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**UNIVERSITÄT
BERN**

ISPM2030

Vision, Aim, Mission

2018 report



Preamble by the new director Prof. Oscar H. Franco

March 19, 2019

Taking over as Director of the Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine (ISPM), my first priority has been to get to know the Institute in detail and every single member of it. I also believe it is crucial that we recognize that the leading position ISPM enjoys today is not an entitlement, but the result of hard work, dedication, and innovation by our predecessors and all current members of the Institute. Each one of us plays an important role in what ISPM is today, and each will play a crucial role in the Institute's future.

*As the international environment becomes increasingly competitive, it is vital that we continue to work effectively, maintain focus on teaching quality and research outcomes, and most importantly that we continue to innovate in the coming decades. To achieve this, I invite every member of ISPM to unite behind a common vision, a common strategy, a charter for development and engagement: **ISPM2030**.*

Oscar H. Franco

ISPM2030 builds upon the Institute's strengths and already existing excellence in teaching and research to further capitalize on these assets. ISPM2030 is less a charter for change than it is for addition, transformation, and conscientious development that builds greatness upon greatness to maintain excellence.

Vision, Aim, Mission

Vision

Our vision is to commit the Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine to global excellence and innovation through local impact.

Aim

The core aim of the Institute is recovery and active maintenance of health, and prevention of disease throughout life.

