

Career Opportunities in International Development

The goal of international development is to alleviate poverty among the citizens of developing countries. Strategies for improvement include investment in the economic, political and social arenas. Economic development ranges from the creation of sound macro-economic and fiscal policy to the fostering of small- medium enterprise to the introduction or expansion of microfinance. It also involves identifying and creating the necessary infrastructure, energy, transportation, and sanitation for economic growth. Political development focuses on the creation and fostering of good governance, including transparent financial systems, an independent judiciary and the active participation of civil society. Social development focuses on the improvement of health, education and the social safety net. Each of the areas is interrelated and interdependent. International development is literally a global topic and professionally a highly multidisciplinary field.

Career Paths and Entry Salaries

College graduates who are interested in exploring the field may seek entry-level positions in a NGO with a development mission or in a development consulting firm. Such a position will likely involve administrative support (backstopping) in the US headquarters. Opportunities for international travel and experience are likely to be very limited. Graduates with a strong commitment to a career in development are well-advised to consider enrolling in the Peace Corps or to seek other extensive overseas experience in a developing country for at least two years before entering graduate school. International experience will provide context for graduate study and for discussion with prospective employers upon graduation. Candidates with a master's degree may consider employment in government agencies of their home country, multilateral donor organizations, or with the implementing partners in the non-profit and private sectors. Foundations and policy institutes that conduct research and advocacy to influence development policy are also potential employers. The field is characterized by fluidity and high travel demands. A significant proportion of development professionals will work in at least two of the three sectors, public, private and not-for-profit over the course of their careers. Many professionals travel as much as forty percent of the time.

Candidates with a master's degree will enter US government service at GS 9, through the PMI or Foreign Service. Agencies may offer a salary of GS 10 or 11 to direct hires with considerable previous experience. Median salaries at intergovernmental organizations fall in the low \$50s, at NGOs in the mid-\$40s, and at development consulting firms in the low \$60s.

Qualifications Necessary to Enter the Field

A graduate degree is essential to pursue a career in international development. A master's program with a strong applied curriculum is valuable. Sound training in economics and public administration, including policy monitoring and evaluation may be broadly applied. Also given the interdisciplinary nature of the field, joint degrees or consecutive training in related disciplines, (i.e. law and economics or health and economic) are strong credentials. An MBA may be applied in development of the private sector, banking and finance.

In addition to graduate training, employers seek fluency in at least two languages. As mentioned above, experience in one or more developing countries is important. Graduate students are advised to expand their international experience during the summer between

the first and second year of their program through an internship. UN agencies, multi-lateral development banks, government agencies and NGOs all offer such opportunities.

Sample Group of Employers

Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs):

- African Development Bank, www.afdb.org
- Asian Development Bank, www.adb.org
- Inter-American Development Bank, www.iadb.org
- International Finance Corporation, www.ifc.org
- International Monetary Fund, www.imf.org
- The World Bank, worldbank.org
- United Nations, www.un.org
- United Nations Development Programme, www.undp.org
- UNICEF, www.unicef.org
- World Food Programme, www.wfp.org
- Federal Reserve–New York, www.ny.frb.org
- Department of Energy, www.doe.gov
- Department of State, www.state.gov
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID) www.usaid.gov
- US Treasury, International Division, <http://www.treasury.gov/about/organizational-structure/offices/Pages/Office-Of-International-Affairs.aspx>

Development Consulting Firms:

- Abt Associates Inc., www.abtassociates.com
- Chemonics, www.chemonics.com
- Development Alternatives Inc., www.dai.com
- Environmental Resources Management, www.erm.com
- John Snow International Inc., www.jsi.com
- Nathan Associates, www.nathaninc.com
- Research Triangle Institute (RTI), www.rti.com
- The Pragma Corporation, www.pragmacorp.com

Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs):

- Accion International, accion.org
- Ashoka, ashoka.org
- Asia Foundation, www.asiafoundation.org
- CARE USA, careusa.org
- Catholic Relief Services, www.crs.org
- International Foundation for Election Systems, www.ifes.org
- Management Sciences for Health, www.msh.org
- National Democratic Institute, ndi.org
- Oxfam America, www.oxfamamerica.org
- Pact, www.pact.org
- Partners of the Americas, www.partners.net/
- Population Services International, www.psi.org
- Save the Children, www.savethechildren.org/
- Winrock International, www.winrock.org/
- World Learning, worldlearning.org

- World Wildlife Fund, www.wwf.org

Foundations, Policy Institutes:

- Bank Information Center, www.bicusa.org/
- Brookings, www.brookings.org/
- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, www.ceip.org
- Center for Strategic and International Studies, www.csis.org
- Earthwatch, earthwatch.org
- Environmental Defense, www.edf.org
- Ford Foundation, www.fordfound.org
- Heritage Foundation, www.heritage.org/
- Rockefeller Foundation, <http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/>
- Worldwatch Institute, worldwatch.org

Demand

As more than one billion people live on less than \$1 a day, the imperative to address global poverty is ever present. Opportunities for careers in development are extensive in all sectors. However, competition for positions in the leading IGOs is fierce, as these organizations seek and recruit qualified candidates world-wide. Selection may require choosing one among several hundred qualified applicants and commonly takes 6-9 months to complete. Overwhelmingly, new graduates seek and find positions in national government or with private and non-profit employers.

