Master of Science in Global Health

McMaster University
Canada

Maastricht University
The Netherlands

2017 - 2018
YEAR IN REVIEW

Institutional partners

• McMaster University, Canada
• Maastricht University, The Netherlands
• Manipal Academy of Higher Education, India
• Thammasat University, Thailand
• The University of South-Eastern Norway (USN), Norway
• Universidad del Rosario, Colombia
• Ahfad University for Women, Sudan

The evolving consortium of academic institutions that make up the Master of Science in Global Health program shares the same commitment to providing an equitable, inclusive, and high-quality education to create a globally competent workforce.
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Dr. Andrea Baumann, Director, MSc Global Health Program, McMaster University
Dr. Anja Kromeich, Director, MSc Global Health Program, Maastricht University
Message from the Chair

As we reflect on the last academic year, I continue to feel very fortunate to have played a part in shaping this groundbreaking program. Last October, the global health advisory board met in Maastricht for our annual meeting, which was the first board meeting of all country delegates. It was exciting to learn about the action-oriented research taking place at partner institutions, and to plan for the program’s continued expansion as we review additional sites for Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Uganda and Kenya.

This year, we also saw the opening of the Maastricht Centre for Global Health, created to address issues of health and wellbeing in a globalized world. Research carried out in the centre will contribute to a better understanding of the various determinants of health, as well as the understanding of transnational responsibilities—and I look forward to hearing about the latest developments.

Our students, alumni, and faculty continue to inspire me, as we all work together and move forward with a shared vision of a world in which there is health equity for all people.

Message from the Directors

The Master of Science in Global Health program continues to grow, as we strengthen existing partnerships and forge new ties with institutions globally. We have welcomed distinguished guests including ambassadors and heads of state, who have delivered lectures to shed light on key issues, from pollution in Ontario to multiculturalism in Canada. These perspectives are critical to the program’s offering, as we work together to make an impact in the world of global health today.

In Maastricht, the new Centre for Global Health will bring opportunities for research and transdisciplinary collaboration between institutions, and is an important step in overcoming complex challenges that require an integrated approach. This newsletter highlights some of the program’s successes over the course of this academic year and invites readers to learn about the various innovative ways in which our students, faculty, and alumni are tackling global health problems in their work and research.

We hope you enjoy reading our latest newsletter.

Elizabeth Witmer, Chair, Global Health Advisory Board

Anja Krumeich, Director, Global Health Program, Maastricht

Andrea Baumann, Director, Global Health Program, McMaster
International Cooperation: Building Alliances with Embassies

By working with the wider international community, the program exposes students to different areas of global health and provides them with a unique opportunity to learn from experts outside of our higher education consortium, including ambassadors and heads of state.

This year, through McMaster University’s global health speaker series and strengthening alliances with partner institutions, the program welcomed Canada’s Ambassador to Norway, Artur Wilczynski and Consul General of the Netherlands, Anne LeGuellec.

Ambassador Wilczynski spoke to MSc Global Health students as part of McMaster’s joint course with University of South-Eastern Norway (USN): Global transitions within local communities. Small places, big changes. His presentation focused on multiculturalism in Canada and its associated issues, including combating discrimination, facilitating integration and ensuring equality and inclusion for all citizens.

“Canada is at its core and will continue to become an increasingly diverse society—and how we manage that diversity is a fundamental question,” said the Ambassador, speaking from Norway and addressing students at USN and McMaster.

McMaster’s partnership with USN is supported through the High North Fund, which has allowed the university to welcome experts from all over the world to share their experiences and foster global citizenship on campus and beyond.

The Ambassador called for a collective effort—on the part of leaders in various sectors, from education to health care—to practice vigilance and, beyond that, to speak out and address problems.

Earlier in the year, McMaster welcomed Anne Le Guellec, Consul General of the Netherlands, who delivered a talk titled “Canada and The Netherlands: A Fruitful Cooperation,” focusing on her position with the consular office in Ontario and her associated responsibilities.

Prior to delivering her presentation, Le Guellec met with exchange students from Maastricht University who were visiting McMaster for the winter term. She spoke about the Consular office’s prioritization of green energy, clean water and sanitation, and life on land. She drew attention to Toronto, which tops the list of the world’s most resilient cities, and is constantly striving to improve its responsiveness to issues including potential disasters, extreme weather events, and population growth in an age of globalization.

