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# TOOL BOOK

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# LANDING A JOB IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

# Tool Book

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# **Development Jobs: What You Need to Know**

By Devex Editor, Rolf Rosenkranz February 04 2010



Considering a career in international development? The following tips, gleaned from communications with Devex's network of more than 250,000 international development professionals from around the world, may help you get started.

#### Understand the types of positions available

Professionals often will speak of their interest in an international development career. But what they envision is often vague and doesn't fit with the types of positions available. It's an oversimplification, but there are essentially three types of jobs in international development. If you understand what each entails, it will be easier for you to position yourself for a job or assignment.

#### Technical expert

This is what many professionals think of when they envision an international development career. A technical expert is someone with a high level of expertise in a particular field such as infrastructure, irrigation, water and sanitation, public health, food distribution and assessment, judicial reform.



These positions are generally attached to specific projects funded by governmental donor agencies including the World Bank, U.S. Agency for International Development, and U.K.'s Department for International Development. These agencies normally have tight restrictions on the qualifications for technical experts. It is not uncommon for requirements to include many years of professional experience and an advanced degree, plus particular foreign language skills and substantial in-country experience.

If this is the type of position you are seeking, it's important that you have sufficient technical expertise in a particular field or fields. If not, now is the time to build your qualifications toward positions of this kind. In addition, technical experts generally work in the country a project is based in. So, depending on your career level and the sector in which you work, be prepared for long-term assignments (1-3 years) in a particular country or region, and/or frequent short-term assignments to multiple locations. Such work often takes place in post-conflict regions or in areas without the comforts of cosmopolitan cities. Consider whether or not this is really what you want before investing your time and energy in this career path.

The image of humanitarian relief workers doling out food and medicines in refugee camps is, in many ways, an incomplete picture. Many international relief agencies send abroad mostly technical experts with substantial field experience and specific skills. Less skilled work can often be better managed with local talent. Thus, even those with a strong interest in assisting humanitarian relief efforts around the world should consider the importance of bringing technical expertise to bear in a field where it is needed, such as health care, energy production, water and sanitation or logistics.

#### Project manager

If you want to work on international development projects but don't envision yourself spending so much time in the field or you do not qualify as a technical expert, consider a position in project management. These jobs typically are located either at field sites or local country offices of development consulting firms or non-governmental organizations.

A project management position entails all aspects of coordinating development projects, including the managing a -national and expatriate -staff and the meeting project objectives. Administrative functions may involve basic duties (expense reports, invoicing, and paperwork of all kinds) and, depending on seniority level, it can include project direction, technical advice, coordination with donor agency and local government officials, and the publication of project reports.

A project management position is often the first stop for young professionals interested in an international development career. With successful performance and the right projects portfolio, some short-term travel is often possible, and this can provide the experience needed, over time, for a position as a technical expert.

#### Researcher

If you are less interested in the operational activities of development projects, but rather in the underlying issues and policies that relate to global poverty, consider a position as researcher. These positions typically exist at think-tanks, nonprofit institutions (often those that are more engaged in advocacy than in implementing projects), and development agencies such as the Canadian International Development Agency or the Denmark's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As with other positions, there is a spectrum of opportunities, from research assistant positions for recent graduates to more senior positions that often require a post-doctorate or other graduate degree. These positions are often based in the capital cities of the world's richest countries, but many researchers engage in field research and thus make short-term visits to developing countries in the course of their research.



These three broad categories, taken together, account for most entry-, mid-, and senior-level, if not executive-level positions. But there are some other types of positions worth noting. Firms and NGOs that receive funding from development agencies such as the Asian Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank or Germany's Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit need to maintain close relationships with these agencies and produce proposals to receive funding. As a result, there are typically positions that entail proposal writing and business development at many development consulting firms and NGOs.

In addition, the provision of technical experts for projects around the world is an enormous challenge -matching the right expert to the right project is no small task -and there are many positions available for international development recruiters. These positions often require knowledge of how specific development agencies work, as, for example, USAID and EuropeAid may have very different rules and regulations to comply with when it comes to recruiting technical experts.

There are many positions that blend various aspects of these job types, but a clear understanding of each and how you can contribute to these types of positions will be enormously helpful as you position your career in international development.

#### Promote your skills

It is common among international development professionals to have multiple resumes. Each version highlights and emphasizes a different core skill area to best position you for the wide range of positions available.

As you seek to promote your skills, consider the many job opportunities available by carefully searching job listings on www.devex.com and other Web sites. Select only those positions for which you are truly qualified, and create multiple versions of your resume that directly address specific positions. A general resume is much less likely to be successful, particularly if you are seeking a position as technical expert.

