

Teaching to the Practicum: Training International Practitioners



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The Field Practicum of the Master of Sustainable Development Practice Program

Overview of the MDP Program

Mission

Origin

The MDP and UF: Building on tradition, knowledge and experience

Current status of the MDP Program

Academic considerations

Interrelated SLOs

Interdisciplinary curriculum

The field practicum

Field Practicum

Objectives and process

Regional and thematic considerations

Data collection, analysis and interpretation

Linkages to UF initiatives

Deliverables

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Content

MDP Program Mission

Prepare a new generation of professionals...

...capable of making meaningful contributions to the complex and interdisciplinary processes of sustainable development throughout the world...

...who understand the multidimensional nature of development challenges and possess the analytical capacity and tools applicable to these challenges...

...and who become critical thinkers concerning development processes and their implications.



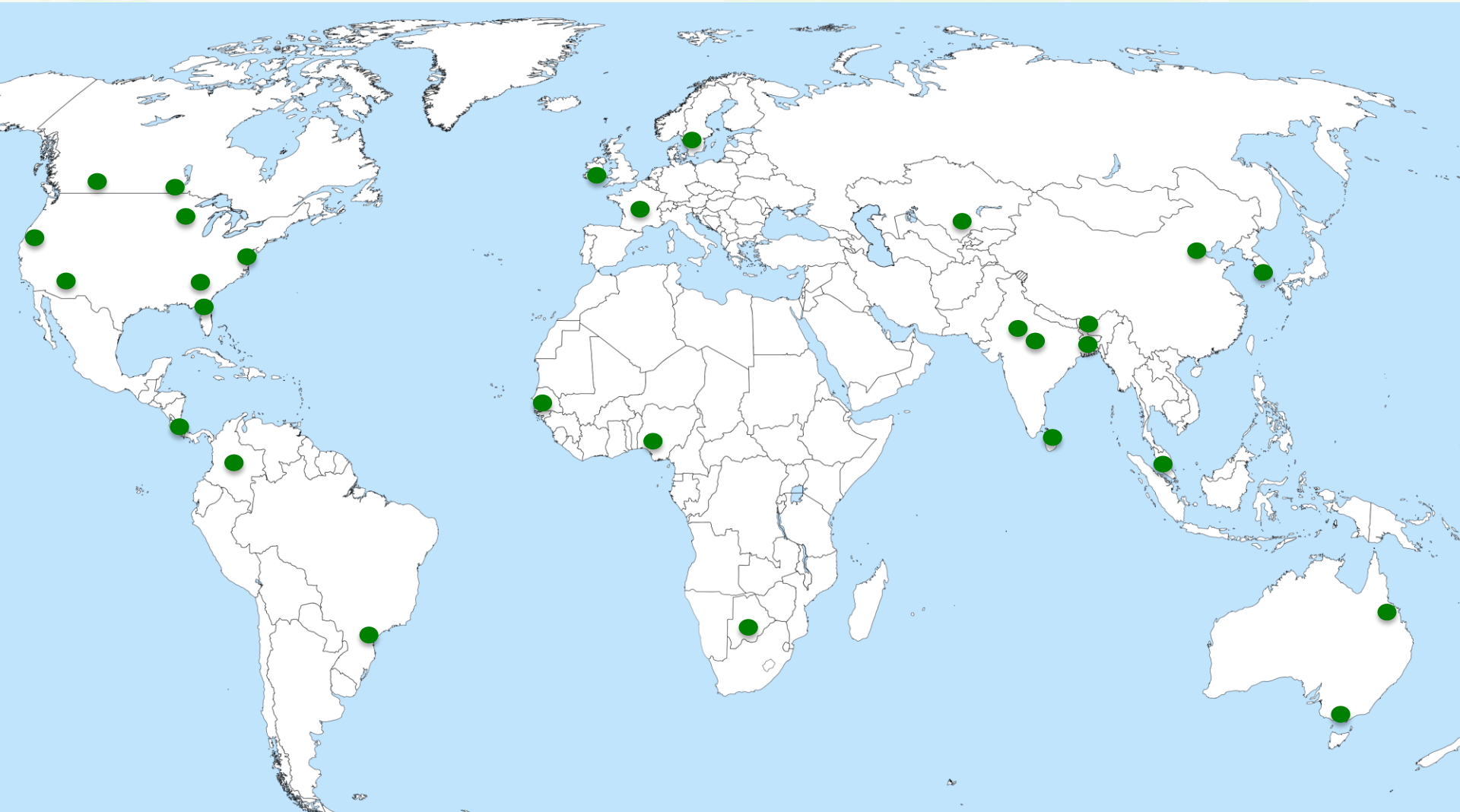
Origin of the UF MDP Program

