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Ethics teacher training course, Riyadh,
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 3-6 November 2007

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United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

SHS/EEP/ETTC/04

ETHICS TEACHER TRAINING COURSE

Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 3-6 November 2007

An evaluation

**Division of Ethics of Science and Technology
Social and Human Sciences Sector
UNESCO**

2007

Background:

The Ethics Education Programme of UNESCO has been mapping existing ethics teaching programs. Since 2004, programmes have been discussed, described and analysed from East and Central Europe, the South-eastern Mediterranean area, and the Gulf area. One of the findings in this programmatic exercise is that ethics teaching is vulnerable since the programmes in many cases are not sustainable in the long run due to a lack of younger teachers. This has been the motive to create a special ethics teacher training course. Since the course has been developed for the first time and no existing courses with similar content and objectives are known, it was decided to offer it two times as a pilot course. In 2006 (30 October – 3 November), the course was scheduled for the first time in Bucharest, Romania, with 17 participants from 9 Member States, mainly in East and Central Europe. For the organisation of the course close cooperation was undertaken with CEPES (UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education) which provided the venue and practical assistance. In 2007 (July 9-13), the second pilot course was organized in cooperation with the UNESCO chair in Egerton University, Kenya, professor Jude Mathooko. In this course 7 students took part. The third edition of the course was organised in cooperation with the Slovak National Commission for UNESCO in Bratislava, Slovak Republic on 10-14 September 2007. In total 17 persons participated, mostly from the Slovakia. This fourth edition was undertaken at the initiative of King Abdullah International Center for Medical Research, King Saud Bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, National Guard Health Affairs, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This course is one the activities scheduled in the framework of a Memorandum of Understanding, signed in February 2007, for cooperation between the National Guard Health Affairs (NGHA) and UNESCO (Division of Ethics of Science and Technology) in the field of bioethics.

Preparation:

The program of this fourth course has been developed in collaboration with Professor Amin Kashmeery, Head of the Bioethics Section, King Saud Bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences. The practical arrangements have been made by the Postgraduate Training Center, KAMC-NGHA in Riyadh. The arrangements for venue, hotel accommodation and meals have been made by the National Guard Health Affairs, while UNESCO invited the teachers and arranged the programme. Participants have been invited by King Abdullah International Center for Medical Research. The University is developing a Master Program in Bioethics which is planned to start in January 2008. The course participants will be the future teachers in this Master Program.

Announcement:

The course has been announced on the UNESCO SHS website and through the Bioethics Section of Kind Saud Bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences. All relevant information about the Course had been directly communicated to all participants selected by King Abdullah International Center for Medical Research.

Registration and selection:

Following the distribution of the draft program, 15 participants have been selected. Prior to the deadline of 15 October, 2007 seven participants sent in the registration form. As this course was initiated and supported by the NGHA and targeting primarily the future teachers in the new Master Program in Bioethics most of the applicants came from NGHA institutions, two from other Saudi universities. Finally 13 persons participated (2 with Egyptian nationality, the others from Saudi Arabia). The background of the participants was rather

homogeneous: the majority of them were medical specialists in areas such as neurology, haematology, oncology, organ transplantation, intensive care and paediatrics; some participants had a background in laboratory medicine, genetics and clinical research. Nearly all of them were involved in teaching activities.

Objectives of the course:

The objectives of the course were defined as follows:

1. to introduce the students to the means and resources of teaching ethics
2. to teach the students the methodologies and methods of teaching ethics
3. to assess and provide feedback on the students' demonstrations of teaching skills under the guidance of experienced teachers.

Teachers:

The course was taught by 5 experienced teachers: Amin Kashmeery (Professor of Physiology, Centre for Islamic Biomedical Ethics, University of Durham, United Kingdom and Head of the Bioethics Section of King Saud Bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, Riyadh), Abdulaziz AlSwailem (Director of the Natural Resources and Environmental Research Institute, Chairperson of the National Committee of Bioethics, King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology, Riyadh), Berna Arda (Professor of Medical Ethics, Ankara University, Turkey), Bert Gordijn (Professor of Bioethics, University Medical Centre, Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands), Henk ten Have (UNESCO Paris, France).

