

Supporting Teaching Experience for Postdocs

Final Report STEP

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Report intended for the funder Swiss School of Public Health (hereafter, SSPH+), Zürich

Background

Postdocs are highly skilled and devoted researchers. Short-term contracts and academic competition force them to focus primarily on activities with pressing deadlines, rarely prioritizing participation in teaching and supervision. As a result, they are often ill-prepared to develop a teaching curriculum when they apply for their first faculty position. Yet, students could profit from postdocs' in-depth knowledge and hands-on experience. For postdocs, developing knowledge transfer and supervision skills helps their career perspectives, as well as their chances in careers outside the academia.

Project aims

The STEP project was funded in August 2016 by SSPH+ with the aims to:

- 1) Organize a small initial workshop for postdocs and young researchers aimed at identifying the obstacles they face in advancing their teaching and supervision skills, and explore the possible options for overcoming these hurdles and supporting their needs to grow as teachers.
- 2) Actively work with SSPH+ on shaping a broadly supported action plan on supporting teaching experience and lobby for its implementation at SSPH+ partner institutes.
- 3) Inform postdocs and young researchers of existing and newly arising (as part of the "action plan", see below) opportunities for them to develop their teaching experience, and encourage and engage them in the development of their own preliminary ideas.

Results

The project delivered an action plan and organized two workshops for postdocs, the first one focused on generating ideas to aid the participation of young researchers in public health education, the second to inform them and encourage the development of their own preliminary ideas.

The first workshop

The workshop was held on 21 November 2016 at the ISPM, Bern and was attended by 8 postdocs from 5 different universities: Swiss TPH (Basel), University of Geneva, University of Luzern, Institut für Sozial- und Präventivmedizin Bern and University of Zurich. The attendees had heterogeneous level of experience and obligations regarding teaching and supervision. As an outcome of the workshop, we aimed to define and draft the basis of an action plan to support teaching & training by postdocs and young researchers which will be supported within SSPH+ and its partner institutes and the resulting issues and proposed solutions were presented in the action plan.

The action plan

In summary the action plan identified three main action points:

- To improve the possibilities to communicate with and among public health postdocs in Switzerland.
- To communicate postdoc's desire to gain teaching experience and improve teaching and supervision skills to seniors.
- To improve visibility and networking opportunities with public health postdocs across Switzerland.

To this end, we set out to pursue the following concrete action points:

- Create a mailing list for postdocs among all SSPH+ institutes (postdocs@ssphplus.ch), which can be used to reach all public health postdocs within Switzerland at once. This will help the teaching offers to reach the demands. SSPH+ will facilitate the contacting of the partner institutes to ask for any new postdocs to join.
- Actively promote the importance and opportunities of gaining teaching experience for postdocs by:
 - o Informing and encouraging postdocs themselves, by means of a second workshop and emails with opportunities.
 - o Bring the issue to the attention of the representatives of SSPH+ partner institutes, by visiting the SSPH+ retreat and talking to the organizers of the Swiss TPH MSc Epidemiology (Dr. Martin Rööfli and Dr. Christian Lengeler); and to stress that teaching may be presented more attractively, for example: recognition through being listed officially as an (co-)organizer, receiving a documented proof of hours taught, or financial compensation.
- Opening the opportunity for postdocs to use the SSPH+ website as a platform where postdocs can present themselves as public health experts in order to be more easily found by others across Switzerland.

The second workshop

The second workshop was organized on 20 February 2017 at Swiss TPH in Basel, and was attended by 16 postdocs, and by Sandra Nocera representing SSPH+. We presented the action plan and had workshops by two speakers. The first speaker, Prof. Dr. Charlotte Braun-Fahrländer, founder and former coordinator of the Swiss School of Public Health (SSPH+) and former director of the Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine (ISPM), Basel, spoke about how to organize Public Health teaching and juggle teaching activities with a research career. The second speaker, Prof. Dr. Jens Gaab, Professor of Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy, Dept. of Psychology, University of Basel and winner of the award "Breaker of teaching dogma's" by the University of Basel, presented the audience with 4 interesting questions (e.g. "Should teachers be friendly or tough?" And "Is teaching about the students or about the teacher?") after which interesting discussions followed.

SSPH+ retreat, Lugano, Switzerland

Marloes Eeftens and Stéphane Cullati were additionally present at the SSPH+ meeting in Lugano, Switzerland on 8 and 9 June 2017, and presented their action plan to the SSPH+ in order to raise support for structural changes and implementation of the structural impacts.

