

## Alumni webinar series 2

MPH alumnus John De Maesschalck talks about suicide prevention in indigenous youth

23 Sep 2021 13:00 - 14:00

# ALUMNI WEBINAR SERIES



**Featuring the winners of the 2021 Prize for Global Research of the Province of Antwerp**

- 23/09: John De Maesschalck (Belgium)
- 21/10: Tatiana Prudence Nti Mvilongo (Cameroon)
- 04/11: Jahan Mallick (Germany)
- 16/12: Hendrik Swanepoel (South Africa)



Dit is de omschrijving

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Four former ITM master's students, graduates of our MSc in Public Health, MSc in Tropical Medicine and MSc in Tropical Animal Health (2020-2021) have been awarded the 2021 Prize for Global Research of the Province of Antwerp. Through this award, the Province wants to stimulate research relating to the global South. The Province has been handing out this award since 1996. This prize is awarded yearly to students whose thesis focuses on topics such as economy, politics, society, culture,

environment, (public) health or medicine (human and animal).

In this first webinar, MPH alum and laureate **John De Maesschalck** (Belgium) will present his master thesis, entitled “**Preventing suicide in indigenous youth - Insights from a scoping review to prevent indigenous youth suicide in the Andes region**”.

[Register here via Zoom.](#)

Mental health has gained welcoming importance on the global health agenda over the last decades. Yet, the latest report of the UN Special Rapporteur on mental health highlights the ongoing prominence of the biomedical model and the biased use of a Eurocentric and psychiatric knowledge base in developing interventions. Through a case study on indigenous youth suicide, John’s master thesis will be the starting point for a critical exchange on the importance of context and local knowledge systems for dealing with distress and how this translates in policy development. The Q&A-session, moderated by John’s thesis coach and mental health expert Willem van de Put, will enable to share topical experiences in other international settings. How is wellbeing and distress understood in your settings? Who has the power to define that and whose voices are left unheard? What are the strengths and limitations of the global mental health “evidence base”?

## Speakers

**John De Maesschalck**, MPH alumnus 2021

John has a background in economics and journalism and is currently training as a sociologist. He has a critical interest in the global traveling of (mental) health policies and health workforce education. He obtained his MPH from ITM in Antwerp, Belgium. He has worked on health and social equality in both Belgium and Latin America, with a particular focus on youth and gender policies.

### MODERATOR:

**Willem van de Put**, Senior Research Fellow, Department of Public Health, ITM Antwerp

Willem is cultural/medical anthropologist and philosopher by training. He has been working on international public health with an emphasis on crisis situations and mental health since the 1980s. Willem worked at Doctors without Borders Netherlands, later as founder of TPO Cambodia (1994-1998) and general director of HealthNet TPO (1998-2017). For the Institute for Humanitarian Affairs at Fordham University in New York, Willem developed the course "Mental Health in Complex Emergencies" in 2004, which has been given annually since then (this year the 17th edition). Currently Willem works as a senior research fellow at the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp and Fordham University in New York. Willem is also co-founder of 'Culture 4 Change', a foundation that uses cultural habits and beliefs based on expertise and action research as drivers of 'positive change' - instead of being seen as barriers to behavioural change.