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Annual Report 2009

2009 was a remarkable year for MDF; we became 25 years (1984 – 2009). This milestone will be celebrated on July 2 with a seminar on Rhineland entrepreneurship in international collaboration. Uncertainties about the effects of the global recession in the end did not negatively impact our results in 2009 professionally or financially. This meant that MDF could face 2010 with a boost of confidence and creative space to continue to improve our services for our clients. Customer services remain a top priority for MDF which is also why we decided to get ISO certified during 2010 to maintain our high standards. Within the development sector, the increasing attention toward Aid Effectiveness and Management for Development Results continued in 2009, also for MDF. But there were several other important events which made the year a particularly exciting one. This includes: more long term engagements, new alliances and the development of several new courses.

Facts and figures

	Staff 2009	Staff 2008	Course participants 2009*	Course participants 2008*	Turnover 2009	Turnover 2008
MDF/NL Netherlands	51	53	372	359	7,827,000	7,916,649
MDF/SA Sri Lanka	12	15	37	86	339,208	432,771
MDF/IC Vietnam	4	5	70	121	280,000	325,720
MDF/AC Congo	15	15	214	195	795,378	604,446
MDF/ESA Tanzania	16	15	87	158	559,572	527,746
MDF/BRX Belgium	7	7	24		737,118	800,342
MDF/WA Ghana	3		23		168,290	
MDF/LA Boliva	1		Online: 150**		17,500	
MDF/Nederland	4				370,000	
Total	113	110	827	919	11,094,066	10,597,674

* Participants in open entry training courses / ** Not included in the total

TRAINING AND COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Overall, the training market is undergoing significant changes these years and 2009 was no exception. MDF recognises a growing trend in demands for shorter training courses and most significantly for tailor made courses. Simultaneously the product cycle for certain long standing training courses becomes still shorter. This required MDF to respond quickly and flexibly and for that reason there was increased attention being paid in 2009 to tailor made training courses meeting client needs. One of our very successful courses has been the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning training course. With 30 participants it has been the most successful course of 2009. MDF also developed a number of new open entry courses. Among others, these were courses on: Competency Based Learning; Outcome Mapping; Value Chain training; Knowledge Management for Development; Participatory Planning Processes; and Process Management.

Over the years, in our consultancies and assignments we dealt with change management a lot. It was therefore decided to develop and offer a stand alone course on change management. The course explored the intricacies of planning and dealing with change in organisations.

MfDR

MDF continued its focus on making the Aid Effectiveness agenda more tangible and practical for practitioners by carrying out several training courses and consultancies. This included the Joint Learning Programme on Managing for Development Results under Train4Dev. These courses brought together senior staff from government agencies, civil society organisations and donor offices in order to create awareness, willingness and ability to apply an MfDR approach within their programme context.

CONSULTANCIES

Consultancies in 2009 constituted about 50% of all our business in the Netherlands and abroad. This clearly demonstrates how MDF more and more complements its traditional training institute profile with a strong emphasis on consultancies for a wide variety of clients ranging from small NGOs to Government institutions, bilateral and multilateral donors. The trend illustrates our success in linking training with practice; one of the original ideas at the start of MDF in 1984. In 2009 MDF also offered several interim management services to Dutch development organisations undergoing change, which seems to be a growing sector. For a full overview of our diverse consultancy assignments, please refer to our website.

NUFFIC PROGRAMMES

Long term engagements in Nuffic funded programmes expanded. Therefore MDF collaborated with other Dutch institutes and offered several different types of capacity development, technical assistance and

programme management services to higher level educational institutions in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Examples include a project to build and strengthen the organisational capacity of a young, recently established, institute in Rwanda. In Indonesia, MDF is providing institutional strengthening to polytechnics and universities. Whereas in Guatemala MDF is offering institutional strengthening for the development of a national decentralised programme of training and research in environmental management.

