

## Game learning in public and international health

Learning isn't all about formal lectures and academic texts. It can also be interactive and fun. An example from Amsterdam.



Forget ancient textbooks, dusty skeletons and tenured professors lecturing from a distant podium. Health education – at least in public and international health – is changing. Students these days are more likely to receive weekly handouts of the latest scientific article than a book list. Teaching staff often comprises visiting lecturers with specific expertise and ongoing field experience. And assignments and feedback are often completed online.

At the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) in Amsterdam, one of the innovations that students enjoy most is the use of 'serious games'. Whether board games or online games, these are tools designed to build students' problem-solving skills in a specific area. KIT uses games in its Master of Public Health and Master of International Health programmes to help students absorb information or gain skills of allocating health resources.

The **Health Resource Allocation Game** (see top right) requires players to plan a complete health system in a fictitious country, allocating a limited budget to competing health programmes and resources - from hospitals to primary care units, prevention programmes, transportation and communication infrastructure etc. The game, developed by KIT almost 30 years ago and continuously updated, has been used by public health training institutions around the world. An online version is currently being developed.

Recently, KIT has also developed the **World Health Champion Game** (being played by students in picture above), a quiz-style activity to raise student awareness of public health issues in developing countries and trigger interesting discussions. The game components can be downloaded from KIT's website: [www.kit.nl/health-champion](http://www.kit.nl/health-champion).



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