

Politics and Diplomacy for Health Fellows' Program

Evaluation Report

30 September 2024



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Summary

We are very encouraged by the feedback received from our first year of running the Politics and Diplomacy for Health Fellows Program. This is specifically important as the program has attracted a lot of attention and there is a high demand for a continuation. The lessons learnt from this first program will be of major importance in shaping future programs.

The overall satisfaction with the program was very high and set against the goals of the program, Fellows reported increased confidence in navigating international and regional political processes related to health, improved understanding of political economy and tools for political analysis and strengthened professional networks. Participants appreciated the blend of theoretical and practical learning and the quality of the faculty.

Most Fellows indicated that the highlights of the program were the opportunities to hear from leading authorities in global health (online and in-person Master Classes), and to meet Fellows and faculty in a relaxed setting during the residential Master Class. Participants completed the program feeling truly inspired by their interactions with the speakers, their peers and the faculty. It was specifically those characteristics of the program which made it different and appreciated.

Below are some of the feedback and conclusions on the features of the program:

- **Comprehensive Content:** The program's content was appreciated for its breadth and depth, covering a wide range of relevant aspects of health diplomacy and political engagement.
- **Expert-Led Sessions:** Participants valued the insights and experiences shared by senior experts and practitioners.
- **Interactive Format:** The combination of online workshops, in-person sessions, and interactive activities such as the 1:1 sessions, walk-and-talks and the group discussions enabled effective engagement and practical learning.
- **Professional Network:** The program facilitated the building of a global professional network, which participants viewed as a significant asset for their future careers.
- **Pacing and Structure:** Some participants felt that the program's schedule could be better balanced with shorter, more frequent breaks and extended durations for in-depth discussions.
- **Focus on Practical Applications:** There was a desire for more hands-on experiences and practical exercises, such as case studies and real-world scenarios, to enhance and complement the sharing of experiences.

“The most beneficial components of the experience were undoubtedly the comprehensive logic framework that guided the content, the interactive format of the 1-hour lecture combined with discussion and garden talks, and the well-curated selection of lecturers and Fellows. The selection of top experts and good participants ensured a rich tapestry of viewpoints and expertise, fostering a collaborative and stimulating environment.”

Suggestions for future programs

The first program was successful but there were also lessons for the future which will be important in the program design for the 2025 year's program.

- **Level of Experience:** Some participants felt that the experience range of Fellows (5-15 years) could be broadened to include those with more senior-level experience (15-20 years) for richer insights, and more consistent contributions to discussions from across the cohort of Fellows.
- **Focus on Practical Applications:** Keep the emphasis on the "how" rather than the "what" in political and diplomatic decision-making was seen as crucial but participants suggested that additional case studies and practical exercises could enhance the learning experience.
- **Program Format and Structure:** The combination of online and in-person sessions was appreciated, but participants suggested improvements such as shorter, more frequent breaks, more time for discussions, and possibly extending the total program duration.
- **Interactive and Engaging Sessions:** The interactive nature of the sessions was praised. They suggested even more interactive elements and practical exercises to maintain engagement and felt that they would learn even more if speakers provided pre-reads so that more time could be better spent debating with, and deepening understanding about, speakers' perspectives.
- **Expertise:** The faculty was highly rated and appreciated but some participants identified the healthcare industry as an under-represented stakeholder among the expert speakers and felt that future programs would benefit from more time spent looking at the role of industry in the future of global health, and in particular what we can learn from the entrepreneurship that is intrinsic to business.
- **Value of the Network:** The importance of building a sustainable network was highlighted. Participants valued the professional connections made during the program and expressed interest in maintaining these connections through regular follow-ups and mentoring. Participants suggested various ways to sustain the community of practice, including informal convenings around major health events, regular virtual meetings, and structured mentorship programs.

