

SPF SPP Alumni Newsletter

First Issue

August 2005

What is in this issue?

The new SPF/SPP Alumni Newsletter

This is the first issue of the new SPF/SPP Alumni Newsletter that will provide you with the news from the SPF/SPP community all over the world. We hope that this newsletter will help you to keep in contact with your fellow students, both in your class and in other cohorts, as well as with the people in Maastricht and at the ILO.

The joint efforts of ILO and Maastricht teachers aim to provide an academic forum to discuss, to discover and to learn in an open-minded atmosphere. Now that you have (almost) graduated and are going back to your families and workplaces, we will not be able to have discussions in the classroom or corridor anymore. We nevertheless hope to stay in academic and personal contact with you through the use of newsletters, like this one, the website and the SPF/SPP bulletin board. I look forward to talking to you in the virtual world.



Chris de Neubourg,
Academic Director of the
Maastricht Graduate School of Governance



We are happy and proud to see the fourth cohort of the SPF programme graduating this year. A global network of experts in social protection financing has emerged. Keep in touch amongst yourselves and with us, and help to contribute to improving the governance, efficiency and effectiveness of social security in the interest of reducing poverty and changing the world for the better.

Michael Cichon,
Director of the Social Security Department
of the International Labour Office

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Events

The 2004-2005 “Almost” Graduation Party

After a year of hard work, being far away from family and friends, toiling away during endless sleepless nights, dreaming of haunting budgeting queries of Michael Cichon, the Dutch capricious weather and much ado about starting (and finishing) the thesis, Friday July 8, was the day that MGSOG “officially” celebrated the closure of the academic year of the Master of Science programme in Social Protection Financing 2004-2005.

Although the SPF programme has been running for four years now, it was the first time that the students were “officially saying good-bye” through the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance.

It was good to see that a year at the MGSoG can lead to many unexpected assimilations as David and Paty (see photo) were transformed from true Mexicans to two characters straight from the 1001 Arabian Nights.



We can truly say that the enthusiasm and vibrant sparkle from everyone present made this day memorable and above all, very colourful.

We wish all the students who have to sweat a little longer on finishing their thesis a lot of inspiration, and for those who have already handed in their thesis, a pleasant holiday and a safe return home. Needless to say that we wish all students all the best for the future!

Don't be a stranger and keep us updated!

From the MGSoG E-Gazette



Chris Esedebe's graduation speech

Preamble An old cliché says that whatever that has a beginning must have an end. This is exactly the situation today with the one year SPF/SPP master degree programme, the fourth cohort, here at the UM. It is no longer news that most of us (except 3 including my humble self who are anxiously but ‘fully funded’ to tackle the missed Managing Social Risks course, come the next block) will not receive their diplomas today, not because we did not pass all the prescribed courses but for the “technical” requirement that the master thesis must be finished by the student, submitted to the supervisor for grading and the grade forwarded to the school before the diploma is handed over to the student. Never mind colleagues, I have been assured that in the next two weeks or so, the diplomas will be there with you as the theses’ grades get to the school.

My Colleagues It has been fascinating coming from different towns, countries, continents, with different academic backgrounds and disciplines into such an ancient town of Maastricht, probing and prodding into the different areas of social protection. Beyond that, we have had very closed and cherished relationship. It is difficult to forget such moments we had together: reading, discussing and presenting tasks, eating, partying, touring; wait a minute, forming and sustaining such a formidable football team!



For the records, a total of 18 of us registered for the full master programme. One dropped out for personal reasons. Along the line, 9 others came for a short-term programme. By the end of next block of studies, a total of 27 different individuals must have joined the list of graduates of this noble programme.

For some of us, the urge to return to our families, work and countries cannot come soon enough. For this set of students, the SPF/SPP programme has been like short vacation but with serious academic job and therefore cannot wait to get back to the warm embrace of family members, friends and of course to our tables in the office. Again, for some of us, we have since realized that some areas of human endeavour we once sneered at, we now find quite interesting and stimulating, making us much better citizens for the benefit of our respective people and the world at large. Whoever would



have thought pension in all its ramification, health care, poverty assessment etc, would have been such a kick?

School of Governance The administrative office has been very helpful, so wonderful even before setting our feet here. There is always someone there to attend to us with answers to our enquiries and ever ready to render some helps. I equally wish to use this opportunity to recognize the valuable roles of the programme director, coordinator and the research fellows in the school. We thank you all for your sense of devotion to duty and more importantly your humane way of dealing with the students and handling our various issues.



The Mentors The mentors I must confess have been very marvellous in their dealings and relationship with

us. They really made our stay here more of home away from home. I, on behalf of my colleagues, wish to thank you individually and collectively for your friendship and cares.

The Professors We really appreciate the role you all played in impacting the requisite skills needed for this programme. We assure you that your 'defined contributions' would be fully replicated in our professional endeavours henceforth to reflect the 'defined benefits' we have acquired.



Conclusion We came, we studied and we all agreed that we succeeded. As we part, do bear in mind colleagues that a global network has been built between us, the school and the University at large. Let us stay together (exchange contact means and use the website that will soon become operational) and make the best use of our coming across and knowing each other here in Maastricht.

