

Cecilia still benefits from her MFS experience

Cecilia de Pedro received an MFS scholarship for a project that focused on water purification in South India. Today she works with global health and the environment at AstraZeneca, where she assesses the environmental risk of medicines.

“I think that I got this job because of my MFS experience,” she says. “And I use what I learnt in South India nearly every day.”

Cecilia de Pedro studied at the University of Gothenburg and is now an environmental scientist. In autumn 2005, she received an MFS scholarship to carry out her degree project in the form of an “ecotoxtest” of water from a municipal wastewater treatment plant in Hyderabad in South India.

What is an ecotoxtest?

“An ecotoxtest is when you study the effect of different chemicals on species that live in the environment. I did the test on water fleas, which I took with me to India from Sweden.”

What did the results show?

“That the water was toxic for the water fleas – that they didn’t survive even when the water was diluted several times over. I struggled for one and a half years to develop a good idea for my degree project because I wanted to find something that would work alongside of other Sida projects in India.”

How did you come up with the idea to apply for a MFS scholarship?

“I phoned Sida (Swedish International Development



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Cooperation Agency) and asked what they recommended if I wanted to work with development issues, and they told me about MFS. Because I am an environmental scientist, I started thinking about water purification in relation to industries. I found out that Sida was running a water purification project in Hyderabad in South India – so I contacted them.

Has your MFS project continued?

“You only have time to carry out one test in 6 months, but I didn’t want my project to stop there now that I could prove that the water was toxic. So I worked hard to find an environmental organisation that could use my results. And now it seems that a Swedish environmental consultancy is going to deliver purification techniques to the plant. I’m really happy!”

More information

Since Minor Field Studies (MFS) began in 1968, around 10,000 students have taken part in the MFS programme. The programme is funded by Sida and administrated by the International Programme Office. This also applies for Linnaeus-Palme programmes (exchanges with developing countries for students and lecturers at universities and colleges) and SIDA's travel scholarships (awarded for unpaid internships, preferably with UN and EU institutions).

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