On a scale of 1-5....	
..how satisfied are you with the entire program overall?	4,4
.. to what extent have the goals and expectations you set/had at the beginning of the program been achieved ?	4,1
..how effective was the peer support in achieving your learning objectives?	4,7
..how important were the external resource persons (faculty)?	4,6
..how was the leadership and management of the program?	4,7
..to what extent were you able to get the necessary administrative and logistic support you needed?	4,7
..how much would you recommend the program to a colleague?	4,7
.. how valuable were the online workshops for the program as a whole?	4
.. how useful were the Leadership Development Groups (LDGs) that were established during the online workshop?	3,1
.. how helpful was the Masterclass for the program as a whole?	4,7
Reflecting on the masterclass, have your confidence levels changed in the three themes you initially felt least confident about?	93% - yes

1. Introduction

This evaluation report summarizes the feedback and experiences from the first "Politics and Diplomacy for Health" Fellowship program, jointly organized by the Karolinska Institute and the Stockholm School of Economics.

The report covers: the initial survey results; feedback collected midway through the program via Mentimeter; mid-point survey responses; individual reflections shared by Fellows directly with the co-directors; group discussions from the final day of the Master Class; and most importantly the results from comprehensive online survey which was conducted after the final online workshop (response rate 96%). A complementary 6-9 Month Follow-Up survey is planned for 2025.

This report will be used to improve future programs and will be presented to funders to demonstrate the program's impact and areas for development. The demand for future program is already high and we could if we had the resources run the program twice a year..

The "Politics and Diplomacy for Health" Fellowship program was designed to equip mid-career health professionals with the competencies required for being able to effectively navigate in regional and global political settings. The program addressed the intersections of health and topics such as foreign policy, security, international development, and business, providing participants with opportunities to learn about and develop practical skills for understanding political landscapes and applying political science in real-world health scenarios.

The aims of the program were to:

- Develop competencies for success in international and regional political processes related to health.
- Enhance understanding of political economy and tools for political analysis.
- Build a global network of health professionals and leaders.

The program enrolled 28 mid-career professionals from 21 countries and diverse geographical regions, representing the public and private sectors and civil society. Participants had 5-15 years of professional experience in managing political processes at regional or global levels and demonstrated a commitment to improving global/regional health. Two of the participants were not able to join the Master Class because of visa challenges.

The program included 5 online workshops and a 4-day in-person Master Class in Sigtuna, Sweden over a 4-month period (April-July 2024).

The program was built on the sharing of personal present or past experiences by senior leaders and colleagues (peer-to-peer learning), from navigating regional or global political contexts for health. Emphasis was given to learning both from successes and failures, and the goal was for participants to be inspired by what they heard and be encouraged to continue developing their skills and professional network in diplomacy and politics for health.



2. Evaluation Framework

The evaluation framework comprised five parts:

- i. **Initial/Baseline Survey (April 2024):** Captured participants' self-assessed competencies and expectations.
- ii. **Individual check-in calls (May 2024):** The co-directors had 30-35 min one-to-one calls with all the participants to seek their feedback and suggestions for the continued program
- iii. **Midway Feedback (June 2024):** Collected feedback during the last day of the in-person Masterclass through structured discussions and Mentimeter.
- iv. **End of Program (August 2024):** Assessed overall impact on skills development and network building.
- v. **6-9 Month Follow-Up (February/April 2025):** we will evaluate the long-term sustainability of skills and networks gained. This will be done through a survey.

Key Performance Indicators

The following key performance indicators were identified.

- **Competency Improvement:** Confidence in key themes and skill areas.
- **Application of Skills:** Usage of new skills in professional settings.
- **Network Engagement:** Professional connections made and ongoing engagement.
- **Program Satisfaction:** Overall and component-specific satisfaction rates.
- **Long-term Value:** Application of skills and network for problem-solving and professional enhancement.

3. Initial Survey

The initial survey was conducted before the program started and captured participants' confidence levels and skill development goals. It revealed that:

- Participants had **varied confidence levels** in key programmatic themes.
- **Skills** participants aimed to develop included transformative leadership, network building, and communication strategies.
- **Expectations** included acquiring practical skills, building a professional network, and understanding political decision-making processes.