OUR PARTNERS AND ALLIANCES

2009 saw a strengthening of partnerships and alliances and the entering into competitive consortia. As many short and long term assignments increase in complexity, so do the demands for effective alliances with other development partners to effectively address the challenges ahead. MDF, more than ever, invested in building new partnerships and alliances while paying consistent attention to maintaining existing ones. These contacts also ensure that MDF challenges its own views and assumptions about development and is enriched by exposure to perspectives from partners.

OUR BRANCHES

Our branches on all continents continue to be an important part of MDF's global business strategy called "Spreading our wings." Through a strong regional presence, we ensure that we are close to the customer and can respond quickly to arising opportunities. Branch highlights are summarised below.

MDF PACIFIC INDONESIA

MDF established a MDF Pacific-Indonesia (MDF-PI) office in Bali in October 2009. In January 2010 MDF-PI could present its full staffing team, led by branch director Bart van Halteren. MDF-PI will provide support to ongoing Nuffic projects in the region and gradually undertakes training and consulting assignments in the years to come within Indonesia and the wider region.

MDF BRUSSELS

The successful transition of MDF Brussels' portfolio following 10 years management of two major EDF training programmes for the EC was a major accomplishment. This has required diversification of the regular portfolio and venturing into new areas. Two new open inscription courses were launched concerning management of EC Grants, which demonstrates MDF Brussels' determination to continue making use of its acquired extensive EC expertise.

MDF AFRIQUE CENTRALE

Although the situation in the Great Lakes region remains volatile, the fragile peace process gives hope for the future and the needs for capacity building are enormous. In 2009 the turnover of MDF Afrique Centrale showed a significant increase. The staff of our main office in Goma and the antennas in Kigali and Kinshasa carried out a total of more than 100 consultancies and training events.

Most salient features in 2009



MDF LATIN AMERICA

2009 was the first full year with an MDF presence in Latin America. This presence is still a one-man-show, but MDF is gaining a clearer profile, which shows in the number of requests received for training and consulting services. The well-known MDF Project Cycle Management course was, for the first time, given integrally on line, with 150 participants from Guatemala being taught from La Paz, Bolivia.

MDF SOUTH ASIA

The 30 year civil war in Sri Lanka came to a dramatic conclusion in May and the economy is stronger than ever. MDF conducted 68 assignments in 10 different countries, including the global evaluation for Caritas in Sri Lanka, and the final review of IOM's transitional shelter programme for tsunami and conflict affected communities. New international clients included World Society for Protection of Animals (WSPA) and the World Wildlife Fund. MDF-SA in 2009 also welcomed its new branch director Ineke Pitts.

MDF INDOCHINA

2009 was a challenging year for MDF Indochina with staff changes and in January 2010, Pui Yee Chan took over the role of branch office director. For the internal organisation the financial and administrative processes have been streamlined while, externally, the demand for leadership courses and private sector relevant training courses for different target groups continues to grow in the dynamic economy of Vietnam.

MDF EASTERN SOUTHERN AFRICA

2009 saw a change in leadership and in January 2010 Bas Beisiegel became the new branch director. It was a challenging year for MDF, demanding a new market focus and the need to respond to new opportunities. New courses include Policy Influencing, EU Development Aid and Outcome Mapping.

MDF WEST AFRICA

In January 2009, MDF opened a new branch office based in Ghana, headed by Ingrid Plag. Staffing was kept at a minimum while the regional markets are being explored. The most exciting assignment in 2009 has been the development of a nation-wide results based monitoring scheme for the National Health Insurance Scheme in Ghana together with the Royal Tropical Institute, KIT, based in Amsterdam. MDF West Africa will continue to offer new training programmes and gradually expand its staffing in 2010.

MDF NETHERLANDS

MDFnl was setup as an independent unit in 2009 and formally established in January 2010 as a full branch. MDFnl is catering exclusively for the Dutch market, led by and co-owned by Niek Bakker. MDFnl cooperates with several Dutch consultancy firms and currently manages two framework contracts with Province of Gelderland and Vilans, a health service institutional capacity builder. Important other clients are Municipalities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Arnhem.



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