

## MDF and the MDF NewsLetter

**Our world is about people** is an expression of our view that organisational development is driven and carried by people, motivated to deliver quality services.

When we decided some months ago to start with our own MDF Newsletter, we fully realised that many organisations and individuals active in the field of international co-operation are already suffering from an information overload. However there were numerous positive and stimulating reactions to the first edition and it is therefore with great pleasure that we send you our second newsletter.

A few reactions:

- *I hope we are keeping touch and I hope to get suitable and helpful topics.*
- *Thanks for the newsletter of May. I will share it with my fellow development practitioners in Uganda. And, it is also interesting to hear that NFP scholarships will be available next year.*
- *Many thanks for the quarterly newsletter. It is very informative and learningful. It was particularly interesting to read the article on private sector in Tanzania.*
- *And if possible can we contribute articles in your newsletter?*

**Reply:** We would be grateful if you can send your contribution to our newsletter. You can send us an article, maximum 200 words, on the activities of your organisation, your bottlenecks and successes. Please explain: what type of activities does your organisation do, who is the target group and what is the role of your organisation in society.

Having returned only last week from a very refreshing and needed summer holiday, I am reconfirmed in my opinion that information management is one of the most important issues with which managers have to cope. People are bombarded with interesting news from all over the world. Every day I realise that all the things I pretend to know, have learnt and am learning mean hardly anything in relation to all the available knowledge that has become so easily accessible nowadays.

We at MDF consider this Newsletter as a powerful tool for sharing with you interesting experiences, lessons that we have learnt and new activities we are undertaking. However, you as the reader should also consider this as an open invitation to share your experiences with us. Please feel free to contact us any time.

I sincerely hope that you will not consider this Newsletter as part of the global information overload. On the contrary we hope that it contains relevant and useful information for you. Feel free to send comments and to forward it on to other people and organisations that you feel might be interested. If you would like to add anyone to our mailing list, just let us know.

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## News

### Annual Report 2004

Highlights in the report are MDF's 20-year celebration events, acquisition of STOAS International, Certificate of Quality from NCCIC and the establishment of a new MDF office in Indochina, Vietnam.

The number of staff in five MDF offices rose to 62, assisted by 26 satellite consultants. Consultancies were done with 70 clients world-wide.

Almost 100 training courses were delivered world-wide with more than 600 participants, of which about 200 participants in open subscription courses and about the same amount in tailor made courses in Ede.

New products in 2004 are the International Advisory Trail and the publication of the Tango Toolkit for organisations.

A few copies of the annual report are still available on request from [mdf@mdf.nl](mailto:mdf@mdf.nl)

### Training Brochure 2006

At the moment, MDF is preparing the training brochure for 2006. The new course calendar will be available on the website from September onwards. If you wish to receive a hardcopy, please let us know at [registration@mdf.nl](mailto:registration@mdf.nl).

## Experiences of participants in training courses

### Project Management - PM, June 2005

The PM training has created the environment, where a participant learns a lot from the trainers, as well from other participants, in a short time with both fun and challenge. The training offers a good opportunity to learn from world-class trainers through the program, which is designed to meet our expectations and there are the logistical arrangements are good. Also the beautiful landscape and the surrounding forests provided good inspiration to learn more.

As a project manager, training is 'a must' for me as it helps to improve your managerial thinking and behaviour. One of my colleagues had attended a MDF training course earlier and came back full with ideas and creativity. Now after attending the training myself I know why. During the two weeks we had the opportunity to go deep into our managerial skills and knowledge and look at our attitudes in order to enhance them, which is also important. The training taught me how to make things work.

By: [Maksat Abdykaparov](#), Co-ordinator Agricultural Vocational Education Project, Helvetas, Kyrgyz Republic

### Course Management Tools & Skills for Young Professionals in International Cooperation - MTS, June 2005

At MDF Training and Consultancy location in Ede I attended the June 2005 course Management Tools & Skills for Young Professionals in International Co-operation.

I am a senior policy officer at the Immigration and Naturalisation Service in the Netherlands. In particular I deal with asylum and migration developments within the European Union, as well as the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme. Since migration is by its nature an international issue, and as the different stakeholders are more and more interested in further (international) co-operation in this area, I am keen on widening and deepening my skills and knowledge in the area of international project management.