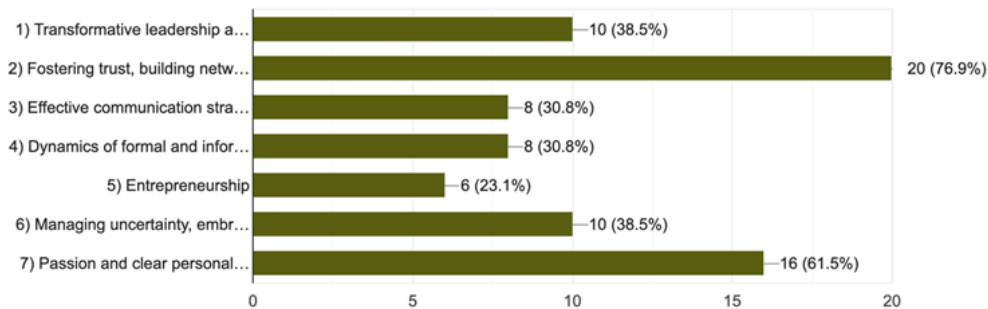
Most Confident Themes

- **Fostering Trust and Building Networks:** Participants felt most confident in their ability to build and maintain professional relationships and networks.
- **Passion and Clear Personal Values:** Many participants had strong confidence in aligning their work with their personal values and passions, which they saw as crucial for effective leadership.

- **Transformative Leadership:** Participants felt confident in their ability to lead transformative changes within their organizations and influence broader health policies.
- **Managing Uncertainty and Embracing Failure:** Participants also showed confidence in navigating uncertainties and viewing failures as learning opportunities.

Of the 7 key programmatic themes, which THREE are you the MOST confident with?

26 responses

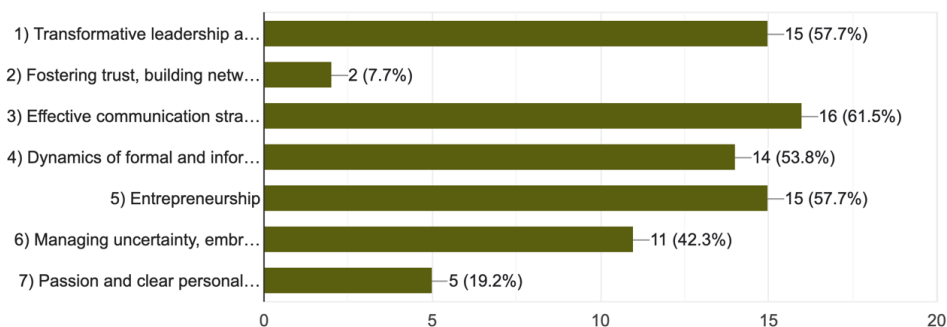


Least Confident Themes

- **Effective Communication Strategies:** Participants felt least confident in their ability to communicate effectively, understanding the importance of style, language, and timing in diplomacy.
- **Lessons from Entrepreneurship and the Private Sector:** Many participants were less confident in applying lessons from entrepreneurship and the private sector to health diplomacy.
- **Transformative Leadership:** Despite some confidence, this theme also appeared as an area where participants sought further development.
- **Dynamics of Formal and Informal Decision-Making:** Participants were less confident in understanding where and by whom real decisions are made within political and organizational structures.

Of the 7 key programmatic themes, which THREE are you the LEAST confident with?

26 responses



4. Individual check-ins

Gunilla Carlsson and Anders Nordström, co-directors, held check-in calls with all Fellows midway through the program. The calls provided an opportunity to get feedback on the progress at that stage as well as suggestions for the continuation of the program.

An initial plan and idea to include case studies and role plays during the Master Class was dropped after the calls which now retrospectively might have been wrong. A lesson for the next program.