May God be with us all – Amen.

Thank you all.

Experiences of the SPF class 2004-2005

The SPF class of 2004/2005

Every SPF class is a very special one, and the one of 2004-2005 is no exception to this rule.



Seventeen students flocked from very different corners of the world to Maastricht and lived through the full year's SPF Masters programme:

- Aboud Mwinyi (Tanzania)
- Adel Al-Otaibi (Saudi Arabia)
- Adrian Shikwe (Zambia)
- Ali Babagana (Nigeria)

- Ana del Rosario Castillo Molina (Peru)
- Chris Uwabu Esedebe (Nigeria)
- Dagnachew Negash (Ethiopia)
- Daniel Simmonds Pulido (Colombia)
- David Gustavo Rodríguez Rosario (Mexico)
- Fayyaz Ali Farooq Bhatti (Pakistan)
- Florida Salazar-Quilates (Philippines)
- Kanjana Tisayaticom (Thailand)
- Kulpash Temirbekova (Kazakhstan)
- Mohammed Danjumma Yunusa (Ghana)
- Nader Al-Wehibi (Saudi Arabia)
- Nurhasanah (Windy) Windiastuti (Indonesia)
- Patricia Manuela Huitrón García (Mexico)

The following students joined in for specific courses:

- Abdul Rauf Bhatti (Pakistan)
- Abdulhamid Abdulla Saleh Said (Kenya)
- Adebayo Somuyiwa (Nigeria)

- Luis Alberto Meza Carbajal (Peru)
- Melissa Pascua (Philippines)
- Mona Said Kamal (Egypt)
- Peggy Adeline Mekel (Indonesia)
- Yefriza (Indonesia)



You will feel some of the flavour of the 2004-2005 class when you read the following accounts of their year in Maastricht provided by Adel, Adrian, Ali, Ana, Chris, Daniel, David, Nader and Patricia.

Ali Babagana (Nigeria)



Who is Ali Babagana? Ali Babagana was born some thirty-eight years ago to the late Ali family at Kuka-wa local government area, the ancient capital of the former Kanem Bornu Empire (the history of Kanuri of Borno at the German historical archives refers

of the North-Eastern part of Nigeria. It was through Borno state with Headquarters named Maiduguri that the religion of Islam penetrated to West Africa. History has also revealed that a Kanuri is a very hospitable person who is always enthusiastic in receiving visitors/strangers and hence the Kanuri state in Nigeria (Borno state) is praised as the home of peace & hospitality. It is not gainsaying the fact that in a ideal Kanuri man's house, cooking fire will not be put off completely in anticipation of impromptu arrival of visitor such that cooking will continue in earnest (BBQ). Despite the fact that western education has been predominated by religious (Islamic) one in Borno state of Nigeria, Ali B. has (before arriving in Maastricht for further education) a masters degree in business administration with specialization in finance. My marital status remained married with two issues as at now and still looking forward for further expansion but I think my academic status shall end after completion in Maastricht. My hobbies include amongst others; playing and watching football, listening and watching comedies and most of all simple and stress free life devoid of all worldly intricacies. For further enquiry, don't hesitate to email me through the address: bgali67@yahoo.com.

From the MGSOG alumni network website

Ana Castillo (Peru)

Trip to Monschau What a nice experience!! Our trip to Monschau was truly one like no other. It is definitely something my classmates and I will keep as a good memory of our stay in The Netherlands. Monschau is a pretty old town near Aachen in the German Eifel mountains. During the day of our trip, we experienced so much. Since the very morning, 7:45 a.m. when we first joined at the train station, according to the indication of our guide Robert. His itinerary was perfect, a good balance of walking and rest stops, and he chose lovely, but inexpensive places with lots of charm and hospitality. All of us were excited about the trip. The mentors who kindly offered to drive us, were already waiting: Dominik, Peter, Rudi and Eva. Robert had even printed maps of the route, so that none of the cars gets lost in the way.



We were all very happy. The day was very cold and as we drove to Germany, it started to snow. It was very cold. Soon, the road and the trees outside were covered by snow. We had nice conversations along the way, as well as told jokes. When we got to our first destiny, we started by singing happy birthday to one of our classmates: Aboud, in different languages, he was happy. Then, we entered to a small place of beautiful artesanias, where there was also a nice coffee shop, we spent some minutes there before entering to the Brewery Museum, where we had a guided tour and could learn how beer is made and also tasted some good German food and beer: Prost!!! in a very nice atmosphere. We took lots of pictures, joked and shared altogether. When we finished and left the place to go to the glass museum, the day had turned into a sunny and warm one, this encouraged us even more. We went to the glass museum, saw beautiful pieces made of glass and went for a drink to the coffee shop. After that, we took our way up the hill to the castle, oh!! There was such a wonderful view; we went around sightseeing taking more pictures on the beautiful bridge, till we finally got to the castle, it was impressive full of history, memories and medieval traditions. After some time there enjoying the weather, we finally decided to go back home. We went down the hill to the cars and took the route to return.