During the course I experienced a stimulating training mix of management skills and tools, brought via different teaching methods by two experienced and enthusiastic trainers in an international setting with motivated participants working all over the world.

I felt my interest in a professional future in international project management confirmed. The end of the training focussed on personal learning goals and handed over instruments to implement these goals in one's daily work and that's what makes the difference at the end of the day, between a training and a lecture.

By: [Bertwin Lussenburg](#), Immigration and Naturalisation Service, The Netherlands

### **Monitoring & Evaluation of Project Portfolios - PCM/M&E, May 2005**

My experience at MDF in the early part of this year was an interesting one. I was selected to attend the course on Monitoring & Evaluation of Project Portfolios. I work with the Policy Coordination, Monitoring & Evaluation Unit of the President's Office and get involved in both Policy Analysis and M&E. The basis of M&E is evidence, hence the need for field trips to collect the information to assess policy implementation.

The course was useful in helping me have a rethink of the issues that we look out for as a unit. The identification of challenges has become a key output of our M&E in order that effective remedial action is taken if required within each quarter. The field trips have been more interactive. Most of all, I came back with helpful guidelines and tools which have been used in the training of M&E units in some of the ministries that I deal with. Collectively, we now place emphasis on outcomes & impacts of implementation of programmes for the betterment of our people.

By: [Sam Aning](#), Policy Coordination, M&E Unit of the President's Office, Ghana

### **International Advisory Trail – IAT - Intake Week, June 2005**

It was in August 2004, when I first learnt about the IAT. It is a new approach to learning, based on the prior learning experience of individual participants. The intake-week primarily serves as an opportunity for (self-) assessment. For that matter, a set of twelve competency areas, eight of them related to the advisory process (e.g. marketing, diagnosis and change implementation) and four crosscutting (e.g. client-centeredness and self-awareness) have been identified by MDF as essential for being or becoming a professional adviser.

Prior to the start of the intake week, all participants had to fill in a very detailed checklist for self-assessment and work on a portfolio, which gave evidence of their work experience in respective competency areas. The exercise forced me to make a sober inventory of what I had to offer as an adviser. Interestingly, the blind spots that I identified in the self-assessment came very close to what the coach and the external assessor found and commented on later during the Intake-week. In retrospect it seems to me, that the more effort you put into a realistic self-assessment, the more fruitful the whole exercise becomes.

We - a diverse international group of six participants - are now the second batch of the IAT. All of us are coming from different countries. Apart from some introductory group sessions and individual sessions with the coach, a simulation exercise on an advisory process in small teams was the core part of the week. MDF staff members acted out the roles of different players (clients, NGO director, etc.). A peer-review session, in which an external adviser commented on the portfolio, and the planning of the trail together with the coach rounded up the intake week in a very useful way. All in all, I once again enjoyed my time in Ede, not the least because I met some good people there.



Back in my day to day life, the reality check for my personal IAT is still to come. Will I be able to work on my competencies according to my individual learning path? Much depends on my personal drive and commitment. Will I grow professionally with the help of my coach? I trust in his ability to guide me competently on the trail. Will I ever be a good adviser? Who knows, I will do my best and trust on the support of the coach. So, let's give it some time.

By Candidate: [Thomas Döhne](#), freelance consultant, Germany

## Assignments in the past months

In this part of the NewsLetter you can read about some MDF consultants' experiences in the field. The consultant's name is given after each article and should you wish to receive more information on the consultancy, please send a message to the consultant concerned.

### Senior Management Capacity Building

Since 2003 MDF has been involved in Senior Management Capacity Building of Chief Executive Officers (CEO's) of Further Education Training Institutes (FET) in South Africa. The first project was executed together with Regional Vocational Training Centres (ROC) in Utrecht, the Netherlands. Nine CEO's, from all South African Province, came twice to the Netherlands for a one-month internship at senior management level at different ROC's. During this whole period MDF guided them on senior management issues such as strategic planning, monitoring and change management. This programme concluded successfully in November 2004.

