



Royal Tropical Institute

KIT Development Policy & Practice

Master of Public Health (MPH)

International Course in Health Development

2012-2013



International Course in *Health Development*

The International Course in Health Development (ICHD/MPH) is an annual twelve-month Master of Public Health programme organized by the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) in cooperation with the *Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU)*.

Public health and health care in a changing environment

Health systems in developing countries face a wide range of challenges: inequalities in health and health care; the overwhelming problems posed by the HIV pandemic; health sector reforms; a call for equity and poverty reduction; epidemiological and demographic transitions with their double burden of disease; new partnerships with donors and other institutions through sector wide approaches and Global Funds; the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; and a focus on quality of services and evidence-based public health.

From this challenging and exciting context, a number of questions arise:

- How do health managers assess and analyse the health status of the population and the performance of the health systems they are in charge of?
- How can disease control officers retain the strengths of their programmes while moving ahead towards more integrated and sector wide approaches?
- How does a regional or district manager retain and motivate health staff in isolated places in order to satisfy the needs of populations in an equitable manner?
- How does one plan, execute and evaluate programmes for a disease like HIV/AIDS, taking into account its multidisciplinary dimensions and gender specific aspects?
- What could be the role of NGO's, civil society and communities at large in this dynamic context of health reforms?

Providing an effective response to these issues requires well-trained professionals able to solve complex public health problems systematically and using a multisectoral approach.

Objectives

The ICHD/MPH is designed to develop the capacity of senior health managers to use an integrated, multi-disciplinary approach to address health problems in their country.

At the end of the programme, the public health manager is able to:

- Critically analyse the health status of a population and identify health needs.
- Appraise the role of health systems in terms of fundamental goals, functions, actors and performance
- Identify priorities and influence effective policy-making and strategic planning concerning interventions aiming at improving public health, taking into account scientific evidence and good practice.
- Implement and monitor health interventions by managing human, financial and logistic resources.
- Work professionally across different sectors, disciplines and institutional levels with private and public actors, and through advocacy, communication and networking.
- Identify research needs, commission research, and critically analyse and use research results, incorporate a pro-poor and equity approach in all actions.
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- Continuously examine and critically reflect on own practice and values and adjust them accordingly.

Participants

This course is aimed at professionals working, or preparing to work, in a managerial capacity in health services at national, regional or decentralized district level.

Programme

First trimester

The introduction to the ICHD/MPH starts with learning and communication skills that will be needed throughout the course. These include computer skills in internet searches for health-related information and literature, use of the library, and presentation and writing skills.

Why study at KIT?

- Up-to-date approach to complex public health issues
- Practice-oriented
- Exchange between disciplines
- Interactive education
- Development of personal and professional competencies
- Network building
- Personal tutoring
- Participants from diverse backgrounds and countries
- Teachers: highly qualified specialists
- Positively reviewed by tropEd
- KIT: international centre of excellence in international health and development
- Accredited by NVAO

In the first trimester, students are introduced to the broad categories of factors that influence health: culture, lifestyle, socioeconomic, political and natural environments and the impact of the health care delivery system. Throughout the course, the gendered nature of many of these factors is emphasized.

Basic concepts and tools for the analysis and discussion of health problems through modules in health planning and management are introduced, including health economics and financing and epidemiology and statistics. The basic knowledge and skills acquired or reinforced in the first part of the course will be applied to a practical strategic planning exercise carried out in small groups. Towards the end of the first trimester, students begin to clarify the topic of their thesis and investigate the literature related to that topic.

Second trimester

In the second trimester, the course takes a more in-depth look at human resources development, health policy and financing, and health sector reforms. The module on health systems research includes participatory, qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and prepares students to assess research proposals and develop their own. The trimester concludes with modules on strategies to address infectious and non-communicable diseases, including public health emergencies as well as nutrition and Sexual and reproductive health including HIV/AIDS. Students write most of their thesis at this stage, and make a class presentation leading to a debate.

