

## Groven Charlotte (GOVERNANCE)

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### Maastricht Graduate School of Governance



## E-Gazette

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#### DEMOS Christmas trip of master's students to the Ardennes

In the aftermath of four challenging first months at the MGSOG, 34 Master's students decided it was high time for some vacation and fun in the Ardennes in Belgium. Especially for those of us who weren't going home for the holidays, our small community was eager to provide some family atmosphere. On Friday the 19th of December, still blasted by Mr. Van Slyke's final lecture, we hadn't yet realized that the desired winter break had finally arrived, and the bus was already waiting for us at the Vrijthof. Huge amounts of food, drinks, music equipment, guitars, chess boards, and footballs – we had made sure that nothing was



missing for having two remarkable and entertaining days in the Belgian mountains. Everyone was helping with the organization, which made a truly international experience possible. In particular, the Thai dinner on Friday and the Italian pasta, Nigerian soup and the fusion beans on Saturday will most certainly be remembered! Another highlight was the Scavenger hunt, where it finally came down to proving skills apart from STATA - speed in a three-legged race or eating a hanging banana with your eyes closed required a lot of team spirit! Finally, late at night on Sunday a shoulder



massage chain with Daniel's guitar accompaniment was spontaneously formed to provide some pain relief for our tired heroes. Despite the stormy, gloomy weather the Ardennes trip proved to be a lot of fun, and once again we realized how close our community has grown during this short time. An excursion for the

warmer spring months will therefore be indispensable.

#### Governance Indicators and Assessments: Impact and Future Trends

On January 21 and 22, we hosted already the 4th Advanced Academic Update. For the second time, the event was organized in collaboration with the European Centre for Development Policy Management. During two intensive days, more than 40 participants attended the presentations and debates on the impact of governance indicators and assessments on donors and aid-recipient countries.

The sessions on the first day provided an overview of governance indicators and assessments. Speakers and participants discussed the underlying assumptions, the purposes the assessments serve and their impact on developing countries. The case of Mozambique provided sufficient food for thought as the proliferation of governance assessments implemented



by various international and national stakeholders was demonstrated impressively during the session. It led to questions such as the usefulness of the assessments for the national governments in developing countries and demonstrated the need for more donor coordination and the willingness to accept of each other's work. The second day discussed experiences from developed countries with managing indicators and assessments and analyzed the trend towards more "actionable" indicators for developing countries.



The AAU concluded with a stocktaking of



emerging experiences, lessons learned and suggestions for future research. The invited speakers reflected the views of both academics and practitioners in the different sessions. Equally varied was the background of the participants which included professionals working in donor organizations, NGOs, or consulting firms and academics from various disciplines. The expertise of the participants enriched the debates as different views were reflected. The Advanced Academic Updates are not only learning events, but also provide ample opportunity for participants and speakers to share experiences and extend their networks.

#### What happened to... Kristine Farla? (MPP Graduate 2008)

Hello, I am Kristine. You may have already know me because in August 2008 I graduated from the MPP programme with a specialization in Gloablization, Trade and Development. Before I started my master's at the School of Governance I already had two master's degrees from Maastricht University and université Libre de Bruxelles.

I spend the last half year in Mexico to participate in an exchange programme set up by MGSoG with the prestigious Universidad Iberoamericana (UIA) in Mexico City. David Rodriguez and Patricia Huitron (Mexican MGSoG PhD Fellows) were responsible for creating this wonderful opportunity. The academic level of the master programmes in Mexico is high. In general master students already have working experience. I took a



course in International Relations and worked on my master's thesis at the same time. For my thesis I analyzed an economic cooperation project between the European Union and Latin America. In Mexico I conducted an interview with Canacindra, an organization that participated in this project.

I truly treasure my time in Mexico. There are more people living in Mexico in the entire Netherlands. Even so, I did not feel overwhelmed by this. I enjoyed the Mexican lifestyle. I learned to dance to Mexican music and to eat all foods with spices and lime. I even extended my stay to work the Netherlands Education Support Office in Mexico (Neso) for three months. Neso is part of the Dutch organization Nuffic, whose mission is to link knowledge worldwide and promote internationalization of higher education. I conducted a feasibility study for Neso to help plan activities in 2009. Unfortunately my time in Mexico came to an end and I am back in Maastricht. The next few months I will be working for the School, investigating institutional cooperation possibilities for the master programmes. I look forward to seeing you around!