This year MDF is involved in capacity building of all CEO's of FET institutions in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. The programme involves training and facilitation on senior management issues. CEO's reflect upon College-strategic plans and the roles of the different bodies within the College. They also scanned opportunities for new courses and learned how to translate them into business plans. CEO's reflect upon own performance and they have been introduced into the principles of peer review. The CEO's were in the Netherlands in June to visit several ROC's on site. They were very impressed by the openness and willingness to share information and quite satisfied as indicated by the following statements:

*"As far as I am concerned, this is the most effective training that I attended and it was very relevant to my line of work.", "I enjoy this course and learn a lot".*

*"I have learned a lot and can bring some into practice in my college", "Real eye openers to see that we are similar but also uniquely different".*

Consultant: [Marie-José Niesten](#)

### Logical Framework works also in Amsterdam

Those who claim that multi-stakeholder planning in development co-operation is complex should come with us to Amsterdam and learn about what is really complex.

To keep Amsterdam interesting, beautiful, attractive and also economically viable, as well as healthy to live in, every 4 years a strategic development plan is composed. To ensure that this municipal strategy is also executable, every year an annual plan is worked out. Since the planning reality in Amsterdam is complex and multi-faceted, it is also difficult for all (planners and implementers) concerned to draft a comprehensive plan that is both readable as well as consistent.

Within the municipal policy setting, 14 result areas are defined. Each result area covers a number of linked policy issues (e.g. traffic and infrastructure; economic affairs, harbour and business promotion; water and environment). For each result



area a separate year plan is compiled, together with the various implementing agencies.

MDF advisers have assisted the municipality's central planning agency to bring more consistency into the various annual plans. The Logical Framework methodology was used to train the planning officers and to develop guidelines for planning throughout the municipality.

Positive comments from the civil servant especially focused on the practical applicability of the LFA and the high communicative value of the planning exercise when done in this way.

Consultant: [Niek Bakker](#)

## Supporting managers of change processes

It was a pleasant surprise to be invited by a former participant of the IDOS course to support him in a process of preparing his organisation for a major change. The project manager of a Dutch government organisation had been assigned the task to prepare a master plan for the new organisation that was created as a result of a merger. The master plan included a step-by-step plan 2005-2008; very concrete steps to end up with a well functioning renewed organisation. In such a process we, as advisers, should leave the project manager in his role and support him with a "backstage" scenario.

It included guidance and advice regarding design, set-up and elaboration of the plan; critical reading of the draft reports, drafting some chapters and also support, on demand, of the project manager. This turned out to be a winning formula, in which it appeared that the success of such an assignment depends very much on the personal chemistry between the adviser and the client, as well as the flexibility in the assistance. I also learned that whereas the new mission and strategic priorities had already been formulated, the IOM provided the organisation with sufficient tools to work out the master plan in a tailor-made fashion'. After 13 sessions the master plan was presented to and approved by the management team: it is the start of a change process with lots of challenges ahead.

Consultant: [Herman Snelder](#)

## CARE Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction

The number and seriousness of disasters is increasing, disproportional affecting poor countries and poor communities. Many national and local development efforts have benefited from the use of disaster risk reduction tools and practices.

In May 2005, CARE Nederland invited MDF to facilitate a three-day CARE International workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in The Netherlands.

Before and during the workshop the CARE organisers and the MDF facilitator adapted workshop methodologies to achieve the best results.

During the workshop Academia (research expert in DRR) and CARE staff shared research findings, experiences, knowledge and initiatives in Disaster Risk Reduction. CARE's role in DRR at local national and regional levels was elaborated. Capacity building was discussed as one of the most important aspects in being able to integrate DRR in programming. The viability of mainstreaming DRR in CARE was explored. The participants discussed components necessary for mainstreaming DRR at institutional and country office levels and concluded that the following five steps were of importance in the initial process of mainstreaming disaster risk reduction:

Step 1: Defining DRR principles

Step 2: Integrating DRR into CARE's strategic frameworks

Step 3: Mapping CARE's DRM initiatives

Step 4: Capacity building & knowledge management

Step 5: Adapt and use an existing tool to assess organisational mainstreaming

A timeline was discussed to implement these initial steps towards mainstreaming disaster risk reduction.