Third trimester

With guidance from an adviser, participants write a thesis on an important health problem they have been involved with in their country. The aim is to systematically analyse the problem and make suggestions for its solution, based on qualitative and quantitative information participants have brought with them and on a literature review.

The last three months of the course are devoted to finalizing the thesis with individual tutoring and visiting the World Health Organization in Geneva. In the week before the oral examinations, students practice presenting their thesis to each other in class.

Learning methods

The content of the course is practice-based and oriented as much as possible to the working situation of participants. Contacts between staff and participants are intensive throughout the course. Methods used include lectures, discussions, group work, individual presentations, case studies, exercises, study visits, an internet-based virtual learning community and “serious games”, self-study and written assignments including a thesis. A list of recommended books is provided, and readers for each module are prepared and distributed beforehand. Homework assignments are prepared in advance of most classroom sessions. Participants share information about health issues in countries they have worked in, such as organization and functioning of health services, health policies and regulations. This information is used in discussion and comparison of experiences and problems encountered across different countries and situations.

Study load

A total of 60 ECT credit points must be accumulated for successful completion of the ICHD/PMH programme. The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) facilitates transfer of course credits between institutions at the same academic level. One ECTS requires 30 hours of student time, which includes class time and independent study.

Programme structure

First trimester

- Introduction
- Determinants of health/ Introduction to public health
- Learning and communication skills
- Epidemiology and statistics
- Health policy, planning and management/ Health economics and financing

Second trimester

- Health systems research
- Human resources development
- Health policy and financing, advanced module
- Control strategies for infectious and non-communicable diseases
- Sexual and reproductive health including HIV/AIDS

Third trimester

- Visit to WHO; Thesis; Oral examination

Graduation requirements

Each module is assessed by means of either a written examination or a take-home assignment. At the end of the programme, an independent external examination committee assesses the thesis and the candidate's oral examination performance.

If the overall assessment is satisfactory, the degree of Master of Public Health is awarded. Candidates who do not meet the requirements for the degree may be eligible for a certificate of attendance.

Admission criteria

- Academic training at least to the level of a bachelor's degree, either in medicine or in another field related to health care, such as health sciences, economics, social science or nursing.
- A minimum of three years of experience, including managerial responsibilities in health services in a low resource country.
- Proven proficiency in spoken and written English
- Computer literacy is expected

The number of participants is limited. Because there are always more applicants than places in the course, a selection must be made from those meeting the above-mentioned criteria. The selection committee takes into account country of origin, experience and professional background in order to compose a group with a mixture of professional and geographical backgrounds. An adequate representation of women is also sought; women with appropriate training and experience are especially encouraged to apply.

Application procedure

Please send the following documents:

- A completed ICHD/MPH application form – including the names of 2 people who are willing to act as referees.
- A one-page letter describing your reasons for wanting to follow the ICHD/MPH, including how you plan to apply the knowledge and skills acquired.
- Certified true copies of your diplomas and grade reports accompanied by a certified translation if they are not in English.
- An up-to-date curriculum vitae and a list of publications if applicable.
- Unless you are a native English speaker or have completed your higher education in English, enclose proof of English language proficiency in the form of the internationally recognized test TOEFL or IELTS. A minimum

TOEFL score of 5.5 or a minimum IELTS score of 6.0 is required. We do not accept certificates other than the TOEFL or IELTS. If you have not yet completed such a test, you can send the results at a later date.

The entire application package is due by *January 1*. Candidates fulfilling the ICHD/MPH entry requirements will receive a letter of conditional admission, admitting them to the course provided that financing can be arranged. Most sponsors and agencies providing fellowships will ask you to submit this letter of conditional admission along with your fellowship application.

Once you have secured financial support and provided evidence of proficiency in English, you will receive a definitive notice of admission.

Note:

Participants with a source of guaranteed financing have until June 15 to apply to the ICHD. However, visa applications can take several months to process and candidates are therefore advised to apply early.

Funding & financial assistance

The arrangement of financial support to cover all study costs is the responsibility of the applicant. Please note that KIT does not offer financial support or fellowships.