Structural organizational impact

The STEP workshops have brought the importance and opportunity of teaching and supervision experience for postdocs and young researchers to the attention of postdocs themselves and senior researchers representing their institutes at SSPH+. The workshops were targeted entirely at postdocs

and organized by postdocs, and for many attendants provided a first opportunity to network across Switzerland with fellow public health postdocs. When the new SSPH+ website is launched, the new email address (postdocs@ssphplus.ch) will also be available. Everyone can then email all public health postdocs in Switzerland in order to promote courses or workshops, disseminate teaching opportunities, funding opportunities, look for research partners and networking (SSPH+) events. An email was sent to the whole crowd of potentially interested postdocs to inform them that they have been added to the new email distributor. They can opt out if they wish.

Remaining tasks:

The following tasks will be carried over to 2018, after the launch of the new SSPH+ website:

- A letter will be circulated to the representatives for each of the 8 SSPH+ partners in order to establish this network.
- Get in touch with SSPH+ partners to inform them to make teaching requests visible through MSc coordinators, also for guest lectures and replacements.
- Explore the opportunity for postdocs to appear on the list of public health professionals on the SSPH+ website once it is launched.

Changes to the project (from what was originally proposed)

In the spring of 2017, Anna Neodo left the project and further responsibilities and funding were transferred to Marloes Eeftens. The budget was impacted by these changes accordingly, with funds shifted from Anna Neodo to Marloes Eeftens and the project extension until the end of 2017 to allow Marloes Eeftens and Stéphane Cullati to attend and travel to and from the SSPH+ retreat in Lugano. Because more workshop attendants had a travel pass, and we had fewer attendants than the maximum for which we budgeted, the costs for the workshops was reduced. Moreover, Prof. Dr. Braun-Fahrlander did not accept the speaker's payment. Both of these resulted in a net surplus balance (see Annex for the Financial Overview). These changes were approved in writing (email) by SSPH+.

Signatures

Marloes Eeftens
Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, Basel
Place and date: 15/12/2017
Signature:

Stéphane Cullati
University of Geneva & Geneva University Hospitals, Geneva
Place and date: 15/12/2017
Signature:

Annex: Financial overview

Annex: Financial overview

	Short specification			Budget	Expenditures	
Category of Expenses	Staffname	Function in workshop	Person-hours on workshop	TOTAL	01.09.16-31.12.17	Balance
Salaries	Marloes Eeftens	Co-organiser	8.24hours*20days*40chf/hour	6,592.00	8,858.00	-2,256.00
		1 author editorial IJPH	8.24hours*5days*40chf/hour	1,648.00	0.00	1,648.00
	Stéphane Cullati	Co-organiser	8.24hours*15days*40chf/hour	4,944.00	4,944.00	0.00
	Anna Neodo	Co-organiser	8.24hours*15days*40chf/hour	4,944.00	2,256.00	2,256.00
	Inspiring and engaging tutorial guest speaker(s)	Paid speakers	Flat rate	1,000.00	535.80	464.20
Sub-total Salaries				19,128.00	17,015.80	2,112.20
Travel	Number of travelling persons: for preparing work:		Average cost per person CHF: For preparation work			
	- 3 organizing team members plan to meet 3 times either in Geneva or Basel		- 75 CHF (Basel-Geneva) * people * 1.5 times = 337.50 CHF	337.50	291.90	45.60
	For initial workshop:		For initial workshop:			
	- 8 (out of 10) young researchers + 1 (out of 2) SSPH+ representatives		- 60 CHF (Basel-anywhere) * 9 people * 1 time = 540.00 CHF	540.00	0.00	540.00
	For teaching & training tutorial:		For teaching & training tutorial:			
	- 15 (out of 20) young researchers + 1 (out of 3) SSPH+ representatives + maximum 2 external speakers		- 60 CHF (Basel-anywhere) * 18 people * 1 time = 1080.00 CHF	1,080.00	573.80	506.20
Accommodation	Number of traveling persons: not applicable		Average cost per person: CHF Not applicable	Not applicable		
Food, infrastructure, etc.	For initial workshop: in-house lunch for 12 participants @ 30 CHF + coffee breaks @ 5 CHF = 420.00 CHF			420.00	278.00	142.00
	For finalworkshop: restaurant dinner for 25 participants @ 60 CHF + coffee breaks @ 5 CHF = 1625.00 CHF			1,625.00	839.40	785.60
Consumables, PR, material & any other costs	Printing costs, advertisement, any administrative fees			400.00	0.00	400.00
Total COSTS(=Requested from SSPH+)				23,530.50	18,998.90	4,531.60

Instalments	Inv. Date	CHF	Date	Expenditures	
1st instalment SSPH+ STEP workshops	21/10/2016	-13,000.00		18,998.90	
Total as per 31.12.2017		-13,000.00		18,998.90	
Total in favour of Swiss TPH (+)					5,998.90