Our is a rapidly changing industry and there are new areas of prominence and focus each year. To be best positioned to promote your skills, it is critical that you remain aware of the latest sectors of prominence, funding trends, and activities of the world's leading NGOs and companies.

#### **Networking still matters**

Even in an age of online job postings and resume databases, networking makes an enormous difference. In-person meetings help enormously to build relationships with a wide array of international development professionals. To facilitate these kinds of connections, Devex, for instance, provides an online networking directory international development professionals may use to connect with colleagues, find old friends, and introduce themselves to professionals working at donor agencies, NGOs and in the private sector.

Wherever you live in the world, make an effort to get to know donor agency officials, academics as well as NGO and private sector representatives working in international development research. The personal connections you develop can be enormously helpful in navigating the complex and ever-changing and growing international development industry.



# **Terms and Acronyms**

**ADB**- Asian Development Bank

AfDB- African Development Bank

**AusAID**- Australian Agency for International Development

**Biodata/ 1420 form-** A common salary history form required by USAID contractors to justify salary levels

**COP**- Chief of Party (the Team Leader of a USAID funded program)

**CIDA**- Canadian International Development Agency

**Contract**- A procurement usually for a specific project or service for either non-profit or for-profit organizations. A contract has much more oversight and regulations than a grant or cooperative agreement and does allow for a profit to be made.

**Cooperative Agreement**- Similar to a grant, with the distinguishing factor between a grant and a cooperative agreement being the degree of Federal participation or involvement during the performance of the work activities.

**CSR**- Corporate Social Responsibility

**CV-** Curriculum Vitae- the commonly used resume format for international dev positions. A CV is typically longer and contains more personal details than a resume.

**Danger pay**- Danger Pay is additional compensation above basic compensation for service at designated posts where civil insurrection, terrorism, or war conditions may threaten physical harm or imminent danger to civilian employees.

**DCOP**- Deputy Chief of Party (Deputy Team Lead of a USAID funded program)



**Dfid**- Department for International Development (UK)

**Donor Organization**- An institution that provides funding or financing for an international development project.

EBRD- European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

**Grant**- Funding for a nonprofit organization, usually for a specific project. Grants typically have more flexibility in how the money is spent vs. contracts and there is no profit to be made on the project.

**Implementing Organization-** An organization that implements a project financed by a donor organization in the field.

**IFI**- International Finance Institution like the World Bank or IMF.

**INGO**- international non-governmental organization

**PPP**- Public-private partnership, a growing trend in financing sustainable development projects

P-11- the application form required by all UN agencies to apply to a vacancy



# **Training Programs and Internships**

# **American Red Cross**

www.redcross.org

The American Red Cross offers exceptional undergraduate and graduate college students an engaging nine-week internship at American Red Cross national headquarters in Washington, D.C. through the Summer Internship Program. Interns are matched with a specific department at national headquarters and they have the opportunity to work on advancing critical projects for the respective units, receive professional development training and meet with members of the Red Cross leadership team.

## **Catholic Relief Services**

www.crs.org

CRS is currently partnering for their internship program with Boston College, Fordham University, Santa Clara University, Seattle University, Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, and Johns Hopkins University - all located in the United States.

Short-term assignments (generally from 10 weeks up to 3 months) might include:

- Conducting research with staff or partner of CRS.
- Undertaking monitoring and evaluation for a specific partner or project.
- Building capacity for CRS staff and partners in an intern's area of expertise.
- Documenting programs, projects, and best practices for the country program.

Long-term assignments (generally from 3 months to 6 months) might include:

- Working directly with a partner and CRS staff to design and develop project proposals.
- Developing specific training programs for CRS staff and its partners.
- Assisting a country program with in-depth analysis on a specific issue.



• Designing CRS presentations.

CRS also offers volunteer opportunities that can be found on their website.

# **Chemonics**

www.chemonics.com

**Entry Level Professionals Program** 

Based in Washington, D.C., entry-level professionals work on a variety of project management tasks that are essential to fulfilling our mission. New employees learn the basics of Chemonic's work, business practices, systems and procedures, and the central functions of their main client, USAID. They build on that knowledge as they grow within the company, helping to create leaders from within.

They hire entry-level professionals for positions that range in scope and perspective. For example, some support projects in the field. Others develop proposals for new business, facilitate training events, or address information technology challenges.

Chemonics frequently hires interns and you can apply to be considered on their website here:

http://www.chemonics.com/career/EntryLevelJobs/InternFileUpload.aspx

# Child Family Health International (CHFI)

www.chfi.org

Service learning in international health for medical, pre-med and nursing students.