- International Commission on Education for Sustainable Development Practice funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
- Desire to build on nearly 30 years of interdisciplinary collaboration in the pioneering Tropical Conservation & Development (TCD) Program
- UF was selected to receive one of the first MDP, MacArthur Foundation grants – first cohort began in 2010



Global MDP consortium

- 28 universities around the world offer the MDP; the number is growing
- Periodic global summits of MDP programs (5 to date)



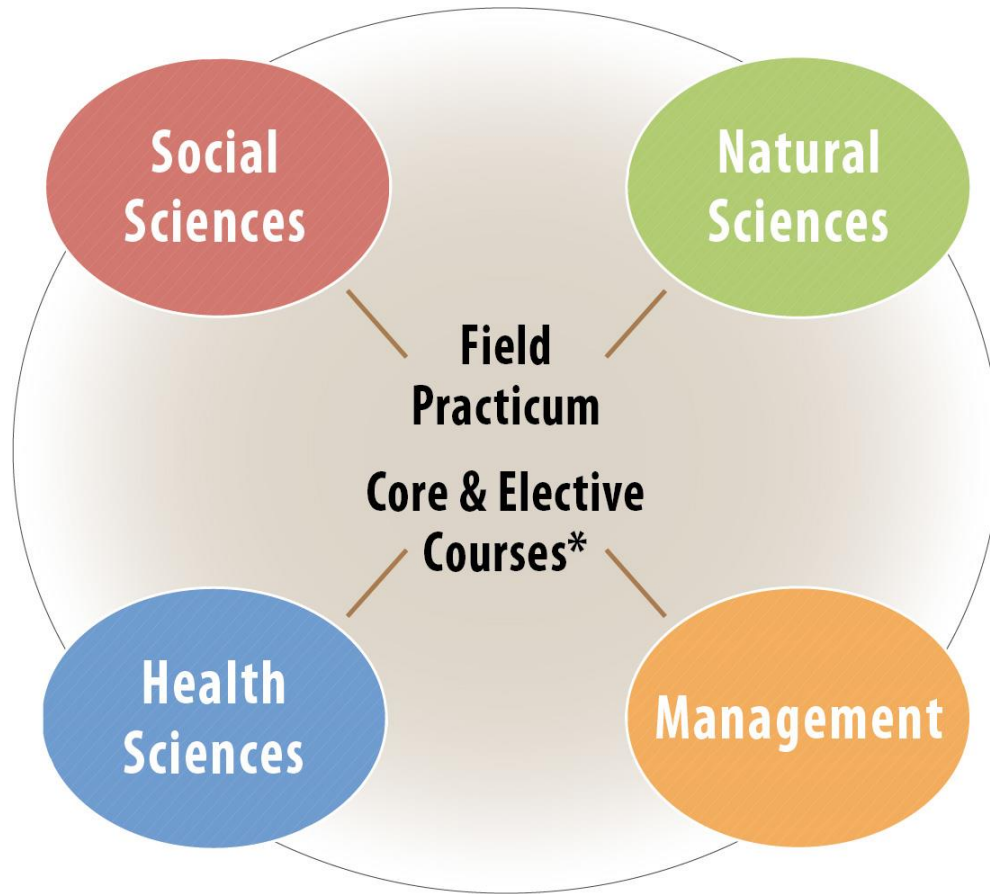
The MDP and UF – Building on tradition, knowledge and experience

- Strong faculty linkages to Latin America and Africa and other parts of the world
- Strong faculty involvement and support across academic departments
- Center for Latin American Studies: 80+ years
- Center for African Studies: 50+ years
- Tropical Conservation and Development (TCD) Program: 20+ years



- Students are vibrant mix of early and mid-career professionals, international and US citizens
- Innovative, experiential, and non-traditional approaches to student learning that bridge theory and practice
- The ***Field Practicum*** is the capstone experience of MDP students

