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How to develop multidisciplinary  
Cooperation?

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# Workshop-Overview:

1. What is AFD?
2. Multidisciplinary in our Work
3. Finding Projects
4. Finding Students
5. AFD Projects in Detail
6. Q&A



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What is AFD?

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# What is AFD? - Basics

- **Founded:** 2012 by Laurens de Poorter at KU Leuven
- **What:** Student Consultancy for NGOs, Non-Profits and Social Businesses (primarily) in developing countries.
- **Where:**
  - Leuven and Louvain-La-Neuve (Belgium)
  - Utrecht (Netherlands)
  - Stellenbosch (South Africa)



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Multidisciplinary within AFD

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# How do we integrate multidisciplinary?

- **Board**

- Drawn from 7 different faculties
- Frequent meetings, teambuildings to reinforce inter-department contact
- Smaller Board → more overlap of responsibilities
- Working groups: anyone can join
- Guiding project students: exposure to new concepts, mindsets necessary
- Teamwork: traditional challenges & benefits enhanced by a multidisciplinary team.



# How do we integrate multidisciplinary?

- **Project students**

- Initially: Economics/business predominant recruiting pool
- Recently: More diversification.
- Each project unique; team recruited to match projects
- Today: 40 project students, 25 different fields!
- Positive reception by faculties: Projects make curriculum *stronger*

# How do we integrate multidisciplinary?

- **Brightminds**

- Open to all students
- Exchange of ideas, participants challenged by different opinions/backgrounds.
- Can different mindsets work towards same goal?
- Ideas → Action → Society of the future!

# How do we integrate multidisciplinary?

- **Marketing**

- Target audience: wide range of people
- Already involved to vaguely interested
- Multidisciplinary = strong marketing tool
- How can I apply my field? How will I find a job with this degree? What am I interested in?
- Content-based marketing



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Finding Projects

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# Project Approach

- **What if faculty bounded approach?**
- **Project Selection**
  - Representation of AFD on Different Events
  - Conscious Diversification of Portfolio
  - Multidisciplinary Teams as Key Value



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Finding Students

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# Project Student at AFD

- **Faculty Cooperation**

- Possibility to take up for credits
- Faculty Dependence
- Scholarships
- Enthusiastic feedback from faculty members!

- **Marketing**

- Info-event AF
- Facebook, Flyers etc.
- Class presentations
- Aim: Diversification of Public





# Project Student at AFD

- **Recruitment**

- Hand in CV & Questionnaire
- Interview: Integrated Case
- Profiles: Strictness of Request - Entrepreneurial Spirit
- Team Composition

- **Support**

- Student Support Board Member
- Teambuilding Activities
- Workshops
- Coach for Team Guidance



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# Case

The Ferghana Valley is a very fertile area in Central Asia. In this valley, AFD has two pieces of land available close to Khujand, one of the biggest cities of Tajikistan (see map).

The first parcel has a lot of potential because of the river Amu Darya that flows through the land and is the main reason for its fertility.

The second parcel is less fertile because there is no river flowing through the land. On this parcel there is also an empty building available. Next to these two promising parcels are mountains, a national park and a big water basin located. Transportation is difficult because of the poor condition of the roads.

As a project student, you have a limited budget available that you and your team of four other students can use to create a social impact on the local environment. How would you approach this project? What are your ideas for these parcels? How would you study this environment and use it to create a social impact? Don't be afraid to be creative!



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Multidisciplinary Applied:  
AFD Projects in Detail

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# Overview:

- Three Projects (Eight in total in 2016)
- **Catapa** – Water Security (Bolivia)
- **Sundarban** – Financial Independence for a Hospital (India)
- **Studio Zambia** – Youth Empowerment/Education (Zambia)



# Discussion Points:

- Project Introduction/Problem Statement
- Team Selection
- Preliminary Results – Project Focus

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2016



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# Catapa: Problem Statement

- Water scarcity -> Rain Harvesting
- Water tank installation: 6 communities and 36 households
- AFD-Task
  - Evaluation of the overall project
  - Project management
  - Impact assessment
  - Provision of further guidance



# Catapa: Project-Team

- Political Science/Statistics (Master)
- Anthropology (Master)
- Bioscience Engineering (Master)
- Electric Engineering (Master)
- Water Resource Engineering/Geography (Master)



# Catapa: Focus

- **Insure long-term orientation**
- Knowledge collection and management
- Background research
- Involvement of the local population



# Catapa: First Results

- Structured library with GIS linkage
- Regional study
  - Cultural
  - Geographical
  - Hydrological
- Project challenges
  - Technical
  - Financial
  - Implementation

# SUNDARBANS ECO-REGION







# Sundarban: Problem Statement

- Low socio-economic status & healthcare
- SSDC: Local group engaged in social development
  - Children's Hospital
  - Clinic Boat
- AFD-Task:
  - Evaluation of current operations (SWOT)
  - Financial self-sustainability: barriers and opportunities



# Sundarban – Project-Team

- Business Administration (Master)
- Medicine-Biomedical Engineering (Master)
- Medicine (Master)
- Law and Economics (Master)
- Corporate Communication (Master)



# Sundarban – Focus

- Financial reliance on external donors
- Vulnerability of the local population
- Mobilisation of unused potential



# Sundarban – Focus

- Agricultural utilisation of nearby land
- Micro-finance/insurance
- Mobilisation of staying mothers



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# Moringa: Problem Statement

- Fostering sustainable entrepreneurship
- Moringa trees for small scale farming -> Growing demand
  - High nutritional value
  - Multidimensional usage
  - Traditional standing



# Moringa: Project Team

- Educational Anthropology (Master)
- Law (Master)
- Bioscience Engineering (PhD)
- Bioscience Engineering (Foodtechnology, Master)
- Business Engineering (Master)



# Moringa – Focus

- Re-introduction of moringa trees
- Farmer education and training
  - Business practices
  - Dietary advantages
- Further research and continuous assessment



# Moringa – First Results

- In-depth research on the specific regional context
- Assessment of most promising utilisation technique
- Long-term orientation:
  - Legal conditions for business foundation in Tanzania
  - Economic feasibility for participating farmers
  - Partner Identification
- Information brochure and didactic materials



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Multidisciplinary in AFD:  
Looking towards the future

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# Our mission

- To keep branching out into different disciplines
- To bring our message to the attention of as many different people as possible
- To discover, promote and apply multidisciplinary solutions across our organization
- To provide a 'laboratory' where the mixing of ideas can happen



Thank you  
for your  
attention!

Any  
questions?