

KS16 - The hidden part of implementing new academic nursing programs: Insights based on the holding concept

Prof. **Marie Friedel** RN PNP PhD, Dr. **Semra Smajic** RN PNP PhD,
Marion Gillot RN PNP, **Micha Massaad** RN PNP MPH PhDc.

March 20th 2026



VNTW: Annual Nursing Theory Conference

Honoring Our Heritage – Building Our Future

18-24 March 2026



Nelle Fourcroy

<https://www.nelle-fourcroy.com/>

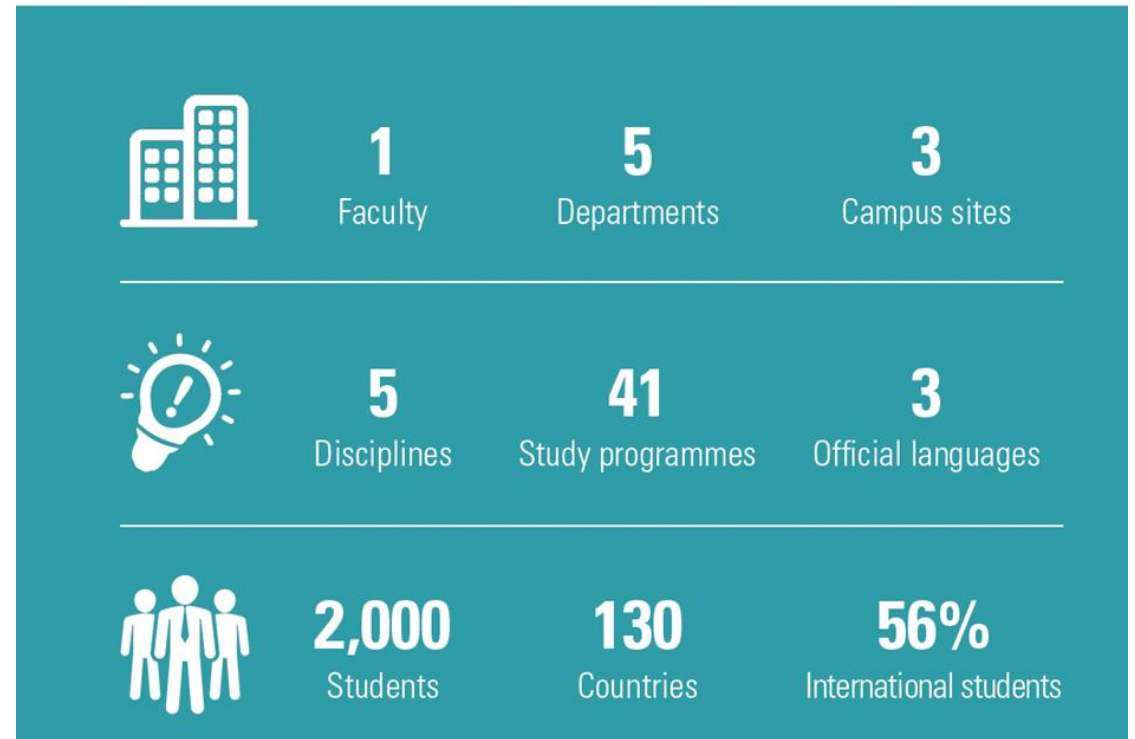
Plan

1. Presentation of the context at the University of Luxembourg
2. The holding theory (D. Winnicott)
3. Needs and challenges
4. Strategies deployed
5. Conclusion

1. Presentation of the context at the University of Luxembourg

- Small country in Europe
- Academization of nursing education
- Aim is to reduce dependency of nurses
- Paradigm of social transformation

Faculty of Science, Technology and Medicine



Overall, at University of Luxembourg : 8000 students

Request by the Luxemburgish government to the University

On May 14th 2021, the Luxemburgish Minister of Higher Education and Research and the Ministry of health mandates the University to create and implement 7 new academic programmes in Nursing - Midwifery – Radiography

Four Bachelor's programmes (in 2 years) for Specialised nurses: Medical assistant (ATM) in **Surgery**, Nurse in Anaesthesia and **Critical Care**, Nurse in **Paediatrics** and Nurse in **Psychiatry / Mental health**

A Bachelor's programme in **General Nursing Care** (in 3 years)

A Bachelor's programme in **Midwifery** (in 4 years)