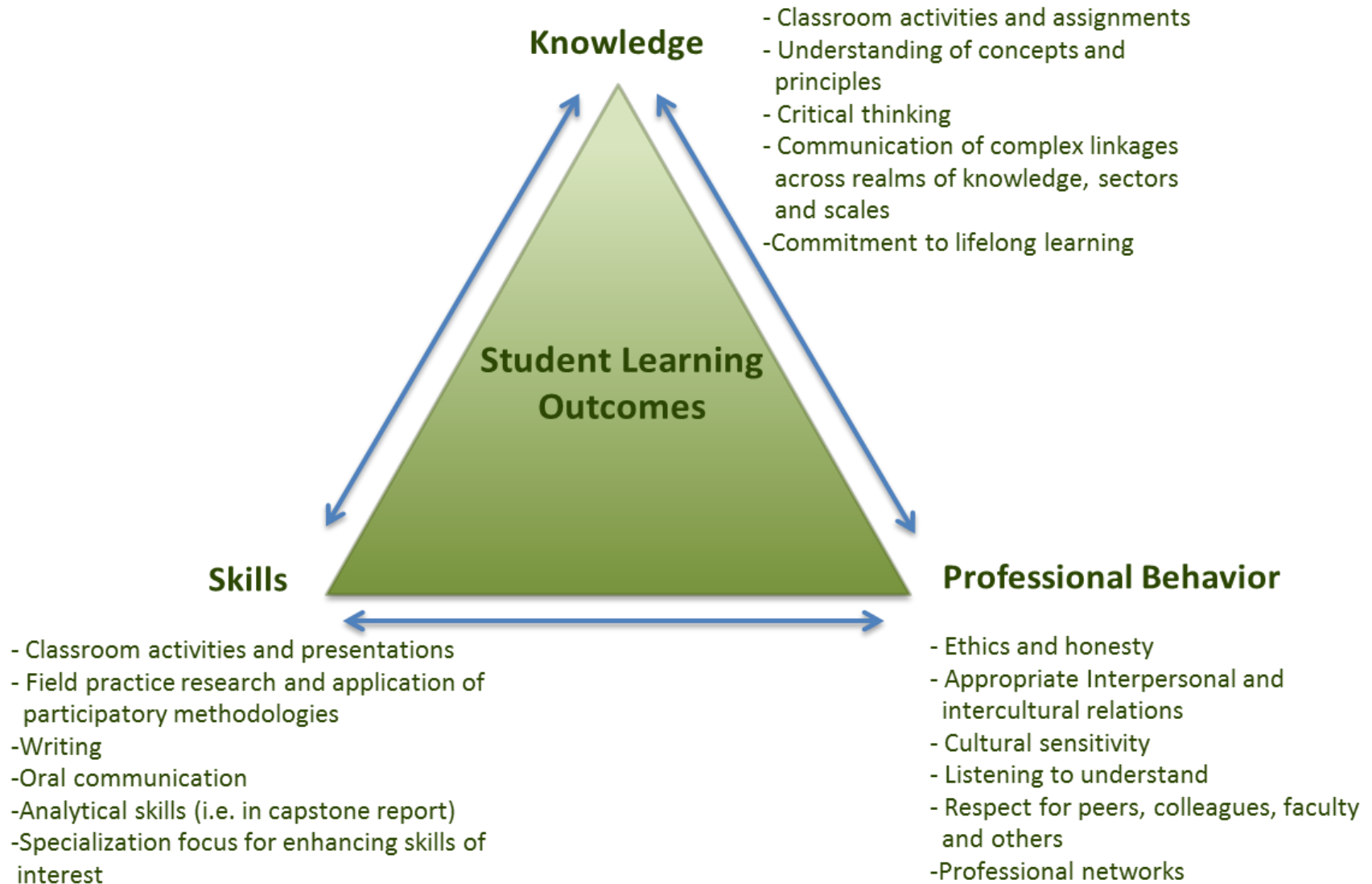




** Students complement the MDP degree with a specialization in a thematic area of interest*

- **The four pillars of the MDP program: Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Health Sciences and Management Skills (33 core credits)**

Interrelated Student Learning Outcomes



The FP is pivotal to achieving these SLOs

Field Practicum

- 10-12 weeks between first and second academic year
- Dual purpose of the FP: provide service to a host organization and fulfill academic requirement of the degree