“Building these relationships with embassies and the external global health community not only benefits students directly, but also facilitates stronger connections between education and policy,” says Andrea Baumann, co-director of the Global Health program and Associate Vice-President, Global Health at McMaster University.
Maastricht Launches Centre for Global Health

In October 2017, Maastricht University announced the launch of the Maastricht Centre for Global Health (MC4GH) at a seminar emphasizing the need to establish global health as a new multidisciplinary field. The Centre’s aim is to build the multidisciplinary research capacity needed to tackle the complex and emerging issues shaping the health of individuals and communities across the globe.

A joint initiative by the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences, The Faculty of Law, and the International Centre for Integrated Assessment and Sustainable Development, the Centre invites other faculties to participate and collaborate.

“Health and disease are the outcomes of many-stranded interactions between local factors—history, culture, religion, health care systems, and environment, for example—and global dimensions, including world market, trade, security, migration, brain drain, surveillance, collaboration and governance,” explains Anja Krumeich, co-director of the Global Health program and director of the Centre for Global Health at Maastricht.

“Since the Centre’s launch, groups from across UM have participated in a series of internal seminars to explore expertise and approaches, looking for common ground to build collaboration and the development of interdisciplinary global health concepts and theory,” says Krumeich.

The Centre has also become actively involved in debates that should lead to developing a national and European research and policy agenda for global health. Currently, more than 70 PhD projects are being conducted under the Centre’s umbrella.

The founding of the Centre coincided with Krumeich’s appointment as Maastricht’s new Global Health chair, and the Centre intends to support and enhance the research that falls under her responsibilities. Since taking on these new roles, Krumeich has been collaborating closely with the Centre’s academic coordinator, Dr. Remco van der Pas, and an executive board representing the other faculties.

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Anja Krumeich
Co-director, Global Health program; Director, Centre for Global Health, Maastricht University
The Global Health Symposium, Bridging Different Worlds, in Manipal is the culmination of the program. The intense two-week summit brings together students from McMaster, Maastricht, and Manipal to meet their peers face to face, take part in field visits, and gather feedback from global health experts. 265 students participated in the 2018 symposium, an immersive experience designed to simulate the situations they will face in the working world.

This year, three faculty members from Ahfad University for Women in Sudan attended the symposium for the first time. Dr. Sahar Al Amir Bashir Hamad, whose qualitative research investigates factors influencing child marriage in Sudan, commented that the symposium promotes open-mindedness and reflection. “Students get...
to meet stakeholders that they would not meet otherwise, develop observation skills, and experience practicalities such as language barriers, which all reflect reality," he said.

“The faculty members from Sudan brought a unique perspective to their areas of research, and their contributions in Manipal reflect their increasingly important role within the consortium of global health partners,” says Andrea Baumann, the Global Health program’s co-director.

Throughout the two-week Symposium, students from McMaster, Maastricht, and Manipal presented their thesis or scholarly paper abstracts, attended keynote lectures, interviewed stakeholders, and observed public and global health projects in the field.

On presenting her scholarly paper, McMaster student Emma Warren commented that “Getting to present and hear feedback from not
only experts in the global health field, but my brilliant, diverse and experienced peers was an invaluably constructive experience.”

The students also attended field visits related to their selected clusters, which included Mental Health, Traditional Health Practices, Occupational Health, Environmental Health, Reproductive and Child Health, and Infectious Disease Surveillance. Working together with peers from McMaster, Maastricht, and Manipal, the students observed four different sites related to their cluster in order to gain a clearer picture of an aspect of the Indian health care system.

“The field visits were really helpful in terms of contrasting what’s on paper and what’s actually implemented on the ground,” says McMaster student Fazila Kassam. “When we went into the field we saw the reality as compared to the literature review we had done earlier,” she said.

The Symposium was also a valuable opportunity for faculty and staff from McMaster, Maastricht, Manipal, and Ahfad to meet and discuss the program’s strategic direction.
Maastricht Global Health Students Awarded Grant to Promote Inclusion and Diversity

As the Global Health program is delivered in coordination with a network of partner universities in the Netherlands, Canada, India, Thailand, Sudan, Colombia, and Norway, it offers students an opportunity to collaborate in transcontinental teams and participate in an international exchange to one of the partner universities. However, due to financial barriers, not all students are able to take advantage of the exchange component. A group of Maastricht students are working to change that, armed with a recently awarded 10,000 € grant from ECHO, a non-profit organization specializing in diversity policy in higher education and the labour market.