5. Master Class feedback

At the end of the Master Class the participants provided feedback using the Mentimeter platform, highlighting:

- **One word to describe the experience:** Participants used terms like "inspiring", "thought-provoking", "stimulating", and "insightful".
- **Most impactful lessons:** Practical political decision-making and network building were frequently mentioned.
- **Confidence in key themes:** Participants reported increased confidence in addressing key themes after the Masterclass

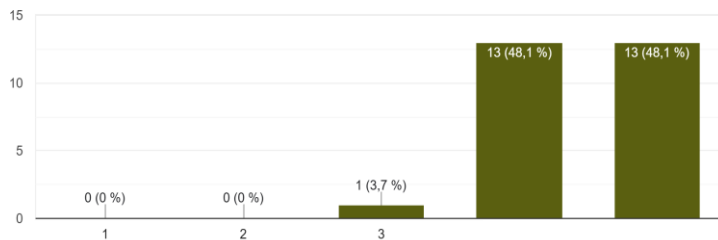


6. End of program survey

After the completion of the program a comprehensive online survey was shared with all Fellows including 36 questions where the participants were both asked to rate their experience as well as provide written comments. 27 of the 28 Fellows replied (96%) and gave detailed comments and suggestions for the future. **The majority of the participants were very satisfied with the program and would recommend it to a colleague.**

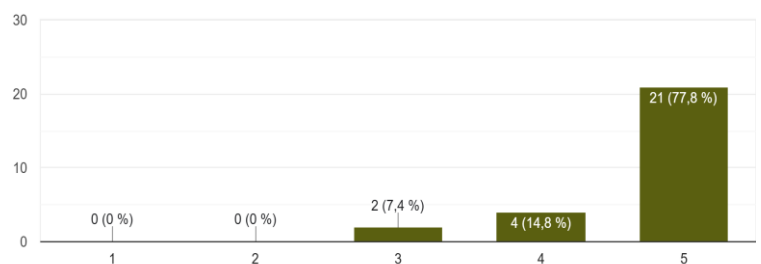
On a scale of 1-5, how satisfied are you with the entire program overall?

27 svar



On a scale of 1-5, how much would you recommend the program to a colleague?

27 svar



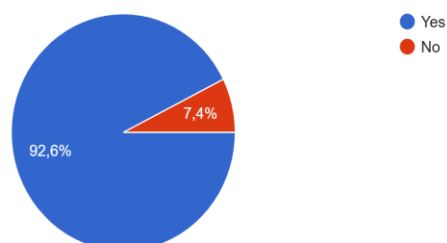
Application of skills

Twelve of the Fellows reported that there had been a situation where they have already applied the skills or knowledge from this program to a real-world challenge.

While reflecting after the masterclass 93% of the participants indicated that their confidence levels changed in the three themes they initially felt least confident about.

Reflecting on the masterclass, have your confidence levels changed in the three themes you initially felt least confident about?

27 svar



They also indicated that conversations with a number of people they met during the program helped them think through the practical steps of making things happen.

"As I work with various partners at the Ministry, I've become **a bit more intentional** in my communication and have led more bravely than I normally would. I've always been good at networking and finding commonalities, but I haven't harnessed my network into something beneficial. I've stayed in contact with a few fellow participants and mapped out ways of collaboration and hope to do more of that in the future"

"....in the first call with an industry association I have **tried to establish a personal connection** by asking some 'personal' questions and finding common ground to build the trust"

"I have been more risky in my outreach. If you don't try, how will you know? I feel like I am **more keen to take risks** and see how things go now".

"I have had the opportunity to apply the skills and knowledge I gained from this program in a real-world scenario. During my recent project at work, we faced a new opportunity of collaborating with National Ministry of Sports on physical activity promotion. The communication strategies I acquired through the program's interactive sessions helped me **effectively present** my knowledge and recommendations to the team and stakeholders, leading to a successful design of a proposed agenda. This experience not only reinforced the practicality of the program's teachings but also **boosted my confidence** in transformative leadership."