During the trip itself, they were all so kind and attentive with me. Despite my physical disability and the inconveniences caused by the wheelchair, they just were pendant of every detail and I never felt uncomfortable on the way. On the opposite, I enjoyed it very, very much: Thanks Davy, Robert, Eva, Peter, Adrian, Rudi, Sheila, Aboud and all. That will be part of my personal experiences that I will always treasure.

As graduation is near and we will soon part to our countries, this kind of experience is more than valuable. We will never forget the opportunity to be part of the

Maastricht Graduate School of Governance Students and Mentors Team.

From the MGSog SPF website

Chris Esedebe (Nigeria)



The 2004-2005 SPF/SPP master degree programme experience, started for me right away in my country, Nigeria. Yes, it started from the moment the university (UM) communicated to me that the MVV visa had been approved by the relevant Dutch authority and as such, I should go to the Dutch embassy in my country to

get the visa. This was the stage, as we say in proper Nigerian way, “the real show began” – the legalization of my stay in the Netherlands! The result was that I missed the first block of studies. As had been suggested earlier in some other forum, ways should be explored to help future participants (especially from some African countries like Nigeria and Ghana) in the programme to reduce the hassles involved with the legalization issue.

Joining my colleagues at the UM for the second block of studies brought yet another set of experiences resulting from challenges that will be hard for me to forget. From the PBL concept to the common jargons like PAYG, welfare state, ‘defined this and defined that’, etc. All these were practically strange and confusing to me.

First, the lecture concept of the university education in my country and in most other countries is totally different from what is obtained here in the UM. There, the lecturer is expected to be fully loaded with all the stuff that is required for the course and would just come into the class to offload them. The students are then expected to sort out what is needed for the almighty examinations and what is needed for future growth in that line of studies; through reading all relevant textbooks/materials. But what did I get in my first class in Financing Social Protection course of the programme here – a topical briefing. I was getting ready to start hearing the details of the course, but all I got at the end were just advice (the different groups had been formed) to go and prepare for the task and be ready the following day for the presentation, discussion, etc. The truth was that I did not in any slightest imagination think that I was prepared to assume the role of a lecturer for my colleagues and for the real lecturer over night, again, Nigerians would add, “just like that”. Not only that, we were to use the beamer for the presentation. The closest I had come in presentation was using transparent sheets with the projector which was operated by another person. So, after the class that first day, I excused a colleague who was kind enough to stay back and teach me “how to use this thing”; another hurdle crossed.

The problem of all the strange jargons that were just falling from nowhere ordinarily would not have posed

much of problems to me for the simple reason that I came from a social insurance institution. But that was where the story stopped. Before coming to the programme, I have been working in the Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund for over thirteen years as a programmer in the computer department. I sneered at any opportunity of learning anything concerning social protection or pension except of course, computer related issues. The result, I had to begin from a “zero level knowledge”, coupled with the fact that I did not do the prerequisite course – Managing Social Risks. What a daunting task it turned out for me to tag along with my group members! But thank God for their understanding and cooperation – I presented just one of our tasks and they bailed me out when questions started popping out from all corners, especially from the indefatigable Michael Cichon!

The subsequent courses turned out to be just building on my first course in the programme (Financing Social Protection) except of course, an aspect of the course Actuarial Mathematics. It is worth pointing out that before the Actuarial Mathematics course; a lot had been said and heard about the said aspect of the course and about one of the lecturers for the course. The tension earlier created was even worsened after a meeting held between the Director/Coordinator of the programme on one hand and the students on the other, specifically arranged before the course commenced, to drum into the students head the need to sit up or else have “yourselves” to blame. That aspect of the course, to put it mildly, turned out to be really tough (and surprisingly that was the area I enjoyed most throughout the programme). I believe the heat generated both before and after the course contributed significantly to the sudden (even at a faster rate) greying of the hairs on my head!

Outside the academic angle of the SPF/SPP programme, the programme afforded me the opportunity of meeting and interacting with people both within the programme and without, from all the five continents of the world: from over forty countries with different cultures, religion and backgrounds, all at one swoop; thereby forming a great international network of people! This, not only reflects the international nature of the programme, but also that of the UM and the city of Maastricht itself. The adaptation from the tropical climatic condition to the temperate condition and back to tropical one; the extra cooking skill acquired overtime and the resurrection of my biking skill after over 20 years of dormancy in that area, would all remain indelible in my mind for a very long time.

So, what lessons did I learn from all these? From the speech I delivered at the graduation ceremony of the 2004-2005 cohort, and without necessarily trying to hold brief for the rest of my colleagues, I made an attempt to summarize all the lessons gained academically and I quote, “We really appreciate the role you all (referring to the teachers/professors) played in impacting the requisite skills needed for this programme. We assure you that all your ‘defined contributions’ would be fully replicated in our professional endeavours

henceforth to reflect the 'defined benefits' we have acquired". Now I can discuss with respectable level of confidence and full understanding, issues pertaining to social protection, pension, health care financing, poverty assessment and if need be, do a presentation to clarify any aspect as well as serve as a backup; thanks to my participation in this programme, a case of jack of all trades and master of all; permit me to say!