Some candidates are sponsored by their own governments, universities or employers while others apply for fellowships offered through the United Nations and its specialized agencies such as UNICEF, WHO, WB, UNDP or through other international programmes, such as those of OECD, EU or OAS.

For more information on these and other possibilities, consult the UNESCO guide Study Abroad: www.unesco.org/education/study-ingabroad or go to www.kit.nl/fellowships.

Netherlands Fellowship Programme (NFP)

One possibility for obtaining a fellowship is through the Netherlands Fellowship Programme (NFP). For detailed instructions on NFP fellowship application procedures, please see the attached document or www.nuffic.nl/nfp.

The Netherlands Government does not grant a fellowship unless it is assured that the candidate's government and employer agree to his or her participation and that the candidate will be admitted to the course. For this reason, it is essential to first gain admission to the ICHD before applying for a fellowship.

The Netherlands embassy or consulate can advise prospective applicants on relevant application procedures. Candidates interested in these fellowships are strongly advised to contact the embassy or consulate in their country before applying for a stipend. More information and application forms can also be downloaded from www.nuffic.nl/nfp

Practical information

Course dates

Starting date: 17 September 2012

Ending date: 6 September 2013

Course fees

The fee for this course is € 15.870 (2012) which covers the tuition fee, course materials and excursions. Books (€ 300) are not included in the course fee. The entire fee must be paid 1 month before the start date of the course.

Location

Classes are held at KIT in Amsterdam.

Accommodation

KIT will secure accommodation for participants with a NFP fellowship and assist others in their search for housing, if the request is received **before 1 May**. After this date we cannot guarantee accommodation. Note that when accommodation is arranged by KIT, it is for the whole course period. A shorter lease period is not allowed. There is a severe shortage of student accommodation in Amsterdam and participants are advised to contact KIT for information.

Visa requirements

Citizens of most countries of the EU or European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries do not need a visa to enter the Netherlands. For up to date information we advise you to visit the Ministry of Justice website: www.ind.nl Participants from other countries will need an 'Authorization for Temporary Stay' to enter and stay in the Netherlands for longer than three months. This visa should be applied for through KIT. Participants admitted to the course will receive detailed information as well as a list of documents KIT requires to secure their visa. Applicants should take into account that this procedure can take months.

Insurance requirements

The Netherlands has no national health insurance. According to Dutch law, all participants of international courses and any accompanying dependents are required to have health, accident and third party insurance.

Dutch insurance companies offer reasonable rates to foreign students. Please note that holders of a NFP fellowship are automatically insured but their dependents are not.

Accreditation

The ICHD/MPH is accredited by the Netherlands-Flemish Accreditation Organization (NVAO).

KIT and the ICHD/MPH have been positively assessed during a review by tropEd, a network of European institutions for higher education in international health.



Focus on HIV/AIDS

A Master of Public Health – Specialization in HIV/AIDS is also offered at KIT. For more information visit www.kit.nl/training

WHO Collaborating Centre for HRH

The World Health Organization (WHO) has designated KIT a collaborating centre for the training, retention and motivation of health care workers in developing countries. As such, KIT conducts research and advises countries on policy, planning and capacity development for HR management in the international health care sector.

Advanced courses

Global Health and Development

- Advanced Course on Health Sector Reforms and Financing
- Control Strategies for Infectious and Non-Communicable Diseases
- Gender, Rights and Health
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in Disease Control Programmes
- Governance and Human Resources for Health
- Health Systems Research
- Health Policy and Financing
- Human Resources for Health
- Implementing Quality Management in Diagnostic Laboratories
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Innovations in a Dynamic Health Systems Environment
- Sexual and Reproductive Health including HIV/AIDS

HIV and AIDS

- Dynamics of the HIV and AIDS Epidemics and Effective Responses
- Health Sector Responses to HIV
- HIV Politics, Policy, Governance and Planning Mechanisms

Gender, Rights and Development

- Tailor-made training
- Scheduled advanced courses

Sustainable Economic Development

- Tailor-made training
- Scheduled advanced courses

Contact information

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