#### Nice to meet you... Dragisa Mijacic (PhD Fellow Governance and Policy Analysis)

Hi folks, my name is Dragisa Mijacic, a PhD researcher at the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance. I am coming from Belgrade/Serbia though I am originally from Kosovo.

At the very early stage of my professional career I've started working as a Director of Agency for Local Development, dealing with projects funded by

international multilateral and bilateral donors as well as national development agencies. Working in the field of local development inspired me to continue my education and in 2005 I have advanced my academic knowledge by obtaining a Masters in Local Development at the University of Trento/Italy. After coming back from Italy I have continued working as a consultant with numerous international agencies and national governments across the South-Eastern Europe. Among the international agencies I have been working with UNDP, OECD, IOM, OSCE, USAID, Open Society Institute, SNV, UNODC, Save the Children, European Agency for Reconstruction and many others. Last year I have decided to enrol the PhD programme at MGSOG with the research proposal on the impact of decentralization on regional and local economic development. I am very much interested in researching the impact of growing devolution of powers from central to sub-national authorities to regional convergence and divergence.

Being a researcher at the School of Governance means being a part of dynamic academic environment of young and clever people from all over the world. The multidisciplinary character of the research provides additional value to the School environment and it is very important to mention that the School is a big family of friendly and open minded people who care and support each other and I am glad to be a part of this crew. Hope to see you around... Dragisa

Hello, Goodbye!

*Goodbye*

Last Thursday we congratulated 11 students with their graduation from the Master of Science in Public Policy and Human Development. The speech by academic director Chris de Neubourg was quite a reality check; our graduates are facing a truly difficult time finding a suitable job in this time of financial crisis. However, the financial crisis, which is supposedly going to last for eight years, promises to cause a positive effect on the job market in (semi-)governmental organisations.

Although our graduates will be looking for jobs in the private as well as the public arena, we are confident that they will be successful, because as Ian van der Vlugt emphasized in his speech: "We are all people who care, who want to make a difference, want to see the world become a better place and want to be a part of that. We share the same intrinsic



values and the understanding that we supersede our national identities, even though they are a foundational component of who we are: we recognize that above being European, North American or South American, Asian, African, Australian, or, for the sake of continental inclusion, Antarctic, we are people of the world; of our world. It is this basis that makes my peers unique and that unites us all in a small city in the Netherlands, to learn how to save the only world we have—to learn to be heroes in our own ways. And it is with this in mind that we will leave this city, taking with us the knowledge we have gained from our professors, and also from each other, in order to further pursue our dreams, our goals,

and live our lives. These are truly special people who have the potential to do great things." Sadly enough, the graduation also meant having to say goodbye to most of the graduates, although a few decided to extend their life as a MGSOG-student and will follow an extra specialization.

### *Hello!*

How different was the atmosphere today, when we welcomed 18 new MPP students from South Africa, Romania, Cambodia, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Germany, U.S.A. and The Netherlands. Curious but very anxious to start the programme and meet their fellow class mates, they entered the premises of the School of Governance and were introduced to Chris de Neubourg, the ladies of the Student Affairs Office, student association DEMOS and the programme manager Mr. Bas Thijssen.

### Upcoming events:

- 5-02 [Khalid Koser, International Migration and the Global Financial Crisis \(MGSOG Seminar Series\)](#)
- 7-02 Meet MGSOG at the European Voice Studies Fair in Brussels, Belgium
- 12-02 [Martin Evans, From Thatcher's Cradle to Blair's Grave - Lifetimes in The British Welfare State since 1979 \(MGSOG Seminar Series\)](#)
- 15-02 Meet MGsoG at the European Board Meeting of AEGEE in Torino, Italy
- 07-03 [Visit our Master's Meeting and find out everything you need to know about our MSc in Public Policy and Human Development](#)
- 25 & 26-05 [Research conference: How healthy are our health care policies?](#)

For more upcoming events, please [click here](#)

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Maastricht Graduate School of Governance Universiteit Maastricht P.O. Box 616, 6200 MD Maastricht, The Netherlands Phone: +31 43 3884650, Fax: +31 43 3884864 E-mail [info-gov@governance.unimaas.nl](mailto:info-gov@governance.unimaas.nl) Website [www.governance.unimaas.nl](http://www.governance.unimaas.nl)