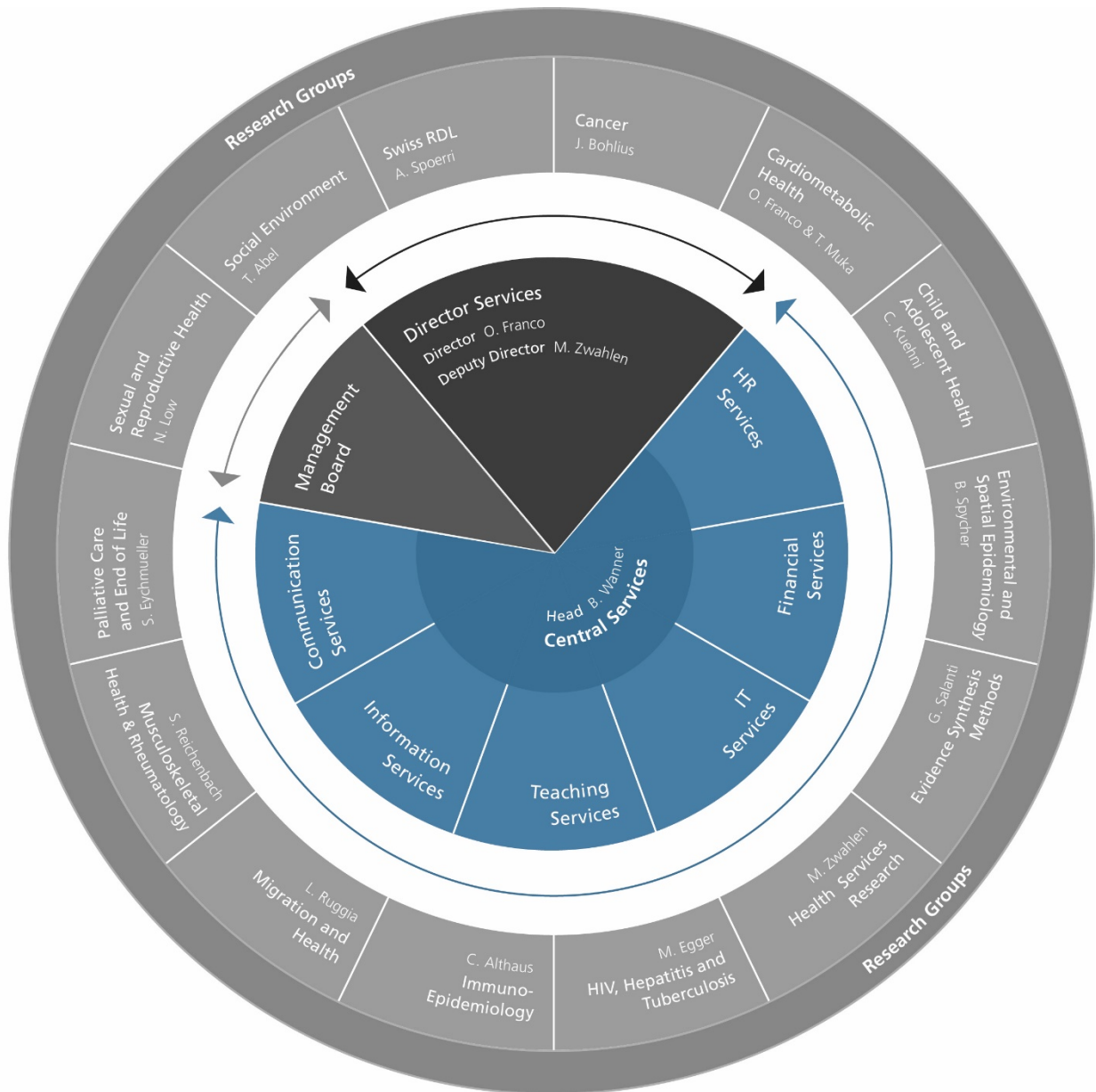
Mission

The mission of ISPM is summarized by these seven key actions:

- Improving population health across the life course
- Producing scientific and educational outcomes relevant to prevention, epidemiology, public health, social sciences, and methodology, striving towards open access and reach of our scientific output
- Creating an optimal environment for scientific and academic development in which the ISPM talent cycle is the motor of development
- Facilitating and maintaining open communication with the academic and healthcare communities, and with the public
- Building strong collaborations with partners at local, regional, national, and international levels
- Applying knowledge and creating links to help formulate local, national, and international policy
- Providing fair access, opportunity, and advancement for all, irrespective of gender, age, ethnicity and cultural background

Our vision, aim, and mission can only be achieved by the active contribution of every member of the organization working in collaboration, with the essential and excellent support provided by central services. This integrative and dynamic nature of ISPM is represented by a new organigram (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Organigram ISPM



Phases of implementation

This overall vision and mission will be achieved by first building and consolidating the foundations of excellence during the first five years of ISPM2030, and further development during the following six years.

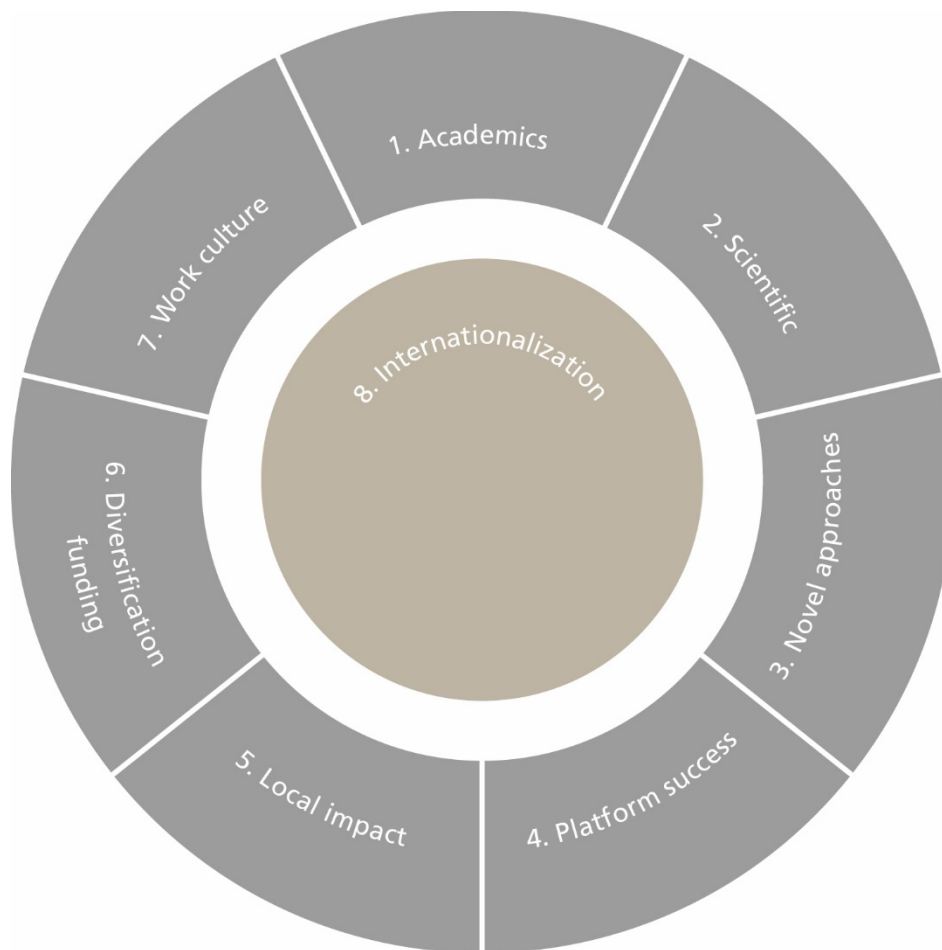
To build and consolidate its foundation of excellence in the next five years, ISPM's strategy will consist of seven strategic pillars that have a key, underlying aspect: internationalization of the Institute at all levels (Figure 2). These seven pillars and the international character of who we are and what we do will realize the vision, aim, and mission of ISPM stated above, and all will be propelled by the motor of the development of the Institute—ISPM's **talent cycle**—which is the cornerstone of ISPM's future at all levels.

