INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CAREERS

Addressing international development issues is a long term undertaking requiring multidisciplinary approaches as well as individuals with a wide range of skills. Learning “what works” has been a decades-long iterative process, with each new effort adjusting and building on the lessons of the past.

Recent years have brought some impressive innovations and as well as new and difficult challenges. Political instability, civil strife, institutional fragility, record breaking numbers of political and economic refugees as well as cross border threats posed by disease, crime and terrorism pose greater challenges than ever. Though a “silver bullet” has yet to be found, use of new technologies and approaches in communications, health, agriculture, education, business and economic management as well as the demand for more solid evidence of impact and development of more rigorous research methodologies characterize the context in which today’s development practitioners work.

Two additional considerations are also important: the capacity of developing countries to address development challenges has vastly improved. This means less need for capacity from external sources which generates more job competition in today’s development field. In addition, the emphasis on “partnerships” is increasing among different types of organizations. As a result, you should be open to jobs in for-profit corporations rather than just non-profits or government agencies. Furthermore, your value to any employer will increase as you intentionally gain experience in more than one type of organization during the course of your career.

Below are some questions to consider as you navigate through careers opportunities and choices:

- What type of organization would you like to work for?
- What type of skills should you develop to work in certain types of jobs?
- Do you want to be a specialist or a generalist?
- What will be your area of focus or specialization?
- Do you prefer to work in “operations,” “analysis,” or a “support” function?
- Do you prefer to work in headquarters or the field?
- Do you prefer to lead/follow, operate collaboratively, or work on your own?
- Are you comfortable with ambiguity or situations where information is scarce?
- What is your tolerance for risk?
- Would you be content working in a resource-short environment and “making do”?
- Do you like to ‘juggle” many tasks or do one thing at a time?
- Do you work well in high-pressure, unpredictable environments?
- Can you deal effectively with people of diverse backgrounds/conflicting interests?

This guide is designed to help you answer some of these questions. It provides information on the main organization types, potential employment areas, specializations, and skill sets that exist in the international development sector today. While this list is not exhaustive, it should allow you to begin to navigate your own interests and goals in an international development career.
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<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil Society</td>
<td>Oxfam, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Save the Children, CARE,</td>
<td>Also known as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Non-Profits, and Not-for-Profits. Civil society is an umbrella term for an extremely diverse group, including charities, religious and private foundations, and cooperatives. There are both international and indigenous domestic civil society groups. Their activities are funded either by private donations or by public funds from bilateral or multilateral agencies (see below).</td>
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<td>International Rescue Committee, World Vision, Catholic Relief Services,</td>
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<td>Mercy Corps, Accion, Agha Khan Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>Abt Associates, Chemonics, DAI, Inc., Booz-Allen Hamilton, Management</td>
<td>This is a term that describes any privately owned group or person involved in profitable activities. This is a large and diverse group and distinct from the other categories as organizations within the private sector are all for-profit. These companies provide consultants on virtually all aspects of development, from agriculture and education to engineering and logistics. The funding for this work usually comes from either bilateral or multilateral agencies (see below). In addition some companies “do development” through their own Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Offices.</td>
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<td>Services International, Proctor and Gamble, Tetra Tech</td>
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<td>Research Institutions</td>
<td>Brookings Institute, Center for Global Development, Urban Institute,</td>
<td>Defined as any group involved in analytical research and/or investigative study for scientific or educational purposes. They may be privately owned or funded by the state or private donations.</td>
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<td>Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL)</td>
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<td>National government</td>
<td>United States of Agency for International Development (USAID),</td>
<td>These are taxpayer funded national government agencies that support mutually agreed upon development programs and projects in developing countries. Their activities are built to respond to BOTH the altruistic goals of economic and social development in</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;bilateral&quot; Organizations</td>
<td>Millennium Challenge, Corporation, Department for International</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Development UK (DFID), Swedish</td>
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International Development agency (SIDA) | A general and their own country’s national interest—e.g., national security, economic and trade objectives. These agencies may implement their own programs, or may arrange with non-profit, for-profit, or multilateral organizations to implement the activities.