#### **FINCA**

www.finca.org

FINCA frequently hires interns to work on micro-lending programs.

# **Leland Fellows (Congressional Hungers Center)**

http://www.hungercenter.org/international/international.cfm



The Mickey Leland International Hunger Fellowship is a unique leadership development opportunity for experienced, motivated individuals seeking to make a difference in the struggle to eliminate hunger and poverty worldwide. This two-year program begins with a one-year field placement in countries throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Fellows are assigned to national and international non-governmental organizations, private sector entities, and bi-lateral and multi-lateral organizations. Fellows spend their second year in a policy environment, usually at the headquarters of the organizations where they served during their field placements. Field and policy assignments, closely coordinated, are designed to be complementary.

# **Lund University**

The two-year master's program in international development and management offered by Sweden's Lund University is free of charge, incorporates field experience, and encourages students from developing countries to apply.

# **Management Systems International**

www.msiworldwide.com

Offers many internship positions in the Washington, DC headquarters.

# **Peace Corps**

www.peacecorps.gov

Peace Corps service is a life-defining leadership experience. Since 1961, the Peace Corps has shared with the world America's most precious resource – its people. Volunteers serve in 77 countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Central and South America, Europe, and the Middle East. Peace Corps Volunteers live, learn, and work with a community overseas for 27 months, providing technical assistance in six program areas: education, youth and community development, health, business and information and communications technology, agriculture, and environment.

#### **UN Foundation**

http://www.unfoundation.org/about-unf/internships/



Semester-long full and part-time internships during the Fall, Spring, and Summer terms for undergraduates, graduate students, and recent graduates. Interns participate in a variety of activities and perform a variety of tasks in support of the department for which they work. The number and nature of internships depends on the needs of the various departments.

# **World Bank**

www.worldbank.org

To be eligible for the Internship, candidates must possess an undergraduate degree and already be enrolled in a full-time graduate study program (pursuing a Master's degree or PhD with plans to return to school in a full-time capacity. Generally, successful candidates have completed their first year of graduate studies or are already into their PhD programs.

This Internship typically seeks candidates in the following fields: economics, finance, human development (public health, education, nutrition, population), social science (anthropology, sociology), agriculture, environment, private sector development, as well as other related fields. Fluency in English is required. Prior relevant work experience, computing skills, as well as knowledge of languages such as French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Portuguese, and Chinese are advantageous.

- Summer (June-September)
   The application period for the Summer is December 1 January 31 each year.
- Winter (December-March)
  The application period for the Winter is September 1 October 31 each year.

Candidates may apply through the World Bank website.

# **United Nations**

The following United Nations Agencies offer internship programs in New York, Washington DC, Geneva and occasionally in field locations around the world. More information and application instructions can be found on the respective websites:



# UN Associations:

WIPO- World Intellectual Property	UNIFEM- United Nations Entity for	
Organization	Gender	
	Equality and the Empowerment of	
FAO- Food and Agriculture	Women	
Organization	,,, sanda	
Organization	<i>UNICEF</i> - United Nations Children's	
IFAD- International Fund for	Fund	
	rund	
Agriculture Development		
	<i>UNODC</i> - United Nations Office on	
<i>ILO</i> - International Labor	Drugs and Crime	
Organization		
	<i>UNFPA</i> - United Nations Population	
<i>IMO</i> - International Maritime	Fund	
Organization		
018	<i>UNAIDS</i> - The joint United Nations	
UNESCO- United Nations	program on HIV/AIDS	
	program on HIV/AIDS	
Education, Scientific and Cultural	TANDITA II '. 1 NI .' D 1' C 1	
Organization	UNRWA- United Nations Relief and	
	Works Agency	
UNCTAD- United Nations		
Conference on Trade and	<i>UNDP</i> - United Nations Development	
Development	Program	
_		
ITC- International Trade Centre	UNEP- United Nations	
	Environmental Program	





# International Development CVs and Resumes: What You Need to Know

By Ryan Weddle, February 4, 2010



Job seekers in international development have several choices when it comes to resume and curriculum vitae formats. But which among them do employers prefer?

Based on interviews with hiring managers and development professionals, the reverse chronological and hybrid resume and CV formats appear to be the most popular. Both highlight the work experiences of applicants, with the most recent position mentioned first.

Jennifer Rose, senior business development manager for the Academy for Educational Development's Global Education Center, told Devex: "I want to know what someone is doing now and has been doing for the past several years. Within that, I want to see skills, capacities and accomplishments. Use numbers. How big was the project? How many people did you manage? What impact did you have?"

