

# MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PUBLIC POLICY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



UNITED NATIONS  
UNIVERSITY

**UNU-MERIT**



**Maastricht University**

Maastricht Graduate School of Governance

The Master of Science in Public Policy and Human Development (MSc PPHD) is a double degree program launched in 2006 by MGSoG and UNU. Its goal is to train the next generation of public policy professionals to contribute to public policies that support sustainable human development.

The Master provides students with knowledge and competencies to undertake evidence-based policy making, and both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Students are trained to use knowledge, competencies, and values to become proactive contributors to the design and evaluation of policies.

They are prepared for leading positions in national and international organizations working on developments such as the public sector, NGOs, and consultancy companies. MGSoG and UNU design the curriculum jointly along the core values of Maastricht University, which are internationalization and diversity, and the core values of the United Nations, which is human development. The Master is committed to the values of diversity, cooperation, and good governance.

## Going **BEYOND** Awards

By pursuing diversity, the program recognizes that everyone is unique with her/his own competencies and knowledge. The program considers cooperation as the most effective option to strengthen the value of diversity. When cooperating, each individual contributes her/his own uniqueness to find solutions jointly to complex societal challenges.

The value of good governance, formed on the foundation of transparency and accountability, is defined as an institutional mechanism where channels are provided to actors to enable their participation in the policy process. The curriculum is divided into a fall and spring semester.

The fall semester prepares students for the skills and knowledge required to analyze policies in general and with societal impact in mind. Students work on tasks related to relevant societal challenges that affect human development and gain insights from practical experiences shared by guest lecturers who come from UN agencies or other intergovernmental and (non)governmental organizations, such the Center for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth, CIPPEC; the United Nations International Children Emergency Fund, UNICEF; the International Labour Organization, ILO; the World Bank; the European Commission; the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD; and the World Intellectual Property Organization, WIPO.

The spring semester allows students to specialize in a policy area of global relevance, and hence the skills and knowledge gained in the fall semester are deepened, applied and customized in the seven specializations offered by the program. Most of the specializations are designed in cooperation with international organizations leaders on the policy area studied.

## Going BEYOND Awards

The specializations are: Social Protection Policy (with the ILO), Governance of Innovation (with UNU-MERIT), Risk and Vulnerability (with the UNU Institute for Environment and Human Security, UNU- EHS), Migration Studies, Regional Integration & Multi-Level Governance, Foreign Policy and Development, and Social Entrepreneurship and Public Policy (with UNU-MERIT).

Students are required to write a master thesis on a policy area, demonstrating their analytical thinking, independent research, and capacity to produce policy recommendations for sustainable change.

The theses advocate for human development and the SDGs, [see the blog.post of Riesa van Doorn advocating for women's empowerment](#)

### MAASTRICHT UNIVERSITY (THE NETHERLANDS), SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS, MAASTRICHT GRADUATE SCHOOL OF GOVERNANCE (MGSOG) AND UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY (UNU)

The School of Business and Economics (SBE) is part of Maastricht University (UM), the European University of the Netherlands that was founded in 1974. Maastricht University ranks 6th in the top 100 universities in the 2021 Times Higher Education Young Universities Ranking. The University's CORE strategy translates in four core values to be an innovator in (1) Research and (2) Education, and to adopt (3) a collaborative and (4) open approach with all students and staff to build on their diversity. SBE has a broad scope, with expertise in economics, international business, management, public policy, governance, and sustainability. It offers high-quality research and research-based education as initial education and lifelong learning and holds the Triple Crown AACSB, EQUIS and AMBA business school accreditation. Its approach is challenge driven, innovative, collaborative, and inclusive. Since its foundation in 1983, SBE has been using problem-based learning (PBL) as its core approach to Teaching and Learning. Through PBL, students acquire cutting-edge knowledge based on the latest research in the field and the 21st century skills to act as responsible and engaged leaders and managers in the world. The Maastricht Graduate School of Governance (MGSoG) brings significant additional expertise to SBE and a wide network of new societal stakeholders to contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The mission of the MGSoG is to train policy analysts who combine a high level of academic scholarship with leadership in order to strengthen democratic governance in domestic and international institutions.

# Going BEYOND Awards

## PROGRAM IMPACT AND SUCCESS

The MSc PPHD believes influential policy makers are needed all over the world, and this is reflected in the program student population. This academic year (2021/22) the program has a cohort of 144 students coming from North America, Europe, South America, Africa, and Asia and holding degrees in economics, international relations, anthropology, law, and European studies, among others.

MSc PPHD students learn the skills to become inclusive policy makers. This starts from day one when the program core values and the University's approach to Teaching and Learning (Problem-Based Learning) are presented, outlining how these contribute to an inclusive approach to public policy and human development. In the first period, students follow team dynamics sessions to optimize the tutorial learning experience. Tutorial groups are formed with student diversity in mind.

The peer-to-peer conversational learning environment allows the students to understand the many dimensions to creating and analyzing policy in a way that puts impact on society at the heart of the process. Students take the skills learned on inclusive and sustainable development and implement them outside of the curriculum while completing the MSc PPHD.