"Recently with my Board and Minister — taking learnings from the discussions in Sweden"

"While attending the course I was working on the global strategy for regional vaccine manufacturing. I was able to employ some of the approaches to **seizing windows of opportunity and building trust** during this project"

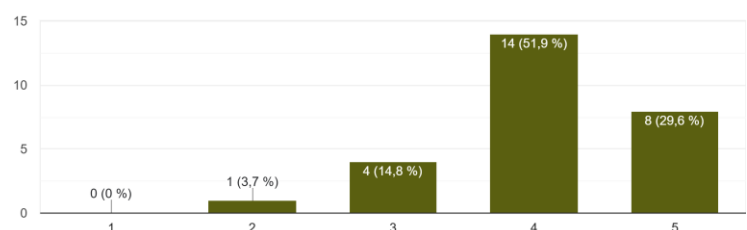
"No real situation to give as an example yet but **my perception of opportunities and risk have changed**, and this will influence my choices in the future"

"Continuously seeking to **be mindful in one's position** and about key skills was mentioned e.g. understanding better formal and informal decision making and hence applying different tactics to reach the targets, nurturing even more the current network and daring to connect also between different networks were feasible, trying to learn and communicate also better about uncertainties. "



On a scale of 1-5, to what extent have the goals and expectations you set/had at the beginning of the program been achieved?

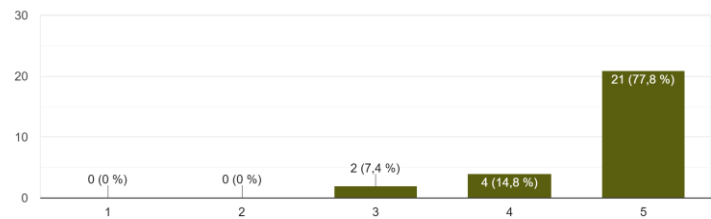
27 svar



The Master Class

Most participants indicated that **the highlight of the program were the master classes** with executive leaders in global health as well as meeting the Fellows and faculty in a relaxed setting. It was said to have been truly inspiring and that the group of Fellows was incredibly well curated, and the speakers were exceptional.

On a scale of 1-5, how helpful was the Masterclass for the program as a whole?
27 svar



The interaction with external resource persons was highly appreciated as an invaluable experience. One of the most beneficial aspects was hearing from speakers about their personal growth, the challenges they faced before, and the skills they used to address problems in real world. This was very encouraging, and not only provided the participants with practical knowledge but also allowed them to receive advice on how to apply these insights within their own professional contexts.

"The most beneficial components of the experience were undoubtedly the comprehensive logic framework that guided the content of the Master Class, the interactive format of the 1-hour lecture combined with discussion and garden talk, and the well-curated selection of lecturers and Fellows. The selection of top experts and good participants ensured a rich tapestry of viewpoints and expertise, fostering a collaborative and stimulating environment."

"Building out a peer network, advice from leaders, anecdotal examples of effective leadership, behind the scenes ""takes"" on how things get done and frank, honest, and trust-based discussions"

"I had a number of in-depth conversations with many faculty members. In particular, I really appreciated that Esperanza Martínez took a lot of her personal time to talk with me through life choices in general and confront my doubts. I also appreciated Gunilla Carlson personal insights on charting one's path despite challenges. Finally, my conversations with Anders, mostly after the in-person meeting, was central to my thinking about next steps in my career."



The online workshops

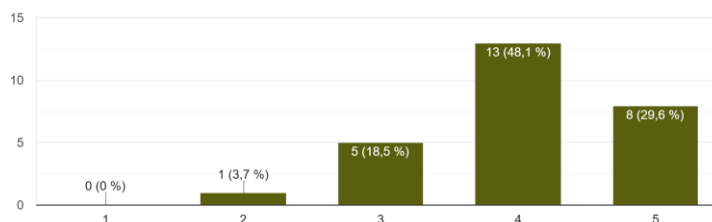
The online sessions were appreciated as well, but feedback indicates they could have been shortened to focus more on the speakers, with less time spent on housekeeping (this could be done via email before or after the online sessions).