Any regrets? Really, my inability to go beyond just a few common Dutch words in my quest to also "acquire" additional foreign language remains a big minus. Never mind, I still have the smallest dictionary I have ever seen – the English-Dutch Langenscheidt's Lilliput Dictionary. I will continue with that quest if other competing demands back home permit me.

Finally, while I personally commend the promoters/sponsors of the SPF/SPP programme in coming out with such a high level "technical training" programme, there is still room for future expansion and improvement; especially in the course content. For example, the possibility of adding one or two finance related courses could be explored. Suffice it to stress the fact that given the opportunity, I would not hesitate to recommend the programme to friends both in the work place and elsewhere.

Long live SPF/SPP programme! Long live the UM-ILO marriage!! Long live all graduates and the "would be" graduates of SPF/SPP programme!!!

Oyoooooooooooooh!

Patricia Huitrón (Mexico)



I have met great people in Maastricht. My time here has been full of nice experiences and the study has just been the starting point of the whole thing.

When I decided to come to Maastricht to study, one year ago, I just had in mind that I would participate in a program, the Master of Science in Social Protection Financing, that is unique due to the courses provided and the learning system that is followed. I was thinking about it as a good opportunity to complement my professional background and to enjoy looking deeper into topics that I have been interested in and have worked on for some time. However, I have found much more than that: great friends with whom I have shared cooking recipes, personal experiences, cultural values, laughs, kebabs with lots of chilli and extra crispy flavour!

In the near future, I can only think about keeping in touch with the MGSOG Community. Much more than that, I will be looking forward to hearing from my dear new friends.

In particular, I thank to my Arab brothers, Adel and Nader, for their kindness and the fun moments that we have had together. Here in Maastricht, in Saudi Arabia,

in Mexico City, in Cancun, in Tabasco (as David would say) or anywhere else, we will surely share much more good moments together.

My best wishes to the SPF and SPP classes 2004-2005!

From the MGSOG alumni network website

Adel Al-Otaibi (Saudi-Arabia)

Born and grown in a small oasis in the middle of the Arabian desert, where all the residents of the town were from the same clan, even the town was named after them, Alraggaas family, as a young kid I thought people were all the same and that was the boundary of my limited world, I spent most of my life there where I attended school from elementary till graduated from high. It had never come to my imagination that some day I would be leaving my beloved ones to set a course of journey full of adventures, mysteries, and surprises. Well, I was wrong, the course of life proved otherwise, destiny had taken me to the most powerful country on earth, United States of America, a country rich with different cultures, a country I truly love, where I learned the most valuable lessons of life, met great friends, and developed my character. After spending four amazing years there, I came back to Saudi where I belong, I thought to myself, well that's all what's out there for me and now I should relive my old life and keep going from there to look for the future.



But life had proved me wrong again, my journey restarted once more, but in different direction, this time it took me to the old continent, to the cheese kingdom as they say, to Maastricht in particular. Where I have spent a great time of my ongoing life, I have learned all about the social protection systems around the globe, I have met many interesting people- people from all over the world, different, yet motivated by the same ideals to change things for the better. I will always remember the good time I had here whether it was discussing philosophical ideas with David, having a drink with Daniel, sneaking to secretive destinations with Adrian, working on the projects with the groups or just having a kebab at my friend's place. Meeting all those friends reaffirm my love to travel, to understand the different cultures, to enrich my knowledge with the different perspectives and to appreciate life itself. As I'm about to go back to Arabia, I still wonder what destiny has for me, a new adventure, or just a normal life in Saudi. Well, I guess I have to wait ...

A wise man once said "Destiny is what you make...." is it? I don't think so!

From the MGSOG alumni network website

David G. Rodríguez (Mexico)



May this just be the beginning of a very nice common story! From my part, receive a permanent invitation to visit us in Mexico and in Tabasco. Strong links can be kept among those that have proved to be friends during this time. Even more, I am sure that many of us now feel of each other like more than friends.

To Adel and Nader, my Arab brothers, I want to say that there is still much more to come... Thank you for your kindness to Paty and me and for the rices, the Shmugah, the Thooob, the very nice dress, and the advices on how to wear them. Without you, we wouldn't have enjoyed this experience as much as we have and... we wouldn't have made all that people at Vrijthof think that we are real Arabs!

On the professional ground, I expect that we can help each other in the future and construct a strong network. But more importantly, I really want to invite you all to stay in touch and to share your happiness and most appreciated personal experiences. I sincerely wish you all the best in your careers and a life full of great moments with your loved ones.

And remember... the pejelagarto is a great fish that can only be eaten in its original and delicious form in Tabasco, the spicy and hot southern state of Mexico. There, in my home, I will be waiting for you all to have lunch together, chat, relax, drink Coronitas or whatever you like.

¡Hasta pronto!