Field Practicum - Process

- Work with a host organization on a topic/theme of mutual interest, define terms of reference and deliverables
 - Identify topic/theme for the field practicum with guidance from supervisory committee
 - Develop and agree on a coherent set of goals and intermediate objectives, endorsed by host organization
 - SC and IRB approval
 - Design and implement the strategies/activities to achieve them with host organization support



Students develop proposals in the course: *“Design and Methods of SDP”* offered each Spring

Data collection, analysis and interpretation

- Emphasis on understanding the context of the FP: social, environmental, economic, institutional, political
- All students apply an array of methods, quantitative and qualitative
- Students gain experience in the analysis of information and in the interpretation and synthesis of results: Support in Fall course following FP

Key skills for development practitioners

Important linkages with UF programs and projects

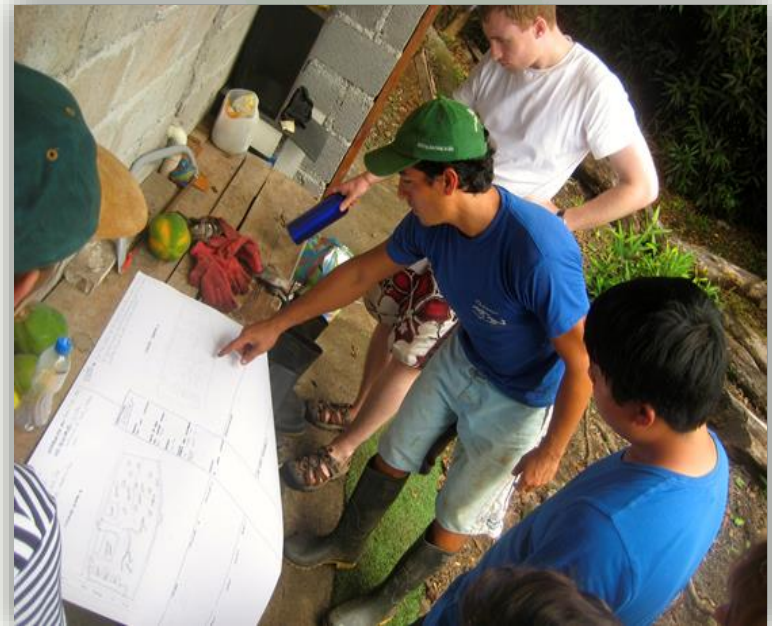
- UF faculty engagement in international initiatives creates invaluable placement opportunities for MDP students. A few examples:
 - Conservation Law Clinic in Costa Rica and Belize
 - Governance and CBNRM in Southern Africa
 - Adoption of agricultural practices resilient to climate change with CIAT, Colombia
 - Integrating gender considerations to ensure equitable access to climate services in Tanzania