ISPM's talent cycle stands for

- I** Identify: we seek opportunities to encounter and identify talent.
- S** Select: after identification we carefully select talented persons who share our core values.
- P** Prepare: once talent has been recruited; we contribute actively to career development.
- M** Maintain: we seek opportunities for talent to succeed in ISPM or with associated partners.

Strategy for the coming five years: the seven key pillars

Figure 2. The seven key pillars of ISPM2030



1. Academic Excellence

All the other pillars are built upon this first, key pillar of academic excellence. Academic activities are the nucleus of excellence for ISPM and the foundation of its talent cycle. As an academic institute first and foremost, masters and doctoral students are among the most central members of the organization. In the coming five years we will further consolidate the existing programs by strengthening and as necessary creating new support for:

- PhD students:
 - Further clarity and detail in job descriptions and expectations for students and supervisors

- Further involvement of postdoctoral researchers and senior scientists in the supervision of PhD students
- VISION 2030 meetings organized by and for PhD students. All ISPM PhD students will be expected to give two presentations, one during year 1 and then during year 3.
- Postdocs
 - PROMETHEUS group for intermediate career scientists, a space to foster collaboration and development
- Teaching activities
 - The internationally recognized winter school program
 - Flagship courses: (i) Egger and Salanti's on evidence synthesis, (ii) Hofman's on fundamental concepts of epidemiology, and (iii) Lemeshow and Spycher's on regression
 - A portfolio of courses and facilities that could constitute a master's program on epidemiology and biostatistics commencing in 2021
 - Alternative PhD programs including a nonresidential program for international students adhering to the requirements of the graduate schools
 - CAS programs, further consolidated and maintained
 - A strategy on further development and utilization of digital means in our teaching activities, in place by 2021

2. Scientific Excellence

One of the great strengths of the Institute is its multidisciplinary expertise. Multiple disciplines work closely together—both within population health sciences and further afield in primary health care, clinical trials, and policy research. This facilitates communication that draws upon complementary expertise to stimulate yet closer interactions and collaborations between principal investigators, creating multidisciplinary theme tiers that cut across the different groups.

2.1 Regarding specific research areas

The overall aim of the Institute in all areas should be the definition, description, maintenance, and recovery of health. Expanding on this, different trajectories of health across the life course can be delineated. Overall, and within specific domains of health given changes in the global population, knowledge gaps, and the effects of globalization and climate change, the following three key research areas will take center stage in the future of the Institute without excluding other areas of research:

- Ageing and prevention of age-related disorders: with particular emphasis on cancer, and cardiovascular and neurodegenerative diseases
- Global/planetary health: global differences, inequalities, environmental impact and changes

- Infectious diseases: e.g. HIV, STDs
- Child and adolescent specific research

2.2 Scientific research infrastructure

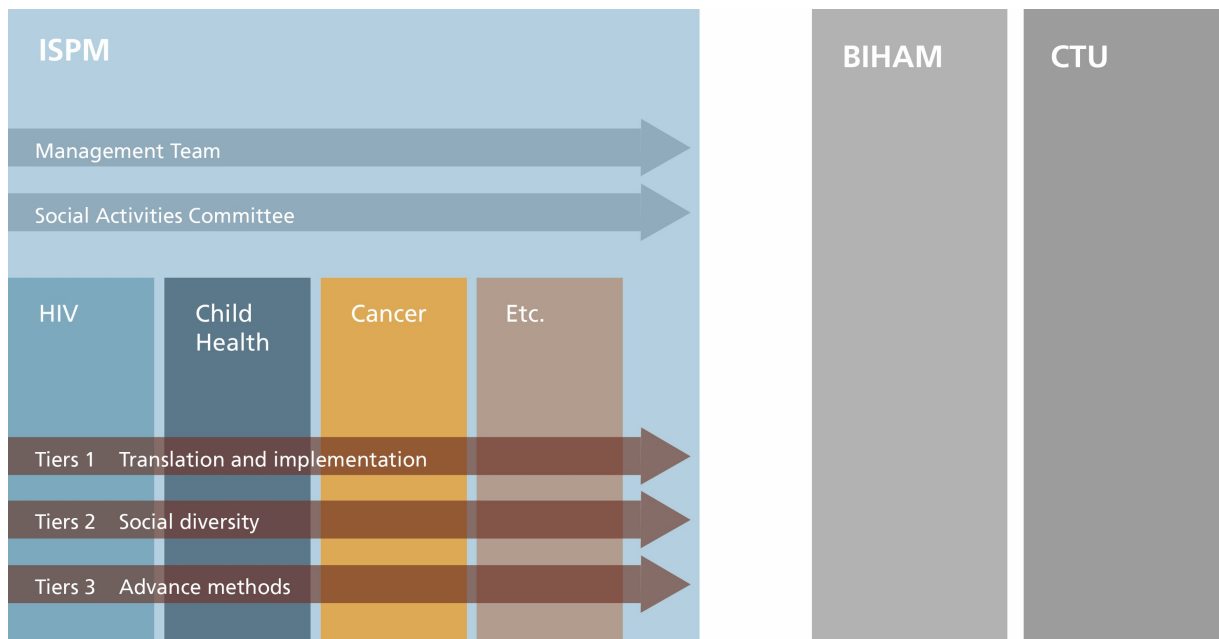
To facilitate interaction, ISPM will maintain its existing research groups, presented in the organigram in Fig. 1, but reconceptualize them in terms of matrix organization incorporating a three-tier horizontal structure (Fig. 3, below) that cuts across the different work themes. The three tiers are:

