



International
Labour
Organization

MASTERS PROGRAMMES ON SOCIAL AND PUBLIC POLICY, FINANCING, DESIGN AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT – MAASTRICHT UNIVERSITY

Depending on their state of economic development, individual countries redistribute between 5 and 30 per cent of GDP through national social protection schemes (social assistance schemes, social insurance schemes, health benefits, pensions and short-term cash benefits). Redistributive mechanisms on such a scale need to be designed, adjusted, reformed, monitored and managed by highly qualified social protection specialists and managers. The global trend to overhaul and revise welfare and social protection systems further increases the need for well-qualified quantitative social protection analysts and managers.

Many developing countries and transition economies, but also some industrialized countries, do not have these specialists or managers; neither do they have access to comprehensive, concise and problem-orientated training programmes. Well-trained experts in each country would make a notable difference with respect to the development of effective social protection strategies for the extension of social protection and, through good governance, to the long-term viability of national social protection systems – and thus to people's long-term social security.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Partners:

University of
Maastricht,
Maastricht Graduate
School of Governance

Beneficiary country:
Global

Timeframe:
Annual projects from
2000 – 2013

Budget:
USD 810,000

THE RESPONSE

The Maastricht University Masters programmes fill a crucial void in global professional governance training.

In 2000, the ILO and the University of Maastricht agreed to set up a joint one-year Masters programme in social protection financing. The programme was designed to train social protection specialists and to create a permanent training infrastructure for further groups of experts.

The long-term objective of this collaboration is to improve the design and implementation of national social protection systems by improving the (quantitative and empirical) bases for national political decision-making processes.

With the active involvement of the ILO, the first Master of Science (Msc) in social protection financing was introduced in the 2001/02 academic year and subsequently followed by a Master programme in social policy design.

These two specializations were later consolidated under an umbrella Master programme on public policy and human development. The programmes train future specialists in social protection for social security institutions, academic institutes, governments and international organizations, thereby creating a network of thoroughly trained and socially responsible managers in charge of social security systems around the world.

In the 2011/12 academic year, the ILO provided the following three courses:

- Financing social protection
- Social budgeting
- Actuarial practice in social protection

The ILO's Social Protection Department has also invested in the production of the textbook series that accompanies the Masters programmes.



"To guarantee high quality in an international environment, we cooperate with the faculties of Maastricht University, partner universities and international organizations, like the International Labour Organization (ILO)."



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RESULTS

During the 12 academic years in which the programmes have been run, 361 students have obtained their Master of Science in public policy and human development. These students came from over 69 countries, and 48 per cent of them came from low- and middle-income countries.

Many of the students were employees of national social protection institutions, who returned to work in these institutions once they had obtained their degrees.

Some former students currently hold prominent positions in their respective governments and in national social security institutions (e.g. in Ghana, Jordan, Nigeria, Thailand and Zimbabwe); others have been involved in ILO lead development projects (e.g. in Ghana, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia); and others have joined international organizations.

Given the success of the joint ILO–University of Maastricht Masters programme, the ILO is justified in seeking to replicate it in other regions of the world. As a result of its collaboration with the University of Mauritius, an executive MSc in social protection financing programme was launched at that university in the 2010/11 academic year. A new programme for higher-level studies in social security was also introduced in 2013 at the University of Algiers. Discussions are under way with a university in Bangkok – and possibly with the University of Montevideo – with a view to setting up programmes in these establishments.

BENEFITS OF PARTNERING

Support from ILO professional staff and senior experts to teaching and the development and updating of curricula.

Use of ILO models for social security schemes including the methodology for projecting population, the macroeconomic frame, the labour market frame, pensions and other social security benefits.

The availability of trained experts able to plan, organize, finance and administer benefit schemes is a prerequisite for the successful planning, implementation and management of social security policies. The ILO, with its long experience, is a valuable partner to support the building up of national expertise.