Kate Warren, director of global recruitment services at Devex, said most applicants for positions in U.S. Agency for International Development-funded projects use the reverse chronological format.



"USAID would want to see CVs and would not accept functional [skills-based] resumes," Warren said. "Focus on your most recent jobs, titles, and locations. You need to demonstrate that you have all the skills they need, experience working on similar projects, or experience in the same country."

Kabwayi Kabongo, a recruitment specialist with Catholic Relief Services, saidCRS does not require a specific resume type but he prefers a hybrid type of CV. He said this format "is the best way to present a candidate's skills and experience," noting that it is widely used all over the world. He added that he wants to see language skills included at the top of the resume, as well as ability and willingness to travel.

Thoric Cederström, director of private consulting firm Agro-Stability Development, acknowledged using the reverse chronological format. He said he makes sure that the first page will have as much information about his work experiences and skills set, in case recruiters "don't read beyond the first page."

Meanwhile, Bruce Kernan, an environmental consultant living in Quito, Ecuador, who has worked on 40 consulting assignments in 12 countries, has developed a three-part CV format, with the first page summarizing everything about him, the second page detailing his experience in reverse chronological order, and the third and fourth pages indicating his experience by activity type.

# **Resume length**

Warren suggests limiting a resume to three to five pages.

"Beyond five pages [you] will lose the reader," Warren said. "Be aware of certain keywords that show you're right for the job. Typically, these would be words from job descriptions or in the types of jobs you are applying for."

Consultant Scott Harding agrees.

"I have done some research on page length for this [reverse chronological] format and found only a few consulting firms have a three-page limit," Harding told Devex. "But after exchanging e-mails with recruiters at some of these companies, I think it is generally assumed they should not be over four pages long."

Kabongo said CVs for consultants tend to be significantly longer than those for staff positions, and that the content of the CV is much more important than the length.

For staff positions with donor agencies or NGOs, applicants usually just fill in an online application form, which requires them to answer questions before uploading their resumes or CVs. A reverse chronological or hybrid CV is usually a safe bet for such applications.

#### Resume for project-based posts

Some funding institutions such as USAID, the European Union and the World Bank have prescribed resume or CV formats. Warren recommends that applicants to any of these institutions know and follow these formats when drafting their resumes and CVs. In other words, those vying for positions in an organization handling World Bank-funded projects should use the World Bank format, and those who want to work with an organization funded by the EU should follow the EuropeAid format. \_ 15 \_

"If you have it in the right format, it helps them see if you can be a good fit for the projects," says Warren.

Applicants for such positions should always include the titles and funding allocations in U.S. dollars of projects they have been involved in and the names of funders and contractors they have worked for. A USD150 million project has more weight than a USD1 million program, of course.

Organizations competing for donor-funded projects might ask the applicant to add more information after a CV is submitted, or it may rewrite the resume after asking more questions. Remember: The more work recruiters on the proposal team do with the resume, the more likely they will move on to another candidate.

#### 'Sell your experience'

According to Kabongo, consultants typically cite work histories "in a bit of a different way" by listing consultancies before other experiences, education, and so forth.

"The point is to really sell your experience," he said.

Christine Dalpino, recruitment manager with International Relief & Development, said IRD prefers resumes that combine the functional and chronological formats because they focus on the candidate's professional capabilities and accomplishments and allows the organization "to get to the heart of the candidate's experience and true interest."

Dalpino's advice to IRD job applicants: They should look at the job posting and see if they really want the post and are qualified for it. If so, they should tailor their resumes to suit the required skills and experience.

Ultimately, IRD, which receives resumes from all over the world, is looking for the best candidate to fill the position, she added.

"Not everyone is a professional resume writer and we are aware of that and take [that] into consideration when reviewing applicants," she said. "However, the more clear, concise, and geared to the specific position, the more likely you will grab attention."

Still not sure if your CV is in the correct format and will make you stand out? Devex offers a CV writing service for individual professional members. The Devex team can reshape your CV help you get the job you want.



