

**School of International and Public Affairs
Columbia University
Office of Career Services**

**CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Description of the Field

The field of international economic and social development focuses on overseas development assistance, providing capital, training and technical assistance to governments, small businesses and cooperatives, communities, voluntary and self-help groups and individuals to support economic growth and improved social and personal living standards. This definition excludes political development and analysis, human rights activism and large-scale commercial activity. Typical descriptors include resource development, production of infrastructure (e.g. wells, roads), capital and program lending, micro-intensive development and human development and education in such forms as schools, trade workshops or health and nutrition classes for mothers. The work is carried out through technical and financial assistance programs and projects by technical and management experts and field workers on-site with technical, analytical and managerial backstopping in national, regional and/or central offices.

There is also a growing field in development education that focuses on educating citizens of the developed countries about the developing world and relations between the two.

Typical Entry Level Positions and Salaries

For the graduate with experience working overseas (on a paid or volunteer basis) and/or technical skills in fields such as computers, environmental analysis, farming, grant writing, lending, nursing, or teaching, a starting position might be as assistant program officer or program evaluator in the home office, or assistant project director or consultant in the field.

For the graduate with weak technical skills and little or no professional and/or overseas experience, a starting position is likely to be as research assistant or placement coordinator in the home office or as a volunteer supporting professionals in the field. It might also be possible to work as a local hire. These positions are essentially apprenticeships.

Qualifications Necessary to Enter the Field

A Masters degree is usually required, as is some overseas experience and/or relevant skills. A more applied focus within the masters program or a joint degree emphasizing finance, environment, health, agriculture or economics would be beneficial. Many organizations look for people with experience in development work (2+ years) and recommend starting in the Peace Corps or a similar volunteer agency to gain this experience. Command of a second language is a plus. Government organizations generally hire only their own nationals.

Sample Group of Employers

Employers in development can be divided into several general, though overlapping, categories:

Government

- Multilateral governmental agencies
- Those offering technical assistance: UNESCO, WHO, FAO, ILO
- Operating agencies: UNICEF, UNHCR, UNDP
- Development Banks: World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, African and Asian Development Banks (typically hiring researchers for analysis and evaluation of projects and multinational managerial and technical personnel for implementation).

Bilateral or national governmental agencies

- USAID in the United States, and its counterparts in other nations, such as the Swedish or Canadian International Development Agency
- Development Foundations, funded by a government to focus on non-governmental activities: Inter-American Foundation.
- Peace Corps and its equivalents in other nations.

Non-Governmental Agencies

Private Voluntary Organizations cover the spectrum from religious to secular, and from general community development and humanitarian relief to those specialized in areas including technology, health, and participant training:

Appropriate Technology	International Executive Service Corps	Partners for the Americas
CARE	International Relief Services	Planned Parenthood
Catholic Relief Services	International Voluntary Services	Project Concern International
Food First	Mennonite Central Committee	Save the Children
FosterParents	National Wildlife Federation	Technoserve
Heifer Project International	Oxfam	Women's World Banking

Consulting Firms that provide technical and management expertise and training for the larger projects funded by multilateral and national agencies:

ABT Associates	Bechtel
Academy for Educational Development	Chemonics
Arthur Andersen	Devers
Arthur D. Little	Management Sciences for Health
Associates in Rural Development	Price Waterhouse

Some universities also consult on development projects: for example, the Consortium for International Development. Other Institutions focus, in part, on development. These include research institutions such as the Brookings Institution, foundations such as Ford and Rockefeller, and organizations such as the Council on Foreign Affairs and the Institute for Public Administration.

Future Challenges of the Profession

Maintaining political support for funding international development assistance is a continuing challenge. Growing global interdependence demands a shift from technical assistance toward a more collaborative setting in which goals are longer-term. This may lead to fewer jobs for First World and more for Third World professionals.

To Obtain More Information

Alternatives to the Peace Corps, (Food First Books, 145 Ninth Street, San Francisco, CA 94103. Tel: 415-864-8555) offers guides to voluntary service organizations, technical service programs, work brigades, etc.

"Community Jobs" is a clearinghouse of social change opportunities in the US and abroad which can be ordered by writing 1601 Connecticut Avenue, NW, 6th Floor, Washington, DC 20009. Tel: 202-667-0661.

The Development Directory: A Guide to the International Development Community in the United States and Canada (Omnigraphics, Detroit).

International Jobs Bulletin is a weekly publication of international vacancies in all levels and can be ordered through University Placement Center, Woody Hall B-208, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901. Tel: (618) 453-2391.

Internet Profiles of International Development Contractors and Grantees (Network for International Technical Assistance, Inc., Chapel Hill).

Monday Developments lists international employment opportunities as well as seminars, conferences, meetings and workshops concerned with international development issues and is published by InterAction, 1815 H Street, NW, Suite 1100, Dept. MD, Washington, DC 20006.

Oxfam America (115 Broadway, Boston, MA 02116) will provide a useful "International Careers Bibliography" which lists many more sources of information.

***For more information, visit: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/sipa/OCS/Resources/LINKS/idlinks.html>.**