| Multilateral Organizations | Agencies of the United Nations Development System, including the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), UNICEF (UN Children’s Fund), UNFPA (UN Population Fund), Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Food Program (WFP), the International Financial Institutions including the World Bank Group, and the regional development banks such as the Inter-American Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank | Super-national bodies—these agencies are tax payer funded and governed by member nation states which collectively establish the agencies’ policies and program guidelines, where the agencies work, and what they do. In some agencies like the World Bank, decision making power depends on the size of a nation’s contribution. Member states providing the most funds have the greater say regarding programs and policies. In other agencies like the UNDP or the World Food Program, every country’s vote has equal weight in decisions. Sometimes the multilaterals are perceived s being more “neutral” than the bilateral donors.

**POTENTIAL EMPLOYMENT AREAS:**
These are the employment roles that exist in international development.

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<td>Advising/Consulting</td>
<td>Usually a part of most projects/programs, and often provided by consultants with specific expertise at certain stages of the policy, project/program cycle. This could include several of the employment areas listed below such as appraisal and design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and impact evaluation. The projects/programs could be individual projects or long-term development programs. The advice is provided to international development organizations, to governments and organizations in developing countries, or both. This advice could cover many topics such as budgeting, fundraising, and</td>
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implementation strategies as well as technical expertise in agriculture, health, regional/cultural considerations, etc.

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<tr>
<th>Impact evaluation</th>
<th>The analysis of programs/projects to identify effects/effectiveness. These could be individual projects or long-term development programs.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>Gathering and organizing resources for international development organizations. This includes tracking and responding to calls for proposals, organizing events and also networking and interfacing with stakeholders and donor agencies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>The management of financial resources for an international development organization. This could be planning for individual projects or budgeting for organizations as a whole. This is often a “back office” function that takes place mostly in headquarters.</td>
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<td>Awareness and advocacy</td>
<td>Lobbying on a range of issues affecting developing countries from human rights to environmental and climate change concerns. This includes interacting with local and national governments and stakeholders as well as community leaders and advocates.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program implementation</td>
<td>Management of international development projects and/or programs in the field. This includes interfacing with local stakeholders and authorities, implementing budgets and plans. Also may include training organizations and individuals in order to improve their knowledge and skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disaster preparedness and response</td>
<td>Assisting national and local governments increase their preparedness and resilience in the face of a disaster. The first on the ground when disaster strikes. This includes maintaining ties with local leaders/responders and diplomatic stakeholders.</td>
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**SPECIALIZATIONS:**

These are the main areas in which international development resources are focused. It is important to note, however, that a career in international development need not focus on one technical specialization specifically, but can incorporate multiple areas of interest. Some “overarching specialties” may be more appealing to those with broad interests, e.g., project management or evaluation. This is especially true for jobs which look more comprehensively at international development activities or at the development of the sector itself.

- Good governance
- Humanitarian assistance (Disaster/emergency relief)
- Water and sanitation
- Health
- Education
- Environment
- Human rights/advocacy
- Livelihoods
- Finance
- Research and analysis
SKILL SETS:
These are the main skills needed for a career in international development. The “CORE” skills are those that are most prevalent and useful in the sector. The “ADD-ONS” and “TECHNICAL EXPERTISE” skills are those that focus more intently on each individual and can begin to define a unique career in the sector. Relevant George Washington University (GWU) course numbers and titles have been added to each skill. Note that this is not a comprehensive list and that other courses more relevant to your interests may be available. It is always a good idea to speak with your faculty advisor for further advice.

