furthermore, for students, it is not always clear what kind of skills they will master throughout the programme. As a result, they don't know exactly what they can do after graduation or what they have to offer as an employee. To make this more transparent, you could consider mentioning the particular skills learned during each module. This might help students become particularly aware of their learned soft skills.

In addition, leadership in policy is different from leadership in the NGO-sector. You can pay more attention to this. What does leadership in different types of organisations actually mean? You can invite people from a diverse set of organisations to explain this to your students.