Consultant: [Han Verhoeven](#)



## Coming training courses

Course Calendar in the Netherlands for September – December 2005. A full version of the course calendar can be found on our website: [www.mdf.nl](http://www.mdf.nl)

### Highlights of special and new courses:

#### Training of Trainers - TOT-e

Professional trainers and technical staff become better equipped to assess practical training needs, to define realistic training objectives and to implement effective training programmes.

Date: 21 - 28 September 2005.

#### Advanced Management for Quality Performance – AMQ

Apply management models and approaches towards improvement of quality and performance of organisations and apply these in your own organisation. Define objectives and strategies to improve quality.

Date: 26 – 30 September 2005

#### Management Tools and Skills for Young Professionals in International Cooperation - MTS

The course aims to prepare young professionals for management oriented tasks by broadening their management knowledge and skills in a cross-cultural environment.

Date: 3 – 7 October 2005

#### Competency Based Learning – CBL

Date: 31 October – 11 November 2005

#### Managing International Partnerships – MIP

Date: 23 - 25 November 2005

#### Leading Learning Organisations – LLO

Date: 28 November – 7 December 2005

#### Logical Framework in the Project Cycle: Planning – PCM/Plan

Participants understand Project cycle management and know how to prepare a logical framework. They also know how to translate this into a concise and transparent budget.

Date: 28 November – 2 December 2005

#### Monitoring & Evaluation of Project Portfolios – PCM/M&E

Participants learn different methods and instruments for establishing a monitoring system, and how to prepare, guide and effectively use evaluations.

Date: 5 – 9 December 2005

#### Organisational Development for Advisers and Consultants – ODAC

Organisational advisers and consultants are better equipped to help their clients to assess and improve the capacity their organisation and to design and implement the necessary strategies for change.

Date: 5 –16 December 2005

#### Private Sector Development – PSD

Provide insight in the creation of an enabling environment for private sector development in a sector wide approach. Analyse a sector, delineate between public and private actors and execute a SME simulation package.

Date: 5 –16 December 2005

#### Facilitation Skills Course – FAC

Introduction to different methods and styles of facilitating groups. The focus is on expanding personal skills to intervene and guide a group effectively.

Date: 7 - 15 December 2005

Calendar

TOT-e

AMQ

MTS

CBL

MIP

LLO

PCM/Plan

PCM/M&E

ODAC

PSD

FAC

## Comprehensive Appraisal of Proposals - PCM/App

A framework for an approach towards and a set of instruments for appraisal of proposals, both those generated by a general call for proposals and proposals submitted by e.g. consultancy firms.

Dates: 13 - 16 December 2005

[PCM/App](#)

## Indicators - PCM/Ind

Develop indicators on the various levels of the intervention logic for operational management, as well as for policy purposes. Understand and apply sector and thematic indicators.

Dates 13 - 16 December 2005

[PCM/Ind](#)

## International Advisory Trail - IAT

Competency based learning trajectory for advisers and consultants who want to become certified International Advisers.

Date intake week: 26 –30 June 2006. Registration possible throughout the year

[IAT](#)

## MDF NewsLetter

MDF Training & Consultancy brings you the MDF NewsLetter.

MDF is a world-wide training and consultancy firm, active in the field of international co-operation since 1984. MDF provides courses, workshops and consulting services for individuals and organisations. These are designed to strengthen the managerial and organisational capacity required to perform effectively and to achieve set objectives. Programmes are designed specifically for staff of organisations involved in development activities.

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For further information and news about MDF and its services and for our courses and registration, please visit our website: [www.mdf.nl](http://www.mdf.nl), or contact our [registration officer](#), Mrs Ilse Haagen.

For any other questions, please contact our [MDF webmaster](#)

[Registration](#)

### Privacy Policy

With this NewsLetter MDF Training & Consultancy is essentially trying to offer information on our activities; however we continue to respect your wish for privacy. That is why we treat your personal information as confidential information:

- Your personal data will only be used to enable us to establish how to provide you a better service. We are committed not to use your data for any another purpose,
- Your personal data are intended for MDF Training & Consultancy use only and will not be transmitted to third parties other than MDF Training & Consultancy entity

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