Future Challenges to the Profession

The flow of funds to development is governed principally by the priorities of governments in industrialized societies and the willingness to fund these priorities. For instance, the current US administration has announced the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), through which it has pledged to increase development assistance by \$5 billion per year between 2002 and 2006. Any actual increased US development spending will be within the parameters of the Millennium Challenge Account, which has strong emphasis on governance and accountability. Implementation of the MCA is likely to put a premium on expertise in technical assistance in these areas. Among NGOs in industrialized countries, there continue to be a significant shift in emphasis from direct delivery of services in the field to capacity building and sustainability through collaboration with local implementing partners in developing countries.

Resources For More Information

Associations/Websites

- Association of Women in Development, www.awid.org
- Interaction, the American Council for Voluntary International Action, www.interaction.org
- Society for International Development, www.sidnt.org
- Women's Environmental Development Organization, www.wedo.org
- Working in International Development, www.sussex.ac.uk/cdec/career_path.php?carpath=15&carsection=4

Directories/Publications

- Careers in International Affairs, 7th edition, Editors: Maria Pinto Carland, Lisa A. Gihring, Georgetown University Press (2003)
- Interaction Member Profiles 2002-03, 8th edition, Editors: Shanta M. Bryant and Marie Campos, Interaction (2002)
- International Jobs, Where They Are and How To Get Them, Eric Kocher and Nina Segal, Perseus (1999)
- Monday Developments, Interaction's bi-weekly newsletter on international humanitarian developments, issues and trends
- State of the World 2002, A Worldwatch Institute report on Progress Toward a Sustainable Society, Editors: Lester Brown, Christopher Flavin and Hilary French, WW Norton & Co (2002)
- World Development Report 2003, Sustainable Development in a Dynamic World, a compilation of the World Bank and OUP (2003)

Internet Resources

- IADB Listings - www.iadb.org/etica/red/dirvoluntariado.cfm - The Inter-American Development Bank listing of 1500 volunteer organizations in Latin American, containing contact information and description of work.
- ASPA - www.aspanet.org/ - The American Society for Public Administration lists public administration jobs and internships in the public, non-profit and private sectors searchable by state.
- Avue Central - www.avuecentral.com - Avue Central is a federal employment service to find and apply for federal jobs and internships.
- AWID - www.awid.org/jobs - The Association for Women's Rights in Development is an international organization committed to achieving gender equality, sustainable development and women's human rights. The website features job listings around the world in these fields.
- Directory of Development Orgs - www.devdir.org/ - Online directory of development organizations which contains over 47,500 listings by country and is a reference for development practitioners, researchers, donor employees, and policymakers.
- Development Net - www.devnetjobs.org - DevNetJobs.org is a gateway to job listings in international development, environment, information technology for development, relief and reconstruction, and consultancy assignments.
- FPA - www.fpa.org/jobs_contact2423/jobs_contact.htm - The Foreign Policy Association provides job and internship listings on its website and in a weekly email newsletter from industries such as development, health, environment, education, humanitarian relief and more.
- Idealist - www.idealists.org - Idealist.org is a project of Action without Borders and contains job and internship listings in economic development, social services, human rights, environment and more. Users can search for jobs by country, state and city.

- InterAction - www.interaction.org - InterAction is an alliance of international development and humanitarian nongovernmental organizations.
- ICEW - www.internationaljobs.org - International Career Employment Weekly identifies international development jobs and internships in all sectors of the market around the world.
- The Microfinance Gateway - www.microfinancegateway.org Source of information and global jobs and internships in microfinance
- www.nonprofitjobs.org - Nonprofitjobs.org is run by the Community Career Center, an on-line gathering place for non-profit employers and management personnel; the site allows users to search for non-profit jobs and internships regionally in the US and internationally.
- OneWorld - www.oneworld.net - OneWorld International Foundation offers job and internship listings at non-profit and international organizations dedicated to harnessing the democratic potential of the Internet to promote human rights and sustainable development.
- Philanthropy Jobs - www.philanthropy.com/jobs Lists US based non-profit jobs in fields such as economic development, education, healthcare and social services.
- US Dept Of State - www.state.gov - Website for the US Department of State lists the categories of State department employees and how to apply for these positions.
- USAID - www.usaid.gov - features a list of vacancies and internships at the organization.