Students Brechje Oonk, Michelle Otter, Aranka Ballering, and Lorenzo De Min are aiming to use the funding to create a global health student-run organization that will provide assistance to students within the university’s partner network who wish to take part in an exchange but are unable to for financial reasons. The organization also aims to build students’ cross-cultural skills—a core competency for every global health professional.

“Lack of financial means is a major barrier when it comes to exchange programs, especially for students from low and middle-income countries,” explains Oonk.

“ECHO’s request for student-led sustainable proposals on how to increase diversity in higher education presented an opportunity to do something about this issue,” says Ballering.

The grant is part of ECHO’s Students-4-Students campaign, initiated by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, which encourages higher education institutions and students to submit proposals to support and improve inclusive higher education and equal opportunities. The aim of the campaign is to support universities (of applied sciences) in developing initiatives for students by students.

In addition to benefiting exchange students, the grant will benefit the program as a whole, by helping students develop cross-cultural competencies—the skills necessary to communicate and effectively collaborate in multicultural teams.

“These skills are essential not only to prepare the next generation of global health workers, but also to contribute to the creation of a more inclusive society, in which citizens can see that what people from different cultures have in common is stronger than what divides them,” says Otter.

“Establishing an even more diverse student population within Maastricht’s Global Health program will increase the interaction between students from different cultural backgrounds, which in turn will help students to develop cross-cultural competencies,” says De Min. “So it’s a win-win.”

The Global Health Student Organization will consist of three committees: the scholarship committee, the educational committee and the alumni committee.

The scholarship committee will create a database of the already-available scholarships and will help students with their applications. The educational committee will organize lectures, debates, and movie nights on global health that will open a dialogue about the exchange students’ home countries, and provide an opportunity for the exchange students to have their voices heard within the student community. And the alumni committee will support global health students in the former two committees.

ECHO is providing the students with hands-on support and guidance on how to set up the project and tackle problems during the start-up phase.
More than 40 alumni from the McMaster Global Health program gathered in Toronto in January 2018 for an evening of networking and catching up. The program’s inaugural alumni reunion took place at the Peter Gilgan Centre for Research and Learning at SickKids, where Global Health Advisory Board member Jeff Mainland works as Executive Vice President, Corporate Strategy, Quality, Performance and Communications.

After welcome remarks from Andrea Baumann, Associate V-P, Global Health, Christy Gombay, Academic Coordinator, and David Hill, Academic Program Advisor, the group heard from three alumni: Katherine Palakovic, Elbert Manalo, and Meghan Brockington. In brief presentations, these alumni spoke about the work they are doing now and highlighted the ways in which the program helped to prepare them for their current roles.

Palakovic is a policy intern with the Ontario Internship Program. Her current work at the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care involves digital health policy and governance—ensuring that when Ontarians interact with the health care system, they can do it digitally.

Manalo is a family doctor who spoke about his time training under Dr. Jane Philpott. He also mentioned his involvement with charitable organization Helping Hands Philippines, and will be returning to the Philippines to assist communities with nutrition, sexual health, and family planning.

Brockington recently started working with Northern Water Futures at Wilfrid Laurier University and is also director of start-up NGO the Unmentionables, which provides women in refugee communities with intimate health and hygiene products.
Meet the Faculty

Susan Barclay
McMaster

For the last 18 years, Susan Barclay has worked as an international project manager and consultant for clients in corporate, academic, and international development settings. Her recent work has included managing a £2m project funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) to support civil society engagement in electoral processes in Sierra Leone; managing research studies in several African countries and in Papua New Guinea; and managing a research study for a small Hamilton company. Prior to moving to independent consultancy, Barclay spent 20 years in marketing and operations management in the health care, hospitality, and transportation industries. A part-time instructor in McMaster’s Global Health program, she is also coordinator of the annual Global Health Symposium in India. Barclay holds a Master of Business Administration from the University of Toronto and a Master of Science in Information Systems from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and is currently taking courses toward a Certificate in Gerontology at McMaster.

Gonnie Klabbers
Maastricht

Gonnie Klabbers is a lecturer in the Global Health program at Maastricht University. She is also the program’s thesis coordinator, responsible for helping students find a thesis research project based on their interests, prior education, and future career plans. Klabbers also tutors in several courses, and trains in research methodology, specifically in quantitative modelling techniques, and coordinates the course, New Biology/New Society. With degrees in Physiotherapy, Work and Health, and a PhD focusing on psychosocial pathways underlying socioeconomic health inequalities, Klabbers has learned to view health from different angles, acknowledging the complexity in maintaining good health or improving poor health. Klabbers’ main global health interest lies in the area of social health inequalities, which are increasing worldwide under the influence of the current political and economic climate. She believes that understanding inequalities and mechanisms that maintain or enhance these inequalities is of utmost importance in global health interventions, in order to deliver help or care where it is needed most.