The question-and-answer time with the external guests provided concrete opportunity for Fellows to learn from the personal experience of people operating at the global, level concerning politics and diplomacy. This helped Fellows to broaden their understanding of how things are done, and what it takes to operate, at the global level.

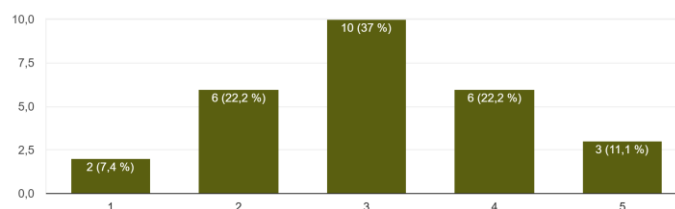
A less strong part of the program as identified by several of the Fellows were the Leadership Development Groups, which were introduced during the online sessions. The lack of an assigned group facilitator to structure and maximize the group engagement, and an insufficiently defined purpose for the groups meant it was hard to for Fellows to get meaningful input on their Case Studies from other participants.

However, some Fellows felt that “my LDG Group has been the only space where I could engage with my peers in the program. Our meetings in the breakout rooms were truly incredible, but the allocated time and space was truly insufficient”.

On a scale of 1-5, how valuable were the online workshops for the program as a whole?
27 svar



On a scale of 1-5, how useful were the Leadership Development Groups (LDGs) that were established during the online workshop?
27 svar



Workshop B - Agenda

- 12.30–12.40** Recap of Master Class
- 12.40–13.10** Group work – Case Studies
- 13.10–13.30** Joint Discussion
- 13.30–14.30** Seminar on “Research, evidence and politics for global health” with Dr. John-Arne Rottingen



Workshop D - Agenda

- 12.30–12.40** Recap of Master Class
- 12.40–13.10** Group discussion
- 13.10–13.30** Joint Discussion
- 13.30–14.30** Seminar on “The power of people and how people’s voices influence political decisions” with Dr. Githinji Gitahi



The faculty

The overall feedback was that the contributions by the resource persons/faculty were excellent and highly appreciated also as a valuable network for the future. The Fellows learned about personal experiences, values, and beliefs, which would otherwise not have been known in a purely work setting.

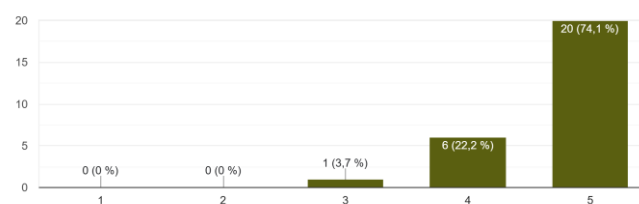
The diversity of backgrounds and expertise among the external resource persons was said to have enriched the learning experience. The external resource persons served as positive role models, inspiring Fellows with their journeys and motivating them to pursue ongoing professional development

All the (and in particular the in-person) interactions were much appreciated, since resource persons were often sharing their personal experiences, being open about successes and failures, as well as reaching out and conveying their stories in an "unconventional way", allowing themselves to be eye-to-eye with the Fellows.

It was recommended to instruct the faculty members to focus on sharing their valuable experiences, expertise and learnings in an engaging style and primarily through a story-telling approach, to maximize understanding and engagement from the Fellows."

On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate the quality of the resource persons/faculty and their contributions?

27 svar



Some comments from the Fellows

The faculty members/resource persons were a super team! They know exactly what they are doing, and they are doing it extremely well! A brilliant line-up of faculty!

The session with **Joanne Liu** - I felt the authenticity of a global health leader from her the most

Yodi Alakija - full of passion in driving the agenda for better health of people in the region. Amazing stories/anecdotes about the 'how', clear passion, and tangible takeaways

Leif Johansson - because he convinced us about the possibility to do the seemingly impossible.