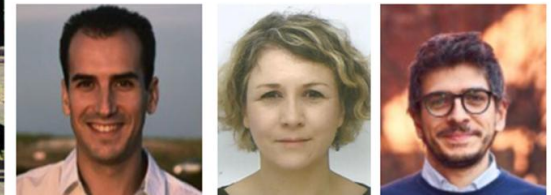
A Bachelor's programme for the training of **Radiographers** (in 3 years)







From a staff of 4 persons in 2022...



to 25 persons in 2026



Assistant technique
médical de chirurgie



Infirmier en anesthésie
et réanimation



Infirmier en pédiatrie

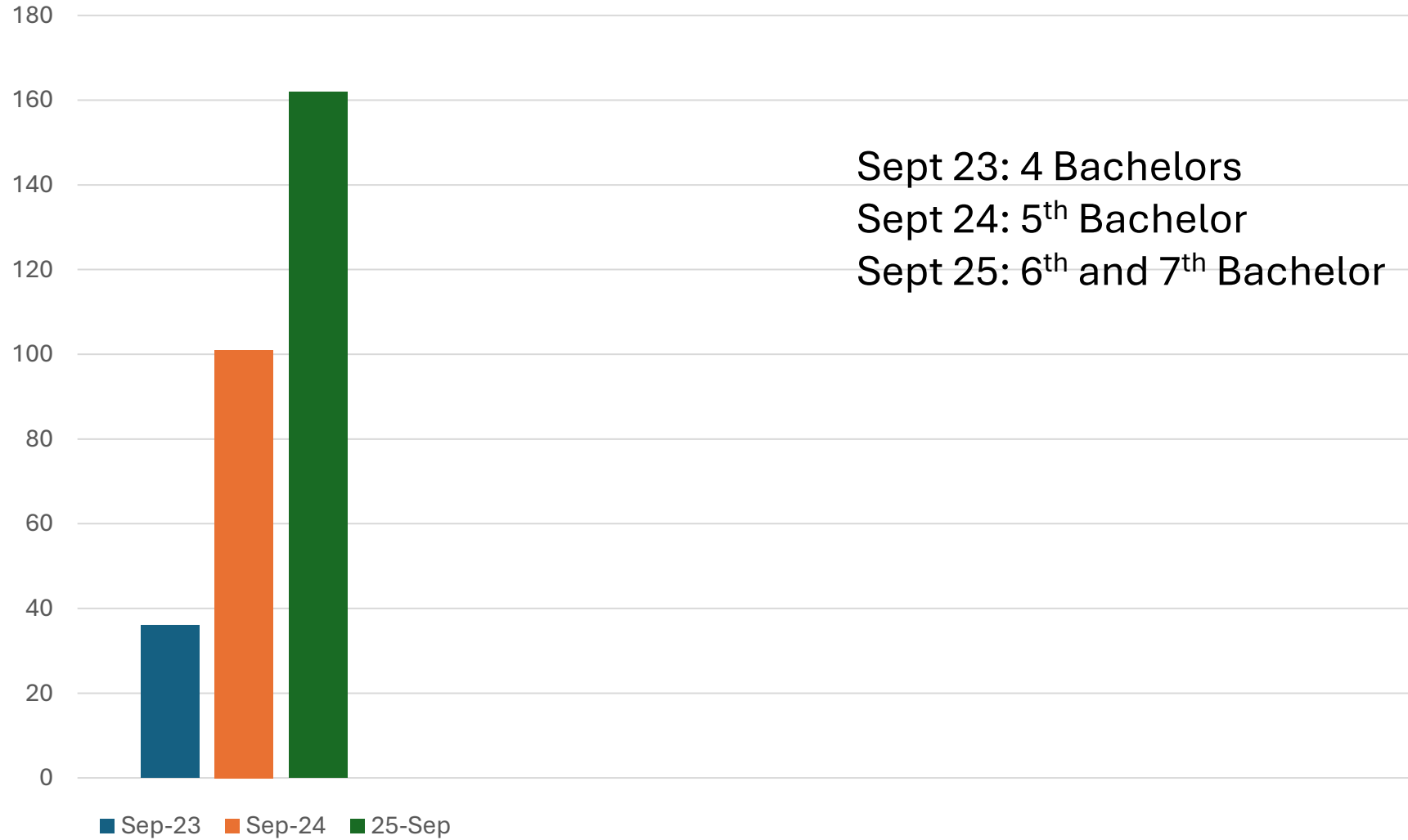


Infirmier psychiatrique

Start in sept 2023, first 35 graduates in July 2025



Growth – Number of students



Sept 23: 4 Bachelors
Sept 24: 5th Bachelor
Sept 25: 6th and 7th Bachelor

2. The holding theory (D. Winnicott)

Two dimensions interwoven with one another:

- **physical support** in the way the surrogate mother's body holds her baby, but also how her body responds to her baby's body in terms of emotional integration;
- **psychological capacity** in terms of emotional capability (the 'sufficiently good psychological availability of the mother' Winnicott) and the quality of her presence with her baby. Mother-baby interactions will be underpinned above all by the mother's perception of the quality of the relationship she has with her baby and her ability to interpret her child's emotions and adjust her response. This marks the beginnings of fundamental attachment, which will shape all other relational spaces in her child's life as they grow into adulthood.

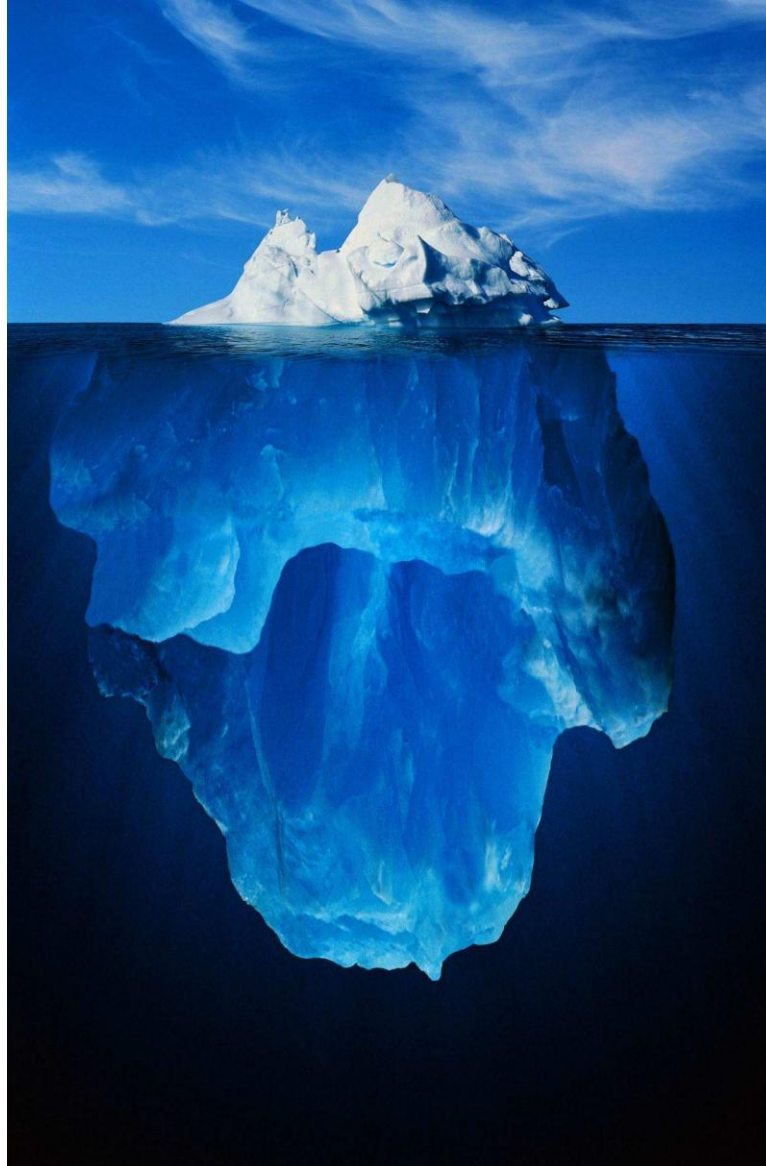
3. Needs and challenges

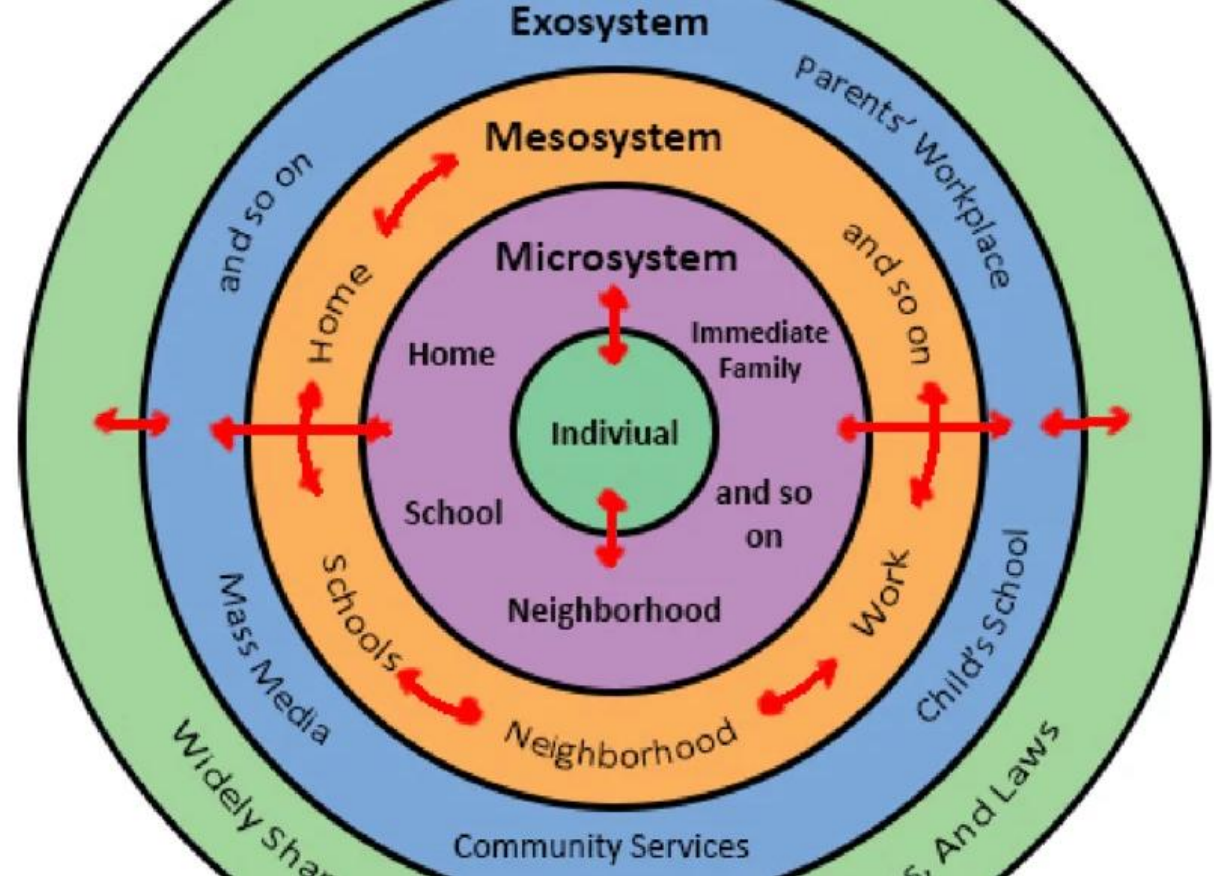
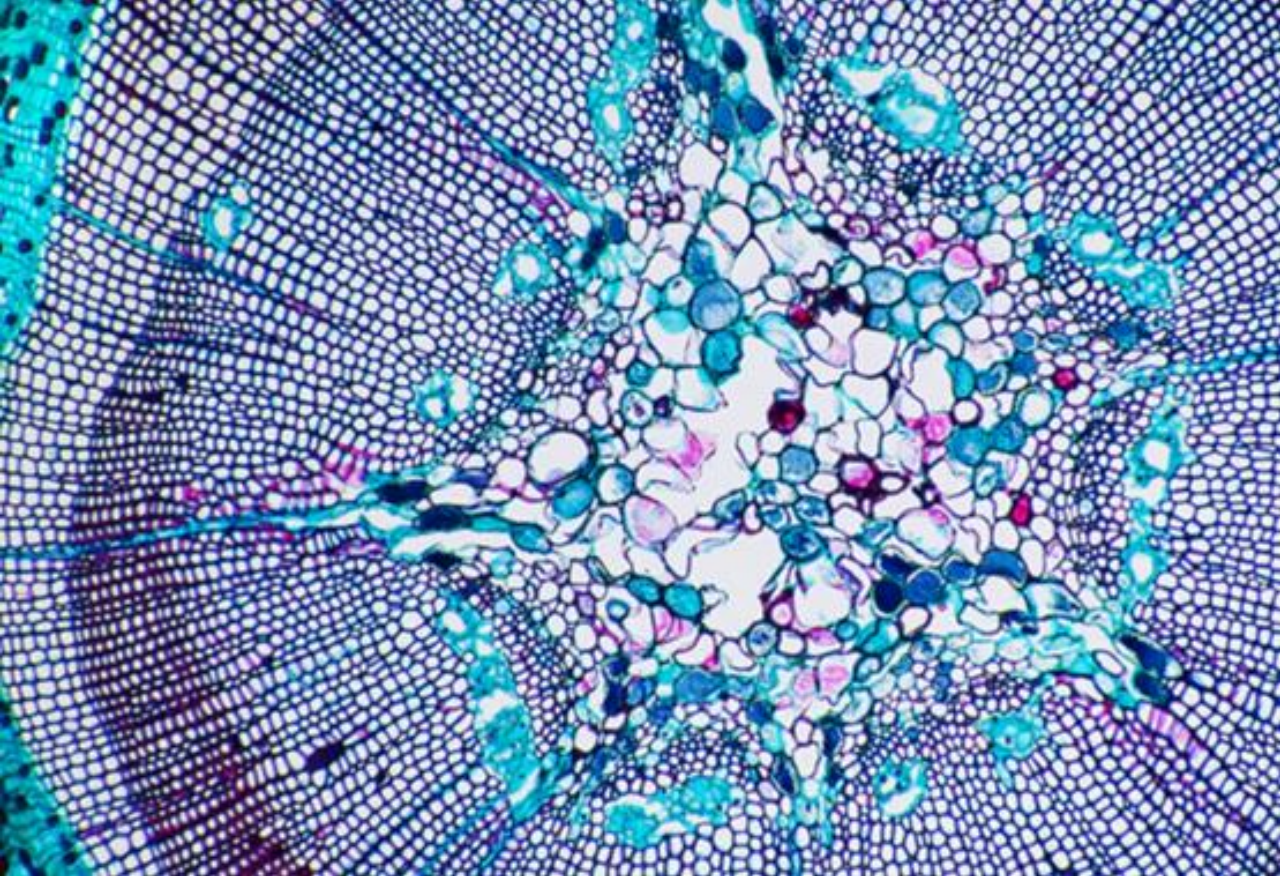
- Language and culture challenges
- Time constraints
- Need to be "adopted" by the Luxemburgish community
- Need to be accessible and available: many requests to meet
- Building everything from scratch: "no manual"
- Need to respect legal frame/ being a public university
- Need to be accompanied/helped by a change agent/mentor

