

CARPeSS training in Morocco

Researchers Werner Soors and Fahdi Dkhimi train high ranking officials of the Moroccan Ministry of Health

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In February 2016, ITM's Department of Public Health (DPH) officially took a new step in its collaboration with the Moroccan Ministry of Health. The DPH agreed to support the Ministry in its attempt to develop a relevant training programme for its central and regional directors. For the department, the reason for taking up this challenge was twofold: first, this was seen as a timely opportunity to deepen the current reflections on how best to adapt their training curriculum to the needs of the institutional partners in low- and middle income countries (LMICs); second, it was also considered a unique opportunity to reflect on how best to reach and strengthen capacities of the top-managers of a Ministry of Health in a middle income country.

The course objective is to give this public a base of common knowledge in order to be able to interact on major public health issues, to strengthen their analytical capacity as well as to develop their ability to summarize complex issues and identify, as much as possible in an evidence-based manner, operational solutions.

Reaching this high-level audience is rare. In a way, top managers of Ministry of Health “fly under the radar” of ITM training programmes, mainly because, due to their level of responsibility, they do not have the possibility to attend off-site courses. The challenge was thus to tailor the course content both to their needs and expectations, but also to their limited time availability while also taking into consideration other constraints – e.g. limited resources, tight timing as the course had to start within a couple of months after the official agreement between the MoH and ITM...

What options did we take for this pilot experience? One of our colleagues, Pol de Vos, conducted a needs assessment in March 2016, which helped draw the contours of a flexible course structure: six themes to be covered over an eight month period. Each theme is built around four main learning tools: guided reading (three weeks per theme, each week being introduced via an online video that presents the selected documents), face-to-face sessions (three days per month), three study tours relevant for specific themes (in England, Belgium and France); and finally a written task to be submitted and defended in front of a jury in order to validate the participants’

work.

And that is how the CARPeSS-training was born! The acronym stands for Certificat en Analyse et Renforcement des Politiques et Systèmes de Santé.

There is still a lot to do for this certificate, but it seems the fire is on. And the flame should be kept burning to make this pilot experience a success.