From the MGSOG alumni network website

Adrian Shikwe (Zambia)



The more I look back at the short time I spent with all my SP(F/P) colleagues, the more I come to agree with the saying that "there is richness in diversity" and that "variety is the spice of life". I feel privileged to have been part of the small but diverse group of colleagues from different parts of the

world with different views and approaches to life. I learnt a lot from every one of you and will always cherish my experiences. One thing I have learnt in this life is that everyone is special in his or her own way and will not disparage anyone because they are different from what I think or feel. Though some may have been more close to me than others, you all mattered to me and will always do.

Maybe as you read my profile I am somewhere in another part of the world close to you, or on the Copperbelt in my beloved country Zambia, where I was born about three decades ago and did my undergradu-

ate studies in economics with mathematical statistics, before moving on to Italia for my post graduate degree in management of development. Then I came to the Kingdom of the Netherlands and I met you!

Though time and space might have separated us, we should keep the memories of our camaraderie in Maastricht alive by staying in touch.

From the MGSOG alumni network website

Daniel Simmonds Pulido (Colombia)

From Popayán to Maastricht with the same objective

In a nice town where many liars have great audience and the stories of your grandfather is more relevant than your insipience present, I decided one day, to explore new challenges and study in Europe in that year of 2004. I just arrive from US where I was working with Latin American workers (specially from Mexico and Central America) taking branches out of trees, to prevent hazardous situations with the energy power lines. During that seven months period I learned about social relations, family networks, the difficult situation the illegal workers have to confront, and the special needs of a working popular Latin community. It was also evident for me to observe the lack of opportunities in all the countries of origin of my fellow workmates, where they left behind loved families and ruined business, all for the same reasons. I then decided to search for a way of learning better this situation and try to understand their possible solutions. That was the objective. I had the empirical experience and then I wanted the academic approach. Therefore, I sat long hours on the computer and applied for the Social Protection Financing Master Programme.



It has been almost a year since Céline told me that I was finally going to Maastricht Universiteit to Study Social Protection Financing, a dream come true by it self. I am a Colombian political scientist with some incursion on economics but I was preparing a priori for the programme, since I was going to be facing the international student community. My preparation was getting classes with a nice looking student of economics to whom I paid lot of attention to... but did not get much of the knowledge I needed to get. Then I took algebra, factorization and differentiation with a nice mathematician guy and these classes worked well, so I felt ready and I had some confidence with my English. Had a good two days farewell celebration and to Maastricht it is...

When I arrived to Maastricht/Aachen airport and got into a very punctual bus it was clear that I was going to spend one of the best times in my life in this by-treaty known city and that my life was going to change for the best. At Randwijk Hostel I met my Arab mates, Ana and Monica the first week, then the rest of a very talented and warm group of people that were like family

for a year and will be friends for life. The expectative was fully completed. Today I have friends and colleagues with whom I will be privileged to embark in projects and into constructing our history together.

Today, I am writing this letter from an ILO office in Geneva, where I am doing my internship/thesis on labour migration and its impact on the countries of origin's economy; what will happen next is not planned, but it will certainly depend on what was built in the last year. About my Latin working friends in the US, some of them got fired and had to go back to their regions. I will keep my objective and in some small way, I hope to be able to help one of them or maybe a son of one of them... someday.

I know my classmates of Maastricht will be reading this lines from all different parts of the world declaring the internationality that characterizes our university and more specially our Master Programme, hopefully this website can become a tool for us to try to achieve our objectives.

From the MGSOG alumni network website

Nader I. Al-Wehibi (Saudi Arabia)



Life is so fast! I can't believe that in the last few years, I spent 4 years in the US, one year and a half in Saudi Arabia, and one year already in the Netherlands! Yet, the year in the Netherlands was somewhat different than all the other years. It was more special, more profound. It was also richer and better. It is just as the saying goes; It is very hard to

explain, yet very easy to comprehend!

In terms of academia, I went through a sizzling journey which lasted for nine consecutive months. Although it may seem short, this journey is a complete life story by itself, in that it contained bad moments and good moments, happiness and sorrow, difficulties and ease.

Overall, I must say, it was very intriguing, full of surprises and events.

I learned more than I anticipated, and became more interested in issues that I have never considered before. This journey basically sketched my road map, and gave me insights of the sort of subjects that I might be dealing with in the future. Bottom line, it removed much of the ambiguity that I had suffered from in the past.

In terms of people, I have always been fascinated by meeting new people from different backgrounds and cultures. I must admit, though, that I have never done as much in that regard as I did in the Netherlands. The whole atmosphere is inviting and welcoming everyone. It's even harder to avoid meeting new people than to look for new people to meet! In addition, it's not only about the quantity, but also about the quality. Sincerity and loyalty are main characteristics of the people I met in this country, whether they were Dutch or non-Dutch. It is very unfortunate to think about leaving these people and living thousands of miles away. But, hey, that's why we have this website! Let's make use of it!

I cannot conclude these words without specifically thanking four people who volunteered to do exceptional efforts for me personally. These people are: Eva Hunold, Robert Bauchmüller, Sheila Gessel, and last but not least, Esther van Engelshoven. To them, and to my soulmate, my brothers and sisters, my friends and super friends, my classmates, my instructors, staff of MGSOG, mentors: Thank you.

