

Health Systems through Crisis and Recovery

8-19 April 2019 - Pisa, Italy

Testimonials from past participants

“The HSCR course was a rich, productive, and engrossing opportunity for exposure to some of the most important and challenging issues facing health systems research and practice today. The organizers have a truly rare and unique combination of experience, insight, and pedagogical skill – all translated into the design of a rigorous, content-packed two-week programme. The balance between relevant, practical exercises and lectures adds to a highly dynamic environment, where participants with unique backgrounds and experiences contribute to a lively exchange of ideas, critical inquiry, and insightful commentary. I’m certain that each one of us walked away having learned a great number of things, which we were able to share with the other participants both inside and outside of class hours. Pisa was a perfect location to host such an event, with beautiful weather, food, and people. It is without hesitation that I recommend both researchers and practitioners working in the international health care field to participate in this uniquely rewarding event”. **(R. F., USA, participant 2015)**

"Health Systems through Conflict and Recovery was an eye-opener to me. Living in a misfortune country I felt our suffering was unique. In Pisa I realised that we are not alone. The injustice in the world is around us all. Our trainers are truly walking encyclopaedias, happy to share a wealth of knowledge and experience with participants. I started applying what I learned almost immediately. On the last day of the course I was already using the materials in my own work. If you want to learn, and develop a better understanding of health systems analysis, book yourself a seat to Pisa now and you won't regret it!! You will not only enjoy the Italian cuisine and cappuccino but you will also be full of food for thought. **(K. Q., Palestine, participant 2012)**

"The trainers bring a depth of experience, scholarship and wisdom to the challenge of health in the world's most challenging places. Participants add to the wealth of knowledge. Together they reveal possibilities and opportunities amidst the complexity, difficulty and madness of conflict and despair. The course is excellent value too, and Pisa is a delightful city to work and relax in. Book now before it fills up!" **(R. J., UK, participant 2012)**

“The Course is an eye-opener because it helps you think “out of the box” on approaches to health system issues. This is done through analysis of different health systems in different contexts using a country case study methodology. For me, the experience was very rewarding and I highly recommend this course to senior staff who are key decision-makers in the health system.” **(Y. Z., Liberia, participant 2012)**

“If you want an enriching course that breathes practicality, that doesn’t claim to offer ‘best practice’ guidance notes within a few days, or to help you ‘solve’ the challenges of post-war health system strengthening, then you are in luck. One hallmark of a good short course is when it encourages you to really develop your analytical thinking, rather than merely learn about algorithms, checklists and guidelines. The course content is certainly derived from an evidence-based public health perspective, but with plenty of real-world wisdom informed by the experiences and narratives of the faculty, composed of prac-academics (academics who are also practitioners).

This isn’t your typical lecture series embedded with the fly-in-fly out experts. But it is certainly not that ‘easy’. The Pisa course creates an ‘enabling environment’ of sheer discomfort, where concepts and strategies you held near and dear are deconstructed and examined through a variety of real-life case studies and exercises. There are moments when you realize that something you were engaged with back at work is poorly constructed, is based on no real evidence or has been tried and failed. These uncomfortable moments are rewarding catalysts.

Also refreshing, apart from that beautiful Tuscan air and food, are the creative conflict/debates with other participants. The discussions are lively to say the least, and best of all, facilitated in an environment that cultivates honest reflections on the success and failures of interventions. The course doesn’t try to indoctrinate you into best practices of health reform, rather it helps deconstruct the process to bite size chunks, which you can then analyze using the various lenses the trainers provide.

Of course, it is not all about the course! Thanks to the genius (and mischief) of the course director and his band of trainers, there is plenty of time to absorb the beauty of Pisa and feast in the Italian hospitality. After spending nearly 9 years working on health systems battered by protracted humanitarian emergencies, I can honestly say I still carry notes on key lessons and insights gained from this training programme... lessons, ‘adapted’ not ‘adopted’ to my context of course! It is truly a wonderful experience and remains the most dynamic public health training I have ever attended.” (K. W., Sri Lanka, participant 2010)

“The course provided ample opportunity to learn, not only from a wide array of trainers with true field experience, but also from fellow participants coming from all the four corners of the Earth. In fact, we engaged in group work, which offered a novel way to directly apply many taught principles - and also a lot of fun. We were encouraged to reflect on key characteristics of health systems emerging from conflict and realistic measures to sustain reform. Plenty of documented examples demonstrated how blueprinted approaches should be avoided at all costs and contextualised approaches work best. Five years later, I still use key concepts acquired during the course in my everyday work. The vast reading material availed was also a resource in its own right, as well as the invaluable insights of the comprehensive manual on which the course is based” (E. C., Italy, participant 2007)