Dr. Navya Vyas
Manipal

Dr. Navya Vyas is a doctor of homeopathic medicine and also has a Master of Public Health from Manipal. As a Manipal alumnus, Vyas participated in the Global Health Symposium as a student, an experience which has informed her current role as an organizing committee member of the symposium. Prior to joining Manipal’s Prasanna School of Public Health as a faculty member, Vyas worked in a surveillance unit in Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka, as a district epidemiologist for two years. Her involvement with the surveillance unit motivated her to pursue a PhD focused on preparing for emerging infectious diseases, and she intends to develop a training module for public health officials based on her findings. In addition to her academic responsibilities, she is the principal investigator of a project funded by Manipal McGill Centre for Infectious Disease, which aims to determine the protective effect of Metformin among diabetic patients with Tuberculosis. She is widely published in peer-reviewed national and international journals.
After completing my undergraduate degree in Medicine, I joined the Masters of Public Health at Manipal. In January, I participated in the exchange to Maastricht, and I remember arriving in Amsterdam—the Netherlands welcomed us with beautiful snow! Travelling from Amsterdam to Maastricht, I was amazed by the hospitality of the people and the beauty of the country.

When we arrived at Maastricht, we were welcomed by faculty members, who showed us the university, and provided us with delicious food.

Attending classes, we noticed the differences in study patterns between Europe and India. Problem based learning exposed us to hands-on learning, which is essential for public health professionals. Small group discussions with the tutor and students focused on the readings, and this helped me develop a solid understanding of the subject matter. Completing three courses in three months, in addition to epidemiology for Manipal students, was a challenging task. Thankfully, the Maastricht faculty helped us to overcome the issues we faced in the beginning.

On weekends, we had the opportunity to explore Maastricht, which is a beautiful city with its river, bridges, and caves. We also visited other cities close by, and got a real taste of life in Europe.

My exchange to Norway was the highlight of my Master’s degree. I have always been interested in the idea of student exchanges and the opportunity to complete course work abroad. I decided to pursue the exchange in Norway because I found the program at USN, Global transitions within local communities. Small places, big changes, particularly appealing. Additionally, Norway was somewhere I had always wanted to travel.

During my studies at USN, we heard countless guest lectures from academics and professionals from a variety of backgrounds. These lectures offered unique perspectives on how global processes are affecting people at a community level, and illustrated the extensive scope of global health.

My most valuable learning experience was when my group examined the measures in place in Norway to ensure the well-being of unaccompanied minor refugees. During this project, I was able to visit two different houses where unaccompanied minor refugees lived. I interviewed the community workers who worked there and had the opportunity to interact with the refugees. This was an incredible experience that made me re-evaluate stereotypes and norms that I had taken for granted. I would highly encourage anyone who is considering going on exchange to fully embrace this invaluable opportunity.
Alumni Making a Difference

Program graduates from the Global Health program leave with work-ready skills and relevant international experience. And they are making change happen in communities near and far.

Ending Female Genital Mutilation Requires a Grassroots Approach, Says Emily Allwood

Female genital mutilation (FGM), also known as female circumcision, is widely recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women. And, as Global Health program alumna Emily Allwood, points out, “in many countries it’s still a taboo subject—one that’s highly sensitive in certain cultures.” Currently employed as a project manager for Pharos, the Utrecht-based Dutch centre of expertise on health disparities, Allwood is working to tackle the taboo through education and awareness about FGM.

Pharos’ mission is to improve the accessibility and quality of care in the Netherlands, where FGM is prohibited. “The projects I work on focus on prevention in the Netherlands, as well as the health care needs of women who have already been circumcised,” explains Allwood, who...
works directly with the communities practicing FGM. “It’s the women themselves and their stories that motivate me,” she says, pointing out that much work is needed to shift traditional ways of thinking. “You can’t expect people to change their mindset at the border—especially when it comes to such a deeply rooted tradition.”

Allwood says the Global Health program taught her about the impact that grassroots approaches can have in affecting change, but she is now seeing the benefits firsthand. “When I started the program, my ambition was to improve health care globally in some manner, and with this job, I feel like I’m taking the first steps towards that ambition,” she says.