From the MGSOG alumni network website



New Projects and Publications

This section of the SPF/SPP Alumni Newsletter is devoted to providing you with up-to-date information on what is happening in Maastricht, at the ILO and elsewhere in terms of new projects and publications.

If you have any interesting news or references to share for the next SPF/SPP Alumni Newsletter, please send them to Christina Behrendt (behrendt@ilo.org). Or, even better, share them immediately within the SPF/SPP community by posting them on the Bulletin Board (see below).

MGSOG research project on social assistance in Europe

The MGSOG completed a World Bank research project comparing the social assistance schemes in nine countries in Europe. The end result is a briefing book addressing the performance of social protection systems in these countries, the role of social assistance within social protection, the design and implementation of social assistance systems and trends in reforms.

The paper can be downloaded from the World Bank's website: http://www1.worldbank.org/sp/safetynets/Training_Events/OECD_3-05/EU_Briefing_Book.pdf

The full reference is:

- Chris de Neubourg; Julie Castonguay and Keetie Roelen (2005): "Social Safety Nets and Social Assistance: Lessons from the EU Experience", Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, Maastricht.

MGSOG study on the impact of remittances on well-being in El Salvador

Mirtha Muñiz Castillo and Jessica Hagen-Zanker analysed El Salvador household surveys using the capability approach and fuzzy sets method to see whether remittances have an impact on household wellbeing.

Their paper can be downloaded from the MGSOG website:

http://www.governance.unimaas.nl/home/e_researchers/jessica_hagenzanker/index.html

The full reference is:

- Jessica Hagen-Zanker and Mirtha Muñiz Castillo (2005): Remittances and human development. The case of El Salvador, MGSOG Working Paper 1/2005, (Maastricht: University of Maastricht).



MGSOG research on micro-finance and micro-insurance

MGSOG researcher Sophie Grooten has written two papers: The first one, "Back to Basics, micro-finance and women access to markets", is based on an impact assessment of micro-credit programmes in Ghana. This paper explores the empowerment of women with a special focus on the limitations of the economic dimension. The second paper called "Micro-insurance: a new instrument for social protection in Africa" discusses the potential and limitations of micro-insurance schemes in Africa, both from a demand and supply perspective.

Both papers can be downloaded from the MGSOG website: http://www.governance.unimaas.nl/home/e_researchers/sophie_grooten/index.html

The full references are:

- Sophie Grooten (2005) Back to Basics, micro-finance and women access to markets, Maastricht: MGSOG.
- Sophie Grooten (2005) Micro-insurance: a new instrument for social protection in Africa, MGSOG Working Paper 2/2005, Maastricht: MGSOG.

Sophie will now work on a project with the ILO in Ghana.

New ILO Discussion Paper

A new paper has just been published in the ILO's Discussion Paper Series "Issues in Social Protection". The paper addresses the question of whether a basic social protection package (cash transfers for the elderly and children, access to health and education) would be affordable for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The study looked at the following countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Senegal and Tanzania. The results of this modelling exercise show that a basic social protection package would be affordable to most countries considered; yet some funding from external sources would be required for a transitional period.

The paper can be downloaded from the ILO Social Security Department's website: www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/socsec/pol/publ/spubl.php

The full reference is:

- Karuna Pal; Christina Behrendt; Florian Léger; Michael Cichon and Krzysztof Hagemeyer (2005): Can low income countries afford basic social protection? First results of a modelling exercise, Issues in Social Protection Discussion Paper 13, Geneva: International Labour Office.

ILO Global Social Trust project

The ILO has just published a report on the Global Social Trust pre-pilot project in Ghana. With former SPF student David Tumwesigye as Chief Technical Advisor, this project tested benefit delivery mechanisms for the Global Social Trust. It set out with two primary objectives:

- to develop and test methodologies for the extension of social protection benefits (health care) to excluded members of society especially in the informal sector; and
- to support the establishment of a pluralistic national health protection system in Ghana.

The project took place against a background of substantial health insurance reform in Ghana, as the Government worked to replace the 20 per cent of health care costs met through the current pay-as-you-go system (cash and carry) with a national health insurance scheme. The remaining 80 per cent would be met, as now, from the national health budget. This is to be achieved through building and expanding on a network of existing voluntary Mutual Health Organizations (MHO) at the district level.

The report can be downloaded from the ILO Social Security Department's website:

www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/socsec/pol/publ/spubl.php

The full reference of the report is:

- ILO (2005): Improving Social Protection for the Poor - Health Insurance in Ghana: Final Report of the Ghana Social Trust Pre-pilot Project, Geneva: International Labour Office.

ILO Social Security Inquiry

The ILO has launched its new Social Security Inquiry. The objective of the Inquiry is to identify statistical information on social security, including formal, employment-related social security schemes, public health, welfare and anti-poverty programmes and non-public schemes of different types transferring goods, services or cash to poor and vulnerable households. Responding to the lack of statistics on social security outside the OECD world, the primary purpose of the Inquiry is not just to collect data but also to promote common statistical standards, which all institutions administering or supervising social security schemes should follow in order to ensure good governance in the field of social policy. A database with comparable statistics on social security will be available soon.