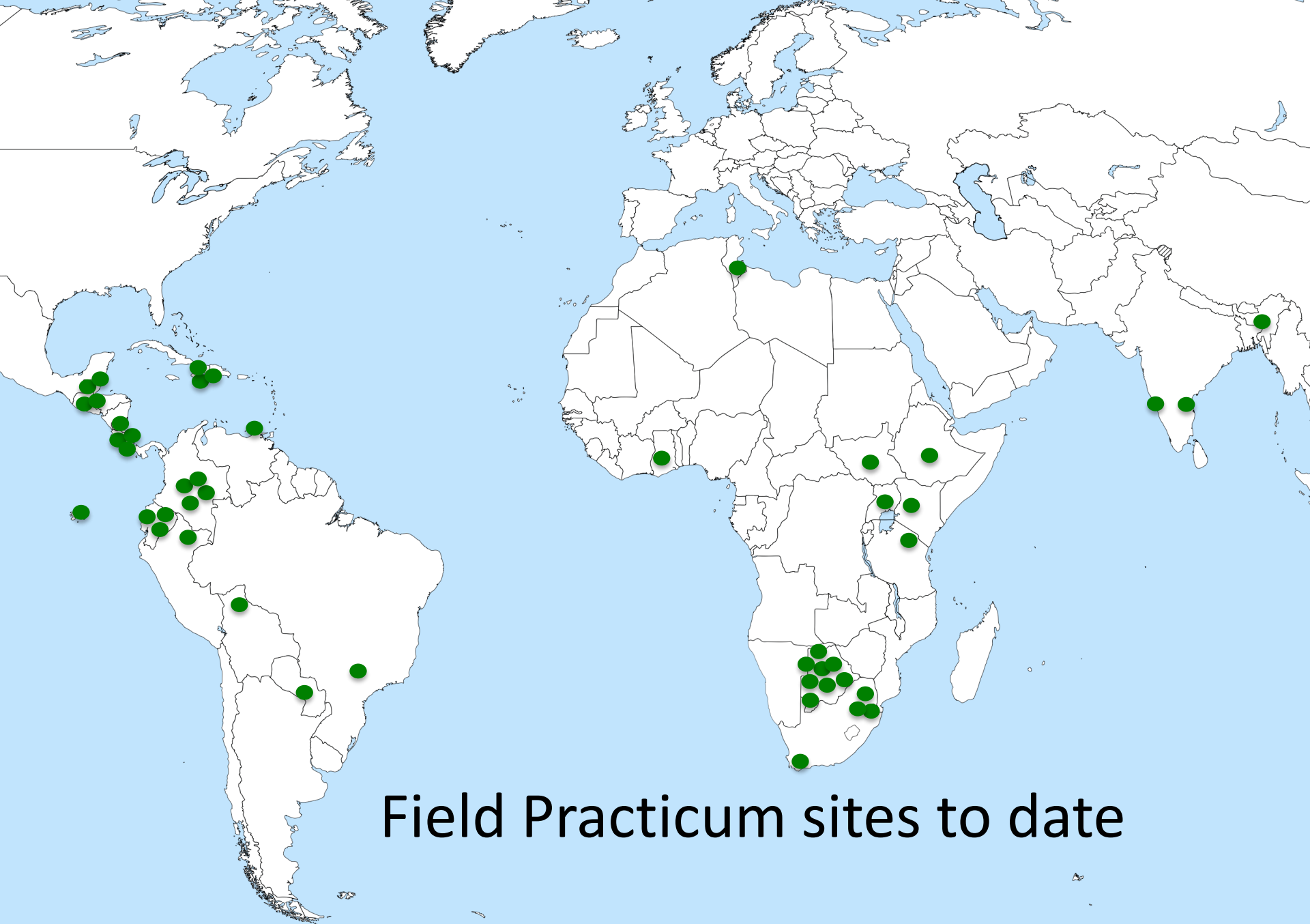
All students benefit from faculty guidance

Products generated by the FP

- Students have the responsibility to deliver a preliminary report, prior to returning to UF
- Students must prepare agreed upon deliverables
- Poster for annual poster session: found on website
- FP Final Report for final defense
(also provided to host organization)

Most placed on the UF
Institutional Repository





Field Practicum sites to date

Examples of field practicum projects

- Integration of environmental stewardship into health outreach - Peru
- Analysis of human health risks associated with the use of treated wastewater - Tunisia
- Measures to reduce human trafficking - India
- Participatory monitoring to reduce water contamination in a rural community - Namibia
- Generation of baseline data and a needs assessment for the development of an outreach plan for a hospital - Uganda

Other examples of FP projects

- Community-based conservation and development assessment to identify opportunities to enhance livelihoods in indigenous communities based on their priorities and interests – Costa Rica
- Evaluation of sanitation behavior change in sustainable livelihood groups, with the aim of developing a monitoring and evaluation system - Ethiopia
- Assessment of water, sanitation, and hygiene needs at schools and orphanages - Haiti
- Evaluation of reforestation programming in regards to efficiency, impact and sustainability - Haiti



**MDP Students
during their
FP**



Challenges associated with the FP

- Linking students with good field practicum opportunities
 - That meet their regional – thematic interests
- Ensuring informed host organization involvement
 - At the appropriate level
- Keeping FP on track
- Instilling in students an understanding of the need for flexibility
- Cultural interactions between students & their counterparts – supervisors
 - Language challenges
- Health and security considerations
- Financial resources – advisors not always able to visit student

Overall status of the MDP Program

- 4 cohorts / 38 students have graduated with MDP Degree, examples of employment:
 - Water is Life International , Ethiopia
 - Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania
 - Runa Foundation, Peru
 - Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Guatemala
 - Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Indonesia
 - Echoing Green, New York City
 - Danish Refugee Council, Lebanon
- Cohort 5: conducted Field Practicum this past summer
- Cohort 6: 15 students from 8 countries, now beginning first year

<http://mdp.africa.ufl.edu/>

**Thank
you**