Erik Wetter— the game theory/negotiation exercises were very practical and engaging

John Nkengasong - such an inspirational figure and great speaker and provided solid insights into the world of health diplomacy.

The incredibly stunned by the generosity of the session with **Gunilla and Anders** ; appreciated such a sincere sharing of experience

Erik – game theory/negotiation exercises were very practical and engaging"

I thought hearing from **Michel** and **Joy** were very interesting

1Which of the sessions with an external resource person do you rate highest? leader from **Indian Ministry of Health**..

Sally Davis - Passionate, trustful, energetic and inspiring expert. I learnt not to let any stakeholder who I am trying to persuade for a noble mission to say no to me, I should never let them say no at all costs. This is because when a no has been said, it will be very difficult for me then to reverse their decision.

David Nabarro - I learnt that it is crucial for me to get comfortable with uncertainty and complexity, because they always persist in any worthy endeavour. I also learnt the cruciality of navigating the political landscape, because dealing with power traders is always going to be a challenge for any initiative I spearhead.

Esperanza's story will always stick in my memory, it was a mix of excellent story telling (communication skills) as well as inspirational experience (how passion/motivation can help overcoming a challenging situation).

Dr **Nabarro**, Dr **Githinji**, Dr **Nkengasong**, Dr **Joy**, Dr **Esperanza** (to be honest, all of them were very interesting to listen to!).

My favourites were **Sally Davies** and **John-Arne Rottingen** - they talked about very specific situations/incidents where their leadership was being tested

Best session? - very difficult. ***It has to be tie between Joy's sessions and Gunilla + Anders' session***

I loved having that time with them to be away from the identification of our day jobs and to just ask our most pressing or vulnerable questions. It really got me thinking in new and creative ways and I think rounds out the main presentations very well.

Leadership and management

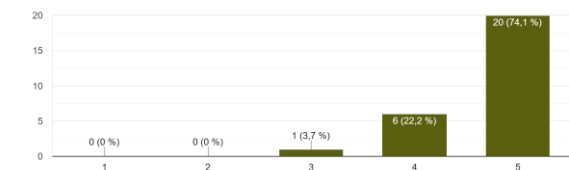
The leadership and management of the program was highly rated for the personal engagement and flexibility. The joint hosting by the Stockholm School of Economics and the Karolinska Institutet was an asset.

"Very well organised, thank you"

"It was amazing. I feel so grateful to have participated and thank you so much for hosting this!"

On a scale of 1-5, how was the leadership and management of the program?

27 svar

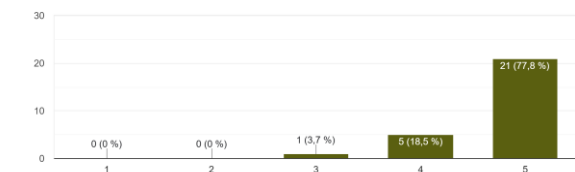


Administrative and logistical support

The participants were very pleased with the administrative support and praise the venue for the Master Class, especially the excellent food.

On a scale of 1-5, to what extent were you able to get the necessary administrative and logistic support you needed?

27 svar



The cost

All participants indicated that the cost was reasonable (USD 12,000 for private sector and USD 1,200 others) including also for Fellows from [did you mean to say low-income settings here?]. Some said that USD 1,500 could be acceptable but it should be made more explicit about what is included in the price (all costs during the in-person Master Class etc)

Final word....

 **Amal Ali** (She/Her) • 1st
Public Health Specialist. Kofi Annan Global Health Leadership Development Fe...
2mo • Edited • 

An absolut privilege to spend a week with these incredible global health professionals 🙏

 **Renzo Guinto** • 1st
Public Health • Global Health • Planetary Health
2mo • Edited • 

This past week in Sigtuna, [#Sweden](#) se, we had the in-person convening of our inaugural cohort of the new executive program entitled "Politics and Diplomacy for Health" co-offered by [Karolinska Institutet](#) and [Stockholm School](#) ...more