The ILO Social Security Inquiry is currently being conducted in a number of low and middle-income countries, including Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Croatia, Ghana, Kazakhstan, Lesotho, Macedonia, Malaysia, Moldova, Mongolia, Romania, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, Vietnam, Yemen and Zambia.

For further information, please contact Christina Behrendt (behrendt@ilo.org).

ILO Social Protection Expenditure and Performance Reviews (SPERs)

The ILO has been producing a series of in-depth Social Protection Expenditure and Performance Reviews (SPERs). The aim is to provide detailed information on the performance of national social protection schemes in a given number of countries as well as on the extent of coverage and exclusion from social protection. In the first place, the SPERs provide information about the structure and level of total social expenditure, and establish indicators of system performance with respect to its effectiveness, efficiency, population coverage and the adequacy of benefit levels. Secondly, the SPERs will be used to make available internationally comparable statistics on social protection.

While some more reports are being prepared, the following SPERs have already been published:

- **Benin:** Protection sociale: Examen des dépenses – Evolution des indicateurs de 1990-2000, Geneva: International Labour Office (2005; by José Tossa; in French).
- **Chile:** Protección Social en Chile: Financiamiento, cobertura y desempeño 1990-2000, Santiago de Chile: International Labour Office (2003; by Alberto Arenas de Mesa and Paula Benavides Salazar; in Spanish).
- **Slovakia:** Social Protection Expenditure and Performance Review Slovak Republic, Budapest: International Labour Office (2005; by Maria Svorenova and Alexandra Petrasova).

- **Uruguay:** Protección Social en Uruguay: Financiamiento, cobertura y desempeño 1990-2000 (International Labour Office: Santiago de Chile) (2003; by Natalia Ferreira-Coimbra and Álvaro Forteza; in Spanish).

Most of these reports can be downloaded online. See the ILO Social Security Department's website: www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/socsec/pol/publ/publ.php



Recent ILO publications on employment and social security in Latin America

The ILO Office in Santiago de Chile has recently published a series of publications on employment and social security in Latin America, with a special focus on Argentina, Chile and Uruguay.

- Fabio Bertranou (ed.) (2004): Protección social y mercado laboral, Santiago de Chile: International Labour Office.
- Fabio Bertranou; Andrés Marinakis and Gerhard Reinecke (eds.) (2005): Uruguay: Empleo y protección social - de la crisis al crecimiento, Santiago de Chile: International Labour Office.

These reports (in Spanish) can be downloaded online at http://www.oit Chile.cl/pub_deploy.php?cat=pro.

Extension of social security in Thailand

The ILO Office in Bangkok has been closely working together with the government and social partners of Thailand to extend social security in the country. The following reports were produced, among others:

- Technical note on the extension of social security to the informal economy in Thailand, Bangkok: International Labour Office (2004).
- Thailand social security priority and needs survey, Bangkok: International Labour Office (2004; by Suguru Mizunoya).

The reports can be downloaded at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/bangkok/library/pub9.htm>.

Recent ILO technical cooperation reports

The ILO has recently published the following technical cooperation reports:

- **Antigua and Barbuda:** Report to the Government: Seventh actuarial review of the Social Security Fund as of 31 December 2002 (2005).
- **Argentina:** Valuación actuarial del Sistema Integrado de Jubilaciones y Pensiones al 31 de diciembre de 2001 (2004; in Spanish).
- **Aruba:** Report to the Government - Actuarial review of the General Old-Age Pension Scheme and the General Widows and Orphans Insurance Scheme as of 30 April 2003 (2004); Report to the Government: Alternative policy options for the long-term financial consolidation of the Social Insurance Bank (2005).
- **British Virgin Islands:** Report to the Government Eighth actuarial review of the Social Security system as of 31 December 2003 (2005).
- **Cyprus:** Technical note - Actuarial valuation of the pension plan of the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus as of 31 December 2003 (2004); Report to the Government: Actuarial valuation of the Social Security Scheme as of 31 December 2003 (2005).
- **Dominica:** Report to the Government - Eighth Actuarial Review of the Social Security Fund as of 31 December 2002 (2004).
- **Grenada:** Report to the Government - Seventh actuarial review of the National Insurance Fund as of 31 December 2002 (2004).
- **Guinea:** Rapport au gouvernement: Evaluation actuarielle du régime géré par la Caisse nationale de sécurité sociale au 31 décembre 2001 (2005; in French).
- **Guyana:** Report to the Government - Sixth Actuarial Review of the National Insurance Fund as of 31 December 2001 (2004).
- **Kazakhstan:** Final report - Decent work: Integrated approach to social sphere in Kazakhstan: Vol. 1: Assessment of targeted social assistance scheme. Vol. 2: International Experience with Social Assistance Schemes (both 2004; in English and Russian).
- **Kuwait:** Demographic projections, macro-economic framework and actuarial bases (2005).
- **Lebanon:** Analyse du projet de loi de 2004 sur la réforme des pensions et propositions du BIT (2004; in French).
- **Luxembourg:** Modelisation du budget social (2005; in French).
- **Madagascar:** Rapport au gouvernement - Étude préliminaire sur la gouvernance du système national des assurances sociales (2005; in French).
- **Niger:** Rapport au gouvernement - Evaluation actuarielle de la Caisse nationale de sécurité sociale au 31 décembre 2002 (2005; in French).
- **Panama:** Financial and actuarial valuation of the Caja de Seguro Social (CSS) (2004).
- **Saint Lucia:** Report to the government, Extending pensions to farmers, fishermen and ex-farmers (2005).
- **Thailand:** Financing Universal Health Care in Thailand (2004).