How can we accompany this
growth?

How can we “hold” the evolving
staff and students?

The hidden part of the curriculum





A cell magnified under a microscope as a metaphor of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model

4. Strategies deployed (for our team)

Charter of foundation

Charter of well-being

Weekly meetings

Rituals (Café saga to welcome new team members)

Training in mental health

Teambuilding activities (8 days) and working groups

Establishing hierarchical organigramme

=> investing in our relations and promote psychological safety



Julie Chabaud



Image: Christophe Beau (reproduced with permission)
Based on Fleury & Fenoglio, Charte du Verstohlen, 2022



Charter of foundation
(presented at ICN Conference in Montreal, 2023)

Strategies deployed (for our students)


Pedagogical approaches

1. **Partnership with the patient** (Lecocq et al. 2017, Pétré et al. 2020, Pomey et al. 2021, Raynault et al. 2021)
2. **Evidence-based practice** (Elsheikh et al. 2023, Horntvedt et al. 2018, Kerr & Rainey 2021)
3. **Health simulation** (Chen et al. 2020, Kim et al. 2016, Padilha et al. 2019, Skedsmo et al. 2023)
4. **The human, experiential and holistic approach** (Morrill & Westrick 2022, Hill 2017)
5. **Creativity and Arts** (Raber & Vermeesch 2022, Rieger et al. 2016, Timpani et al. 2021)
6. **Econursing and planetary health** (Aronson et al. 2024, Bonnamy et al. 2024, Lewett-Jones et al. 2024, Osingada et al. 2020, Richardson et al. 2017)