Allwood joined the Global Health program at Maastricht University in 2016. After spending the first semester in Maastricht, she travelled to Thailand for an elective at Thammasat University in Bangkok. She then moved on to India for the Global Health Symposium in Manipal, and finished off back in the Netherlands to conduct her thesis research in Utrecht. “What I enjoyed most about the program was the diversity among my classmates—not only in terms of nationalities and cultures, but also with respect to study background, past experiences and ambitions,” she says. “The program influenced me in many ways, but I can definitely say that I’m a lot more open-minded and understanding towards other cultures and beliefs, and it’s a skill I use every day in my work.”

“Logan Turner Gives Voice to Indigenous Issues in Norway

Logan Turner
Global Health Alumnus, McMaster

Logan Turner, soon-to-be alumnus of the Global Health program at McMaster, completed his field practicum in Tromso, Norway, 350 kilometres north of the Arctic Circle. As a visiting researcher and research assistant, Turner spent two months at the KG Jebsen Centre on the Law of the Seas (JCLOS) at the Universitet i Tromso. His work has focused on the challenges and opportunities for the Norwegian Sami population to participate in governance processes around energy and mining. He aims to use this research to draw comparisons between the participation of Indigenous peoples in natural resource management in Canada and Norway to study what challenges and opportunities exist for each population.

“As with many Indigenous populations, the Sami people have struggled with a multitude of issues, from land rights and language to health and climate change,” explains Turner, who joined the global health program wanting to learn more about the challenges facing Indigenous people in Canada and around the world.

His research explores questions about how Sami people participate in governance processes around energy and mining. He aims to use this research to draw comparisons between the participation of Indigenous peoples in natural resource management in Canada and Norway to study what challenges and opportunities exist for each population.

During his time in Norway, Turner has helped to organize conferences on Indigenous rights and legal traditions to explore and raise awareness of critical questions and challenges in Indigenous law and methodologies, including issues related to resource management, environment, and gender. He also completed a literature review on processes of consultation of Indigenous peoples about mining projects in Canada, and has held meetings with the Arctic Council Indigenous Peoples Secretariat and the Chairperson of the National Saami Association.

“Through these projects and conferences, I’ve made contacts with emerging and established researchers from around the world, which has been
so important as I work to strengthen my global network of contacts and support,” Turner explains.

Looking ahead, Turner is set to begin a Master’s degree in Journalism in the fall, at the University of British Columbia, where he will focus on issues of sustainability and resource management, with a particular interest in the relationship between the Canadian federal and provincial governments and Indigenous peoples.

He also looks forward to applying a critical perspective to one of today’s most pressing global health challenges: climate change. “As humans continue to consume at an unsustainable pace, our environment and our health continues to deteriorate, and we must take collective responsibility for our own actions,” he says.

From Theory to Application: Basavaraj Kataraki Practices Public Health Without Borders in India

Basavaraj Kataraki
Global Health Alumnus, Manipal

“Being an alumnus of the Manipal Masters of Public Health (MPH) program, I have come to learn what ‘public health without borders’ really means,” explains Basavaraj Kataraki. “As the program is a collaborative initiative between McMaster, Manipal and Maastricht University, it included not only classroom learning but also cross-cultural learning at a national and international level,” he says.

Global Health Foundations I and II expose students to different cultural perspectives right from the beginning, while the Global Health Symposium offers an innovative platform where students from different cultures and backgrounds share their skills, experience, and knowledge.

“I have been able to use these skills in my career since graduating,” says Kataraki, who is currently working as a Surveillance Medical Officer for the World Health Organization at Bihar state of India.

With epidemiology as a field of specialization in the MPH, Kataraki was able to explore this specific field in depth, and was able to get involved in research into communicable and non-communicable diseases. As an epidemiologist, he has focused on issues including disease surveillance, outbreak investigation, and risk mitigation. He has
also worked as a Scientist-B for National Institute of Epidemiology (NIE), at the Indian Council of Medical Research, where he designed a Qualitative & Quantitative Research study ‘Process Evaluation of Integrated Management Neonatal and Childhood Illness in India’.

Since graduating, Kataraki has also designed a qualitative tool (Quality of Life for HIV Adolescents) for the National Institute of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences, and works as an advisor for planning and implementing the Universal Health Care (UHC) Project for the Directorate of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Karnataka, India.

“My experience in the program, which taught me to plan and design large scale projects while working with McMaster and Maastricht Global Health students, has made the transition to professional work a seamless one,” he says.