Many of these reports can be downloaded online. See the ILO Social Security Department's website: www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/socsec/pol/publ/spubl.php



SPF/SPP Alumni Network

MGSOG Alumni Website

Thanks to the initiative of four SPF 2004-2005 students – Adel, David, Nader and Patricia –, there is a new website from and for Maastricht Graduate School of Governance alumni. Visit <http://www.mgsog.org/>.

Much of the text and the photos in this newsletter are taken from this website.

SPF/SPP Bulletin Board

If you would like to exchange news with other members of the SPF/SPP community, share publications, ask questions or look for information, you may use the Bulletin Board at bboard.ilo.org > ILO Forums.

If you have not yet received a user ID and a password, please contact Christina Behrendt (behrendt@ilo.org).

A new home for the SPF programme: the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance



Some of you may not yet know that the SPF programme has found a new institutional home in the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance (MGSoG), together with its new twin programme, the “Master Programme in Social Protection Policy” (SPP) and many more new siblings, such as a PhD Programme in Social Protection, the European Graduate Programme in Social Protection Policy (ESPP) and the Master Programme in Public Policy and Human Development (MPP).

This institutional change also implied that the SPF programme moved out of the main building into a beautiful old villa right on the other side of the courtyard, that is to Tongersestraat 49.

Visit the new website at www.governance.unimaas.nl.

News from the SPF/SPP Community

- **Robert Baumüller**, SPF student assistant and mentor, will be a full-time staff member of the MGSoG as of September. He will be a SPF/SPP tutor and prepare new courses.
- **Franziska Gassmann** is back at the University of Maastricht. She is now the Academic Director of the European Graduate Programme in Social Protection Policy (ESPP) at the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, while still continuing with consultancy.
- **Xiaowei Gong** (SPF 2003-2004) has moved into a new position in January 2005. He now works as an economist in the Xiamen Economic Research Institute, which belongs to the Xiamen Government in the Xiamen (Amoy) Special Economic Zone in China.
- **Rose Metta** and **Ansgar Mushi** (both SPF 2003-2004) are coordinating the ILO Social Security Inquiry for Tanzania.
- **Michael Mhando** (SPF 2003-04) worked on the first actuarial valuation of the Tanzanian National Health Insurance Fund with the ILO.
- **Mirtha Muñoz Castillo** (SPF 2002-2003) is working on her PhD thesis at the University of Maastricht. Mirtha just left for a four-months research visit in El Salvador and Nicaragua.
- **Ansgar Mushi** (SPF 2003-2004) and his wife Mary are proud parents of newborn Florian (Flo) Africanus and his little big sister Cathrin Sutthirat.

- **Walaiporn Patcharanarumol** (SPF 2002-2003) has contributed to the ILO's report on Financing Health Care in Thailand (2004).
- **Agnieszka Sowa** (SPF 2002-2003) did a research project for the ILO on the feasibility of using household survey data for analysing social security in low- and middle-income countries.
- **David Tumwesigye** (SPF 2001-2002) worked as Chief Technical Advisor for the ILO Global Social Trust pre-pilot project in Ghana.
- **Sonam Yeshey** (SPF 2003-2004) has returned to Bhutan in his position as head of the pension department of the National Pension & Provident Fund.

Please keep us informed about changes in your work and life. Any news that should appear in this section should be sent to Christina Behrendt (behrendt@ilo.org).

Most wanted

When sending out the call for contributions to this Newsletter, some of the mails bounced back. If you happen to have an up-to-date e-mail address of **Theo Afenya** and **Ben Yankah** (both SPF 2001-2002), please forward this newsletter to them and ask them to send their new contact details to Jessica Hagen-Zanker (jessica.hagenzanker@governance.unimaas.nl).

Next issue of the SPF/SPP Alumni Newsletter

In the next issue of the SPF/SPP Alumni Newsletter, we would like to feature the experiences of the first three SPF cohorts. Please send us a brief account of your experiences in the SPF programme and what happened after you left Maastricht. In particular, please describe how you were able to apply your knowledge in your old or new job after graduation. Please send your contribution (ideally 500-1000 words and a digital photo if possible) to Christina Behrendt (behrendt@ilo.org).

Please also keep us informed about interesting projects and publications, changes in your career and life and whatever you think might be of interest to other SPF/SPP alumni. Any suggestions on how to improve the Newsletter are most welcome. The next issue will be published as soon as you have provided us with enough news and stories to fill it with life!

Impressum

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