# **Top Employers**

DAI Catholic Relief Services

www.dai.com www.crs.org

Chemonics Booz Allen Hamilton www.chemonics.com www.boozallen.com

CARE Millennium Challenge Corporation

<u>www.care.org</u> <u>www.mcc.gov</u>

Save the Children World Bank

www.savethechildren.org www.worldbank.org

Research Triangle Institute USAID

www.rti.org www.usaid.gov

World Vision UNOPS

<u>www.worldvision.org</u> <u>www.unops.org</u>

The Gates Foundation UNICEF
www.gatesfoundation.org www.unicef.org

International Rescue Committee UNDP

www.irc.org www.undp.org

Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric Aids Asian Development Bank

Foundation <u>www.adb.org</u>

www.pedaids.org

Grant Thornton www.aecom.com

www.grantthornton.com

www.decom.com

Adam Smith International

Land O' Lakes International <u>www.adamsmithinternational.com</u>

**AECOM** 

Development

Louis Berger Group CARANA Corporation



www.Idd.landolakes.com

www.louisberger.com

Abt Associates Crown Agents

<u>www.abtassociates.com</u> <u>www.crownagents.com</u>

Inter-American Development Bank www.iadb.org The Global Fund www.theglobalfund.org

CHF International Cardno Emerging Markets

www.chfinternational.org www.cardno.com/emergingmarkets

www.carana.com

International Medical Corps

www.internationalmedicalcorps.org

African Development Bank

www.afdb.org

Management Sciences for Health www.msh.org AusAID www.ausaid.gov

International Relief and MSI
Development www.msiworldwide.com



www.ird-dc.org

# Career Advice on Devex

Here are just a few of the Devex career advice articles available to members that include practical information about writing your international development CV and cover letter, working with international donors and NGOs, information about finding a job in popular sectors, and interviews with advice from leading recruiters. To learn more about membership and join to gain access to these and 150+ career advice articles, please visit here.

To view an article, just click on the title and log in to access this career advice exclusively for Devex members:

#### **General Career Advice**

<u>Development Jobs: What You Need to Know</u> <u>For Career Switchers: Transferable Skills Are Key</u> How to Ace an International Development Career Fair

<u>Individual Consulting: A Primer</u>
<u>Making Your Devex Profile Count</u>

Writing a Cover Letter: What You Need to Know Writing a Resume: What You Need to Know Salary Negotiation Strategies for Aid Workers

#### **Working With Donors and NGOs**

ADB Jobs: What You Need to Know

Development Banks' Young Professionals Programs: What You Need to Know

DFID Jobs: What You Need to Know

EU Job Applications: What You Need to Know Nonprofit CVs: What You Need to Know

UN Jobs: What You Need to Know

US Foreign Service Career Tracks: What You Need to Know World Bank Job Applications: What You Need to Know

#### **Working in Specific Sectors**

Corporate Social Responsibility Jobs: What You Need to Know

Environmental Jobs: What You Need to Know

Global Health Jobs: What You Need to Know

How to Transition from Private Sector to International Development

Humanitarian Relief Jobs: What You Need to Know

MBA to International Development: Career Transitions for Business Majors

Microfinance Jobs for Beginners

The Ideal Development Engineer: A Character Sketch

Urban Planning Jobs: What You Need to Know



# **Working in Specific Cities**

Largest Global Development Employers in New York City: A Primer

Top Global Development Groups in Washington, DC: A Primer

Top Global Development Employers in London: A Primer

Top Global Development Employers in Geneva: A Primer

Top Global Development Employers in Brussels: A Primer

Top Global Development Employers in Seattle: A Primer

Top Global Development Employers in San Francisco: A Primer

Top Global Development Groups: The Complete Devex List



# **Additional Resources**

# Devex www.devex.com

Most popular website for international development. Includes largest job board, companies and NGOs database, information on projects and tenders, career advice and services and the latest news on what's happening in international development. You can also upload your resume and create a profile to be searchable by 350+ hiring organizations.

# Foreign Policy Association www.fpa.org

Online job board and news on international affairs.

# Society for International Development www.sidw.org

A professional association with chapters all over the world. They hold many events and discussion groups on various development topics

# **InterAction www.interaction.org**

An advocacy group for NGOs working in international development.

# USGLC <u>www.usglc.org</u>

A coalition of international development NGOs and consulting firms to lobby increased funding on the Hill.

# InsideNGO www.insidengo.org

Offers workshops in financial, contractual and human resource management of USAID grants/contracts

# Global Health Council www.globalhealth.org

A membership alliance for global health professionals and organizations

# Center for Global Development www.cgdev.org

Research, blogs, events and news on international development issues



# **Stay Connected**

LinkedIn

http://www.linkedin.com/groups?mostPopular=&gid=3363077

**I** Facebook

www.facebook.com/foreignpolicyassociation

Twitter

www.twitter.com/FPA\_ORG

**FPA Global Job Board** 

www.fpa.org/jobs

**FPA Events** 

www.fpa.org/events

Email **communications@fpa.org** for any questions & to be added onto our mailing list.



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