Strategies deployed (for our students)

- Welcome Day (Water bottle offered as a reminder to stay curious)
- Supervision's after internship (to promote student mental's health)
- Portfolio (assemble, structure and harmonize informations)
- Twin a nurse Mentoring programme (promote self-esteem and capability)
- Triade evaluation during internships (shared evaluation process)
- Courses in Corporality/Embodiement (C. Juliens)
- Creation of a Student counselor profile (emotional support for students)
- Structure international mobility semester (follow-up before, during and after)
- Creation of a financial fund to support vulnerable students

Regular preventive supervisions after internships



UNIVERSITÉ DU LUXEMBOURG



Twin a Nurse

Vous souhaitez soutenir et accompagner un.e étudiant.e en sciences Infirmières dès la rentrée académique de septembre 2023 ?
Tentez l'aventure, rejoignez-nous!

Votre profil ?

- Étre disponible et à l'écoute
- Issu.e de tous secteurs confondus, pas forcément issu.e du monde infirmier/médical/santé
- Étre en emploi ou retraité

Quel est l'objectif de ce projet ?

- ✓ Soutenir un.e étudiant.e infirmier.e pendant toute ses études
- ✓ Aider l'étudiant.e à développer ses compétences linguistiques
- ✓ Partager vos compétences et expériences
- ✓ Début en octobre 2023

GET IN TOUCH

- +352 46 66 44 9482
- nursing@uni.lu
- <https://www.uni.lu/>
- 2, Avenue de l'Université, L-4395 Esch-sur-Alzette

S'INSCRIRE

Twin a nurse mentoring programme

Holding

The importance of educational tools for knowledge transfer that incorporate the **mind-body dimension** (e.g. mindfulness, used both as a tool for patients and for personal development, and role-play workshops involving physical contact)

Regarding the **psychological support** provided: the importance of the emotional framework established, particularly during each course debriefing, both in person during a dedicated session and on an ongoing basis via telephone, using the tool that seems to offer the most support to the students and is chosen by them (in this case, WhatsApp text messages or voice messages with the teacher).

Strategies deployed (at faculty /university level)



ANNUAL REPORTS



REGULAR MEETINGS WITH
RECTORATE/FACULTY



STRUCTURATION OF THE
DEPARTMENT (DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH, MEDICINE AND LIFE
SCIENCE)



PSYCHOEDUCATION AND
INFORMATION TO EXPLAIN: WHAT
IS NURSING?

Strategies deployed at a society level

- Communication plan
- Working groups at Ministries
- More than 15 conventions signed between the university and several different partners (hospitals, education institutions, international universities and nursing associations) to structure partnerships



5. Conclusion

- How do we measure the **impact** of “**holding**”?
With which indicators? What outcomes?

=> Students well-being through academic drop-out /success?

=> Team members well-being through absenteeism, turn-over, sense of belonging, burn-out, level of cooperation, leadership, number and quality of publications?

- What would be a **synonym for holding**?

=>All interventions at micro, meso and macro level to foster psychological security, a sense of belonging, leading to personal and professional growth.



These past two years have been a journey of growth, challenges and resilience. As I look ahead to my path as a pediatric nurse, I am ready to make a difference, guided by heart, dedication, and the belief that every act of care can change a life. ”



Marcia Sousa da Luz

Pediatric nurse at Centre Hospitalier de Luxembourg

[View profile](#)

For Valentine Jongen, a graduate specialising in Anaesthesia and Reanimation, being among the first students of the programme was a unique challenge. “Sometimes it meant moving forward without a model and facing doubts,” she stated. “But we took part in something new, helping to shape the programme and pave the way for future generations. Today, we are no longer students. We are healthcare professionals, ready to enter the professional world with responsibility and humility.”

Over the course of the two-year programme, students learned not only technical procedures and protocols, but also the fundamental importance of the human dimension of healthcare. Raquel Dos Santos Rodrigues, a graduate specialising in Paediatric Nursing, reflects on this: “Caring for someone goes beyond technical procedures or protocols. It’s a look, a word, attention, being present, or simply holding someone’s hand. This is humanity, and it is at the heart of our work.”



Marie Friedel - 20.03.2025

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