Programme:

The programme of the course started the first day with a welcome address by His Excellency Dr. Abdullah Al Rabeeah, President of the National Guard Health Affairs. He praised the activity as one of the targets of the Memorandum of Understanding, signed on 27 February 2007.

The program started with a general introduction regarding the objectives and topics of the course, as well as an introduction of teachers and participants (ten Have). This was followed by a presentation on 'Bioethics, medical ethics and Islam', presenting the basic principles of ethics from the perspective of Islam (AlSwailem). The subsequent lecture presented various approaches and methods of teaching ethics (AlSwailem). Thereupon several classes on class room communication were given (Arda). The emphasis of this day was on how to use communication skills as a teacher and exchange experiences with teaching with the participants. The focus of the second day was on ethics teaching experiences, starting with presentations about how to teach ethics: methods and approaches including an overview of experiences and examples (Kashmeery), followed by model lessons on teaching clinical ethics and exercises in case discussions (Gordijn). The third day started with a presentation about the Ethics Education Programme of UNESCO, followed by an exposition of various dimensions of a teaching program (Ten Have). The last part of this day was dedicated to individual presentations from four students, followed by presentations from five other students on the following day (4 students did not make individual presentations). Each student had been invited in advance to prepare a teaching class on the basis of which he or she could receive feedback and be evaluated. He or she could select a topic in (bio)ethics according to his or her own choice and preference and make a preparation of a class or demonstration of his or her teaching skills for maximum 20 minutes. Most of the students used power point presentations, but some of them based their presentations on written manuscripts, use of games or role plays or did not use any technical devices. Examples of topics addressed in the presentations were: research ethics and consent, irresponsible author syndrome, selection of candidates for kidney transplantation, pharmaceuticals and healthcare workers, evidence-

based consent, ownership of genes, methods of resolving ethical issues, ethical issues in biomedical research, and using ethics principles in daily practice. All participants making individual presentations received individual and general feedback from Professors Kashmeery, Arda, Gordijn and ten Have.

The last part of day 4 was dedicated to an evaluation of the course.

Evaluation:

For the evaluation an outline was used with items concerning the content and the form of the course.

Content:

The overall feedback from students was that this course had been a very important experience. Emphasis was put on the interdisciplinary nature and the friendly atmosphere of the course, as well as on the possibility of enhancing one's technical teaching skills through individual presentations.

Since this course was a preparation of teachers involved in the upcoming Master Program on Bioethics, it provided an excellent occasion to identify common approaches and methods, as well as a framework of principles and methodologies to be used in the future Master. In this course the content could not be separated from the methods and forms of teaching, specifically since the participants are experienced scientists and health professionals.

The participants would have liked more emphasis on techniques of teaching and specific methods. Some also pointed out that they prefer to receive more handouts and pre-course reading materials and resources. Slides used in presentations should be available before the presentations

The separate days:

- Some of the participants expressed that they would have preferred to have the individual presentations not at the end of the course but during the course.

Specific issues:

- Several participants expressed that they would have appreciated more focus on readings assignments.
- Some participants expressed that they would have liked to have handouts from all the presentations in advance.
- Some participants expressed that they would have liked to know more in advance about the structure and contents of the future Master Program in Bioethics.
- Interactive on line case discussion was not covered.

Form:

Several remarks have been made concerning the form of the course

- facilities in the Postgraduate Training Center were excellent
- the length of the course was perhaps too long

Conclusion:

This fourth Ethics Teacher Training Course has been a success. It was very well appreciated by the participants. Also for the teachers it has been a positive experience. The participants of the course were very experienced professionals and teachers. The course was an excellent opportunity to prepare the teaching contributions for the future Master Program in Bioethics. During the evaluation, participants made some useful suggestions for the improvement of the course. Because the course was organised in the vicinity of the working ambiances of several of the participants in the course, some of the participants were not present during all the days of the course, including four students being absent during the days they were supposed to make individual presentations.