CORE:

- Survey/ qualitative research
  - EDUC 8122: Qualitative Research Methods
  - PSYC 8258: Qualitative Research and Analysis
  - PUBH 6533: Design of Community Health Surveys
  - SOC 6230: Sociological Research Methods
  - SOC 6232: Qualitative Methodology

- Econometrics/ statistics
  - PPRA 6002: Research Methods and Applied Statistics
  - PPRA 6013: Econometrics—Policy Research I
  - PPRA 6022: Econometrics—Policy Research II
  - DNSC 6212: Optimization Methods and Applications
  - DNSC 6251: Optimization Models for Decision Making
  - DNSC 6274: Statistical Modeling and Analysis
  - DNSC 6275: Advanced Statistical Modeling and Analysis
  - DNSC 6276: Exploratory and Multivariate Data Analysis
  - IAFF 6502: (Topics)

- Budgeting/ financial management
  - PPRA 6005: Public Budgeting, Revenue, and Expenditure Analysis
  - PPRA 6015: Benefit-Cost Analysis
  - PPRA 6032: Managing Fund Raising and Philanthropy
  - PPRA 6048: Financing State and Local Government
  - PPRA 6053: Financial Management for Public and Nonprofit Organizations
  - PPRA 6054: Issues in Federal Budgeting
  - DNSC 6250: Project Management Finance
  - DNSC 6257: Cost Estimation and Control
  - IAFF 6502: (Topics)

- Planning/ project and research design and implementation
  - PPRA 6006: Policy Analysis
  - PPRA 6011: Introduction to Public Policy
  - PPRA 6016: Public and Nonprofit Program Evaluation
  - PPRA 6059: International Development Management Processes and Tools
  - DNSC 6267: Planning and Scheduling
  - IAFF 6122: Development Policy and Practice
  - IAFF 6502: (Topics)

- Project/ organizational management
- **PPPA 6004**: Leadership in Public Administration and Public Policy
- **PPPA 6031**: Governing and Managing Nonprofit Organizations
- **PPPA 6057**: International Development Administration
- **PPPA 6058**: International Development NGO Management
- **DNSC 6247**: Organization, Management, and Leadership
- **DNSC 6252**: Risk Analysis for Decision Making
- **DNSC 6258**: Executive Decision Making
- **DNSC 6261**: Introduction to Project and Program Management
- **BADM 3101**: Human Resource Management
- **MGT 6210**: Leading Teams
- **IAFF 6503**: (Topics)

**ADD-ONS:**
- **Development/ Micro economics**
  - **ECON 6250**: Survey of Economic Development
  - **ECON 8301**: Microeconomic Theory I
  - **ECON 8302**: Microeconomic Theory II
  - **ECON 8303**: Microeconomic Theory III
  - **ECON 8351**: Development Economics I
  - **ECON 8352**: Development Economics II

**ADD-ONS:**
- **Diplomacy/ conflict resolution**
  - **IAFF 6138**: (Topics)
  - **IAFF 6171**: Introduction to Conflict Resolution
  - **IAFF 6186**: (Topics)
  - **MGT 6215**: Conflict Management and Negotiations
  - **SMPA 3350**: Public Diplomacy

**ADD-ONS:**
- **Writing/ communication**
  - **PPPA 6001**: Introduction to Public Service (Writing Lab)
  - **PPPA 6009**: MPA Capstone
  - **PPPA 6019**: MPP Capstone
  - **PPPA 6077**: (Topics)
  - **IAFF 6502**: (Topics)

**ADD-ONS:**
- **Public speaking/ classroom teaching**
  - **IAFF 6502**: (Topics)

**ADD-ONS:**
- **International/ Macro economics**
  - **ECON 6280**: Survey of International Economics
  - **ECON 6283**: Survey of International Trade Theory and Policy
  - **ECON 8381**: International Trade Theory

**TECHNICAL EXPERTISE:**
- **Computer science/ Information Technology**
  - **CSCI 6011**: Introduction to Computer Systems
  - **CSCI 6212**: Design and Analysis of Algorithms
  - **DNSC 6279**: Data Mining
- **Communications**
IAFF 6142: Technology Creation/Diffusion
IAFF 6158: (Topics)
- Engineering
- Medicine
- Health Sciences
  - IAFF 6342: Drug Trafficking in the Americas
- Geographic Information Systems
  - GEOG 6250: Geographical Perspectives on Development
  - GEOG 6304: Geographical Information Systems I
  - GEOG 6305: Geospatial Statistics
  - GEOG 6306: Geographical Information Systems II
  - GEOG 6307: Digital Image Processing
- Business
- Law
- Linguistics

Sources: