

The Governance E-Gazette



Maastricht Graduate School of Governance

Merry christmas and a sparkling 2006!

Just before everyone can finally close the heavy doors of toil and hard work of 2005 and dive into all the Christmas and New Year's joy, The Maastricht Graduate School of Governance wants to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a sparkling 2006! Enjoy this last issue of the 2005 E-Gazette and we hope to welcome you back, perhaps slightly trembling, but hopefully truly invigorated in 2006!



A passage to India - Shall we dance?



As you might be aware of, the UN is celebrating the year of Micro Finance against the backdrop of the agenda posed by the Millennium Development Goals. In the course of this, the Year 2005 has triggered significant debates on the opportunities, constraints and imperatives of Micro Finance as a tool of cutting poverty in half by 2005.

One such debate took place a few weeks ago in the South of India – in Cochin, Kerala. Our PhD fellow Britta Augsborg had the great chance of participating and presenting her paper on the *International Convention on Micro Finance and Sustainable Enterprise Development*, organized by ISED (Institute of Small Enterprises and Development), a multi-faceted Center for advanced learning and practice in the area of development. The objective of the Convention was to bring to light the challenges and

imperatives of micro finance from the point of view of development of enterprises, and pro-poor financial products. Different stakeholders within microfinance (government agencies, financial institutions, public and private sector organizations, as well as with civil society organizations) from various countries (Tanzania, Kenya, Swaziland, Britain, India and one from The Netherlands) participated in reaching this objective. As common for conferences, input was given in various forms such as presentations, speeches, workshops and panel discussions. As maybe not so common for conferences, issues were discussed further over great lunches (we have to believe Britta's word on how good the Kerala cuisine is!) and, on a dinner-cruise. Especially on the boat, topics were probably not exclusively about microfinance. At least not, when everybody (and with everybody Britta means especially all the Indian men, 40 to 60 years of age) danced like there was no tomorrow to an "interesting" mix of modern and traditional disco music. . For Britta this trip was one of the greatest experiences for her, both – academically as well as socially! Shall we Dance indeed!

Governance and Beyond



With 2005 drawing to a close, we thought it interesting to share the experiences of one of our successful SPF students, Chris Esedebe (second from the left on photo) who graduated last September. A word from our man in Nigeria:

"In my own part of the world, a sponsorship for an in-service programme by an employer as it happened to my colleague and me for the 2004/2005 Social Protection Financing Master programme (SPF), usually comes with lots of challenges. More challenges if it has to do with going abroad for the programme.

These challenges were purely set on expectations from the employer and colleagues in the office on one hand and from friends and family on the other. Fortunately, what has really given me confidence and a lot to look forward to, has to do with the way my Management perceived and received our coming back to the office. Surprisingly, by the time we were back, there had been so many changes in the office resulting from the pension reform currently being implemented in the country. My colleague and I were employed to the Actuarial Department on resumption. To our surprise, the only two staff who were in that department had resigned with the organization. So, we were the only staff of the department with no prior experience working in an Actuarial Department and without any structure whatsoever. So far, we had to fall back on what we studied and gained in the SPF programme to meet the demands and expectations of our Management. And what an irony, some months before we came back to the office, the ILO was given the assignment to carry out the actuarial valuation of our organization. The evaluation and interpretation of the report of that assessment for wider comprehension by Management and other relevant staff of the Fund fell on our shoulders. We were also able to advise the Management on an appropriate course of action to take with respect to the recommendations contained in the report. These we have completed and I believe, to the satisfaction of the Management!".

Nice to meet you..Lina Salanauskaite (ESPP Fellow)

Before starting the PhD studies, I have gained diverse working experience in the international settings. During my bachelor studies in the US, I was engaged in developing International Visitors' Programmes at the International Council of Central Florida – the non-governmental organization, which is responsible for sharing the local US experience on various topics: environmental, governance, development issues, etc. This work experience is highly responsible for my initial interest in development economics and public policy and has actually pushed me to seek studies in social protection field. That's how I got my first introduction to Maastricht and Maastricht University. The master studies in Social Protection Financing have really opened wide horizons, but also showed me how much more knowledge is available to indulge into. Thus, after a couple years of working on the EU structural funding issues in Lithuania, I am back to Maastricht searching for the more thorough answers.



Actually, both my master thesis topic and also the work experience with state institutions and public policy implementation, triggered my further interest to better understand the policy impacts and enrich the grounds, on which the policies are established. My primary interest for the PhD research falls within the microsimulation field and its application for the analysis of the various social policy issues. I would like to focus on income taxation, as a redistributive tool of the welfare state, and analyse its impacts on the people. As this is still a very initial stage of drafting the boundaries of my research, I am currently looking into the vast area of the modelling kinds and applications. Next to the current research on income taxation issues and microsimulation, I am also engaged into the project that aims to assess the pension reform impact on the labour market and poverty prevalence in the Russian Federation.

In addition to research activities, I really enjoy the cozy, flexible and international atmosphere of Maastricht city and the School itself. I love discussing diverse topics over the cup of coffee during lazy and long Sunday brunch times... But I also value the variety of beers and wines that dominate the menus of local pubs. In addition to foods and drinks, I love watching films, chatting to people and taking lots of photos of everyday events.

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