See alumna Laura Nieboer describe how she created a beer brand using bread waste for the product, and Brendan Joy who is currently working for the Social Impact Researcher with Ireland's largest Social Enterprise Investment Fund. In his words

**"I would not have achieved this were it not for the amazing specialisation [...] I was lucky to be part of."**



**Johanna Tassot**  
Cohort of 2020

“ The strong focus on quantitative skills in the MPP enabled me to conduct a complex statistical analysis for my thesis in collaboration with the internationally renowned Max-Planck-Institute for Demographic Research. Currently, we are working on publishing the results of my research to ensure that they can inform policy makers and raise awareness for the need to support young mothers in the early stages of their careers. ”



**Anand Ramesh Kumar**  
Cohort of 2018

“ Our alumni network is so diverse, widespread, and well-engrained in the global social protection community, that every so often I find myself interacting and working with a fellow alumnus across different international organizations, country governments and other key employers in the domain. The shared understanding that the program has helped build for so many professionals in the domain, and its close tie ins with ongoing work in the sector makes it easier to convey priorities, communicate differences and collectively move ahead as responsible social policy professionals. ”



**Emily Olson**  
Cohort of 2020

“ The MPP programme has created an international community of change-makers. To see my fellow alumni benefiting from the unique education of this programme and taking it to their own communities around the world and making a positive impact has been incredibly inspiring. Having the unwavering support of the MPP programme during, and long after, completing my studies has empowered me and many others like myself to continue fostering inclusivity, connectivity, and sustainable development. ”



# Going BEYOND Awards

## PROGRAM IMPACT AND SUCCESS

Additionally, many students work with multiple organizations for the direct application of their thesis research to an organization in the community. Students regularly interact with external stakeholders in the learning process and learning from the guest speakers and practitioners brought into courses. This also helps them develop their professional networks.

After students graduate, a large percentage start or continue a career in governmental or development organizations (for example, National and international governmental employers represented among our alumni population include for example the European Commission, the Government of Ecuador, the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, the US Department of State, and the Office of the Prime Minister of Uganda). Development sector employers represented among our alumni include the UN Agencies such as the World Food Programme, the ILO, the International Organization for Migration, UNICEF, UNDP China, and the OECD).

In these positions and many others, our alumni population of 1,417 use the skills they learned in the MSc PPHD to make a strong societal impact through their work and by assisting in the development inclusive policies in cooperation with relevant actors.

The MSc PPHD equips graduates with knowledge, transferable skills, and competencies to contribute to solving contemporary and future human development challenges and the consolidation of a global network of diverse policy actors.

The high quality post-graduate double-degree and its employability track, empowers students to obtain high level and influential jobs. Moreover, many alumni return to the program as guest speaker, mentor, or member of our Alumni Committee. In recent years, alumni have featured in the curriculum to share expertise from their field and have offered practicums for students to assess current, real-world situations for effective societal impact.

# Going BEYOND Awards

## SDG IMPACT

Because of the program's focus on public policy and human development, and the collaboration between Maastricht University and the UNU, all SDGs are addressed throughout the courses and featured in the Master theses.

In the fall, SDGs 1 is particularly addressed when training students to analyze policies. The other SDGs are introduced through PBL cases used to explain main concepts and theories. Through cases, students are trained to understand policy from a sustainable human development perspective. Because of this, cases addressing poverty, education, equality, and climate are analyzed.

These areas are further explored during the specializations. Each of the SDGs can be assessed through a lens focusing on foreign policy, innovative governance, migration, multi-level governance, risk, social entrepreneurship or social protection.

The students are encouraged to do that in the spring program period. By the time they graduate, they have a deeper understanding of the SDGs and how public policy can help address them and contribute to sustainable human development.



# Going BEYOND Awards

## LOOKING FORWARD

As the MSc PPHD continues to grow, there are three areas in which the program continues to invest.

First, the MSc PPHD takes pride in delivering a high calibre curriculum to its students that requires a deep understanding and analysis of public policy for successful, positive impact on society. It is a goal of the program to develop a curriculum that adjust to the contemporary and future human development challenges. Recently the curriculum has been revised through stronger connections with alumni who bring new knowledge into the program.

Second, the MSc PPHD strives to enhance diversity on an ongoing basis. For that reason, the School wants the program to be widely accessible to all qualified students and efforts are being made to offer some amount financial support to students who otherwise would not be able to afford the program.

Third, the program continues to explore possibilities for students to bring real-life cases to the classroom. Besides the initiatives mentioned above (e.g. presentations of experts, case studies, simulation games) the program is currently working on building a connection between the program and a policy hub, which is in the process of being created at UNU-MERIT.

The policy hub will become a physical space where staff will interact with students, young people, entrepreneurs, policymakers, companies, NGOs and communities to work together on achieving the SDGs, both locally and globally.



**Lea-Maria Löbel**  
Cohort of 2016

Specialisation:  
**Social Protection**

“

The Social Protection Specialisation was the perfect fit for me, taking into account the tools I wanted to acquire during the Master. As I am interested in workers' rights and how social protection policy reaches different people in society, I was keen to not only study the concepts of poverty and inequality, but to apply these concepts right away. Developing a multidimensional poverty index, conducting fiscal space analysis and planning social policies in case studies were valuable experiences, even more so as we were guided by public policy specialists of the International Labour Organisation.



Maastricht University

I do not want to hide that there were days, where I was frustrated with the immense work load and the fact that I did not always grasp the concepts at first. Nevertheless, as all 4 courses of the Specialisation build on each other, you are rewarded in the end when knowledge settles and concepts begin intertwining. Another feature of the Social Protection Track valuable for my career was its main modus of group work on a daily basis. Now that I work in a group of researchers and non-researchers in the field, I can fully appreciate the preparation for negotiations, presentations and efficient division of work.

”



UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY  
**UNU-MERIT**



**Maastricht University**

Maastricht Graduate School of Governance