- Translation and implementation
- Social diversity in health
- Advanced methods

This structure aligns with the inherent multidimensionality of health. The three horizontal tiers are aligned to the key aim and mission of ISPM with a strategic implementation of the future. The three tiers could collaborate with the Clinical Trials Unit (CTU) and the Institute of Primary Health Care (BIHAM), which would facilitate and enhance collaboration across the institutes. Interaction between these three centers could also take place in the research groups, thus increasing the potential for synergistic effects. These tiers will be further developed and established during 2019.

Leaders of the research groups, the director of Central Services, the deputy director of ISPM, and the director of ISPM will constitute the Management Team of ISPM.

Figure 3. The scientific infrastructure of ISPM



2.3. Developments initiated in 2018

- Inventory of activities: besides the availability of rich data in house, there is a gap in data (size and quality) for the study of ageing populations and noncommunicable disorders. New data need to be built or acquired from external sources through collaborations such as those being built with Amsterdam for the “Healthy Life in an Urban Setting” (HELIUS) study, Greifswald for the "Study of Health in Pomerania" (SHIP) study, and Canada for the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Ageing.
- Concept of Bern Health Study was launched and is currently seeking support (a new life course cohort of 35K residents of the Canton of Bern).
- Lindenhof Foundation donation for a Professorship of Community Health and Health Services. This will further strengthen the social dimension of ISPM.
- New group on climate change and health, begun in collaboration with the Oeschger Center for Climate Change Research.
- The new ISPM group focused on cardiometabolic health.
- Collaborations with Inselspital (neurology, cardiology) and BIHAM were further strengthened.
- Identification of potential synergies and collaboration with:

- Center for Development and Environment (CDE), University of Bern
- Collaboration with the Swiss Paraplegic Centre
- Collaboration with Fritz Sager on Policy lab
- Collaboration with astrophysicists from University of Bern

3. Novel approaches to population health

Populations and technology are changing; prevention and epidemiological methods therefore need to adapt. Existing methodological expertise in research synthesis should be maintained and strengthened, but big data and other digital technologies offer the Institute new means to acquire and utilize novel data in new ways of studying and improving population health. Therefore, the role that e-health plays in the Institute should be increased not only to deliver interventions but also to allow reconsideration of data gathering. ISPM has a great opportunity to develop its role as world leader in this field. Additionally, the application and integration of new technologies such as genomics, epigenomics, microbiomics, and others open a new avenue of complex population data that provides new frontiers for discovery and treatment, and make a pathway for precision prevention, care, and population health.

4. The Institute, a platform for success

Attracting and maintaining top talent in the Institute is the foundation upon which the success of ISPM rests. The ISPM talent cycle described above plays a key role in the present and the future of ISPM. We will strengthen the existing career pathways and offer well defined mentorship programs early in the career of promising scientists to maximize success in fellowship applications and career development opportunities in partnership with the broader public sector. We will create communication spaces in which we listen not only to the research leaders but also to all ISPM personnel and visitors to facilitate networking opportunities and active participation in the strategy and vision of the Institute. The face-to-face meetings that took place during the second half of 2018 are the beginning of these interactions.

