



25 January 2007

First group of 'Public Policy Graduates' Graduates'

Last Friday, January 19, a group of 21 very enthusiastic graduates of the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance climbed the stairs of the Bonbonnière theatre where they were given their diplomas in Public Policy and Human Development, in style. It was a special occasion as this was the very first group of master's graduates of the one-year programme in Public Policy and Human Development. Students worked till the very last day before the ceremony to finish their theses and be ready for their big moment.

And what a year indeed! After hours of presentations, papers, group discussions, reading and more reading, it turned out to be a very very successful year since 18 out of 21 students all passed their courses without any resits. The average grade of the four courses together in the first, general, semester is 7.7, and also the achievements in the second semester for the specialization tracks are also outstanding: track sustainable development 7.5, track globalization, trade and development, 7.9, and the track social policy and labour average grade 7.4.

The new policy analysts are ready to work throughout the world in the domestic institutions of both advanced and less developed countries as well as in the setting and core of international organizations like the UN (UNDP, UNICEF), World Bank, OECD, Ministries of Social Affairs, consultancies like Ecorys and Ecotec. The students of this very first year in Public Policy and Human Development came from all over the globe, ranging from Ethiopia, Australia, Germany, Bulgaria, Indonesia to the USA.

Their reaction after graduating was that, 'it was tough year with 'many hiccups' but a year nevertheless of great adventure, making friends for life and gaining valuable knowledge and practical insights of 'what this strange, small globe is all about'. Congratulations!



MGSOG goes Latin

Academic director prof. Chris de Neubourg visited Mexico last November, with the main purpose of strengthening links with the Latin American community.

There, our Academic Director discussed the possibilities for academic cooperation with the Universidad Ibero-americana (UIA) Among the most interesting projects that emerged is the idea of a joint master's degree in public policy (MPP), through a programme which has been designed to attract talented students from the whole region.



Going Global in Scotland

On 5 December 2006, our Student Affairs Officers Susan Roggen and Céline Duijsens set off for the lovely city of Edinburgh (UK) to visit the Going Global2 Conference organized by the British Council. The conference focused on the trends, benefits, opportunities and risks associated with the demand for education becoming increasingly global.

It looked into the implications for staff, policy-makers, governments, education providers and students. They both attended various sessions and plenary meetings on topics such as the role of higher education in developing global citizens, what makes students recommend the higher education institute, how are countries dealing with student mobility, employer perspectives, and what makes student choose Europe for higher education. Although the topics of many sessions were very interesting, unfortunately not all our questions were answered, mainly because the paper presenters had different (sometimes completely different) views. All in all, they concluded that the School of Governance is already Going Global in a big way. However, we cannot afford to sit back and relax, because competition from other higher education institutes is tough and students become increasingly critical.

MPP students in the 'Dutch Capital of Public Policy'

On Monday December 11th, students of the MPP master's programme left Maastricht at 7.30 in the morning for a visit to the Dutch 'Capital of Public Policy': The Hague. This excursion was organized by the course coordinator of Public Policy Analysis, Christine Arnold and the MPP programme coordinator Timor El-Dardiry. Unfortunately, the Dutch weather and the highway congestions were not on our side.

The first visit brought us to ISS, the institute for Social Studies, and we saw a familiar face: Louk de la Rive Box, former professor at the Maastricht University welcomed us as rector of ISS. After a quick lunch, two staff members of the Court of Audit (Algemene Rekenkamer) were expecting us. Annually, this court investigates whether the incoming and outgoing money of the ministries is collected and spent regularly, efficiently and effectively, in accordance with the law and the proposed budget. We learned that the Netherlands quite strictly adheres to the budget. Afterwards a guide showed us the rest of the modern, oddly shaped building that is situated in the old, monumental city centre. The building was designed by Van Eijk in 1992 and it aims to express the court's transparency and dynamism through the use of cyclically shaped rooms and stairwells.

On our way to the bus we were just in time to catch some glimpses of the leading Dutch politicians, among whom was Prime Minister Jan-Peter Balkenende, arriving at the Binnenhof to attend a coalition formation meeting after the elections last november.



Child Poverty in Vietnam

From October to the end of December last year, Keetie Roelen worked on a research project with Unicef Vietnam. Based in the northern city of Hanoi, she wrote a literature review and discussion paper together with Franziska Gassmann and Chris de Neubourg that lay down the conceptual framework of a Vietnam-specific approach to measure child poverty.

Unicef and the Government of Vietnam wish to use the child poverty approach for the midterm review of their Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction (HEPR) programme at the end of 2007. Although well-established methods exist to measure household poverty, there is no such measure geared especially towards children. On the basis of household poverty measurement, inferences are often made about child poverty.

They do, however, not take into account the specific needs of children and circumstances that children live in and thus do not provide a proper assessment of child poverty. Hence, the two months were filled with interesting discussions with local researchers and policy makers from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, international organizations and Unicef project officers on the main question: when do we consider children to be poor in Vietnam?

Although there was a lot of work to be done, there was also time to experience and enjoy Hanoi and Vietnam during the weekends. An extension of the project is planned for 2007 to apply the theoretical framework to data and be able to assess the situation of child poverty in Vietnam.



Nice to meet you... Martin Rehm
(Project Coordinator UNICEF)

My name is Martin Rehm and since August 2006, I am the Project Coordinator of the UNICEF Learning Programme. Moreover, I am also busy with pretty much all E-Learning activities going on at the School. Prior to that, I was working for the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration as a lecturer (General Economics). And even before that, I studied International Economic Studies at the same faculty. Coming to think about it, I've now been in Maastricht since 1998! Time flies when you're having fun! J I was also asked to share with you what I do "in my spare time". Well, my hobbies are: Music (Punk & Ska) and instruments (Bass, Banjo, Ukulele, Drums)swimming, and video Games (anyone up for a game of Tony Hawk?)



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