5. Social and preventive medicine with a local impact

The creation of a horizontal tier dedicated to translation (Fig. 3) reflects support for all activities aimed at effectively improving the health of local populations. This is fundamental: research findings should not be confined within a publication but be put into practice for the direct benefit of local populations and our clinical colleagues. We will seek further collaboration with the clinical departments of Inselspital and build and expand strong partnerships with the Canton and local health authorities, among whom we already have partners and initiatives. We will strongly support these and expand with the planet as the horizon. Further interfaculty collaborations are being built with the Oeschger Center, CDE, astrophysics, and psychology. Existing collaborations with BIHAM and CTU will be maintained and strengthened further.

6. Enterprise - a means to diversify funding

Enterprise is key to the Institute and its population impact. In addition to the successful fundraising activities that already exist in the Institute targeting national funding and charities, building strong collaborations with foundations, NGOs, and industrial partners is also essential. Swiss RDL could play a key role in facilitating important activities in new areas. For this purpose, the working group for marketing has been established to develop an organized strategy to securing these activities.

7. Work culture

Beyond what we achieve, how we achieve it is key. Our top priority is the well-being of our employees and equality of opportunity for them. We will build upon the existing values of the organization and share and champion five key values to guarantee excellence without sacrificing our well-being. We provide fair access and equal opportunities and advancement for all irrespective of gender, nationality, and sexual or religious orientation. The five values are:

- Scientific rigor, which entails doing our best, recognizing innovation as the key driver of science, maintaining records, regular internal auditing, and reproducibility
- Transparency, which allows errors to be identified and discussed openly, and responsibilities and decisions to be clearly communicated while at the same time privacy is protected
- Respect, which establishes an open culture, celebrates international environments and views differences as assets, protects freedom of expression, and avoids aggression
- Solidarity, which is constituted of teamwork and collegiality both within and across groups at all levels of ISPM, out of which individuals produce collective interests
- Equity and diversity, which provide fair access, opportunity, and advancement for all

To assist putting these values into practice, a reproducibility working group will build structures and procedures to ensure reproducibility of scientific work, and a gender equity group has been established.

Social activities are also key, and the social activities committee plays an important role in enhancing success. With members from across levels of the organization, the committee will identify, establish, and organize regular activities to foster the interaction of all members of the Institute with each other.

8. Internationalization, the underlying aspect

Finally, the reach of education and research at the University of Bern is global, and the impact of ISPM should be global in all areas mentioned above. The ISPM internationalization office will pursue national and international partnerships at all levels that include:

- Local partnerships with Swiss universities, Fachhochschulen, SSPH+, and local authorities
- European partnerships to facilitate the networking and interactions of members of the Institute in fundraising opportunities within the EU and academic programs
- Partnerships of excellence, for example with Karolinska, Northwestern, Cambridge, Warwick, and Erasmus University, with an academic goal in mind as well as promotion of scientific excellence and fundraising targeting NIH, EU, etc., and established partnerships with Harvard and the University of Western Ontario
- Global partnerships that add to existing collaborations in Africa, those being established with Colombia (Javeriana, FUCS, Antioquia, and Magdalena), Dominican Republic, and China, and other new collaborations in Latin America and Asia

Administrative infrastructure

As figure 1 shows, ISPM is a dynamic institute in which its research groups, management board, directorate, and central services make the wheel turn and move forward. Engaging in different areas of the Institute as well as communication and information within the Institute are key to reach and maintain the excellence we are striving for. ISPM is a team to which everybody contributes.

Central Services

These services are central to ISPM and play key roles that support all teaching and research activities.

- Financial services is responsible for the Institute's accounting, drafting budgets for grant proposals, billing, and contracts.
- Human resources manages all stages of employment from recruitment to leaving the Institute and is the primary contact point for personal matters.
- Information technology services provides first to third line IT support, and maintains ISPM's own server and firewall system, which is essential in handling confidential data. IT services continually develops new expertise to support the evolving data and analytical requirements of ISPM's scientists.
- Information services manages literature resources as ISPM's library and conducts expert literature searches, offers teaching and database training, and oversees all publications.
- Teaching services coordinates and organizes undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, seminars, the winter school, and is actively involved in new CAS and MAS development.

- Communication services provides editorial services for scientific articles, funding proposals, letters, and presentations, and consults with authors on any writing task and offers writing courses.

We will ensure adequate support for these services that are central to ISPM's work.

This, in principle, is what **ISPM2030** is. WE have the expertise and the capacity to make it happen and WE have available all the human and material resources needed to succeed.

How will this success be measured? Through grants, publications, individual career success, effective collaborations, local impact, and global positioning. And above all, by being happy and proud of being part of an Institute that excels globally through local impact on the health and well-being of populations.



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