

DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

In 2010 there were an estimated 925 million hungry people in the world. Maternal mortality rates in some countries exceed 1,000 per 100,000, meaning that at least one mother will die for every 100 births. Why? The causes of poverty are diverse and the solutions are complex and widely debated. Inequalities, control of the world's wealth and resources by a few, the effects of environmental change and natural disasters are some of the underlying factors. Development Studies seeks to understand why inequalities come about and what the implications are for people and the environment. Practical, values-driven and intellectually challenging, Development Studies seeks ways to ameliorate situations and empower communities worldwide.

Inequalities exist in New Zealand, as in other western democracies. For example child poverty rates in New Zealand, while declining, are above the average of other developed countries. Disparities between rich and poor are marked in “developing” countries, where millions of people live at subsistence level with no support from the state. Access to water, food and health care are critical issues. Through the Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations aims for the following: universal education, gender equality, child health, maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, environmental sustainability, global partnership and an end to poverty and hunger. A degree in Development Studies gives students the understanding and skills with which to begin effective work towards achieving these and other critical goals.

WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT STUDIES?

A multidisciplinary subject, Development Studies examines the patterns, practices, policies and theories associated with inequalities in world development. The discipline pays particular attention to the relationships between “developed” and “developing” societies, the roles played by various institutions within them and their effects on processes of social, political, economic and environmental change.

WHY STUDY DEVELOPMENT STUDIES?

People who are concerned about human rights, social and economic inequalities, and who want to make a difference in the world are drawn to Development

Studies. Globally and in New Zealand, there is a need for suitably qualified and skilled people to help redress these imbalances. Domestic and international organisations such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the United Nations and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) need graduates with a good understanding of development policies and practices. Students have the opportunity to direct their degree studies in ways that bring together the knowledge of many different disciplines for positive change in a complex world.

WHAT SKILLS DO DEVELOPMENT STUDIES GRADUATES DEVELOP?

Communication

The ability to communicate verbally and non-verbally with empathy, respect and understanding is honed through degree studies that have people and humanitarian issues as the main focus. Undergraduate study of Development Studies also enhances students' ability to read and write well, to understand and communicate complex ideas and information through written work and oral presentations.

Topical coverage of career related issues brought to you by Victoria University Career Development and Employment.

Areas covered include how degrees and courses relate to employment opportunities, to life/work planning, graduate destination information and current issues or material relevant to the employment scene. Your comments and suggestions always welcomed.

Problem Solving, Critical Thinking and Conceptual Skills

Students become skilled in analysis and problem solving through engagement with key theories and real world problems and examples. Using different conceptual frameworks they think in the abstract, and analyse and interpret the form and content of live and written information. In writing an argument to support their views, students also learn to critically evaluate and edit their own work.

Creativity

The ability to make connections and arrive at insights is part of the creative process of social research. Through assignment and project work students learn to formulate new questions and hypotheses, to come up with innovative methods and apply theory in original ways.

Multidisciplinary Approach

The ability to see the big picture and the connections between the many different aspects of human activity is a skill students develop as they examine local and global issues. Development Studies brings together knowledge from anthropology, sociology, economics, geography, history and many other disciplines. A multidisciplinary approach gives students insights into other fields and experience in combining different knowledge systems, information and perspectives. This ability is vital when addressing complex problems of human societies living in a globally networked world. Graduates also develop potential for working with different people from a range of backgrounds, cultural and societal settings.

Research

Students of Development Studies do extensive research using a variety of approaches. For example they may gather descriptive data through participant observation, interviewing and ethnographic study or conduct surveys. Students may also critique the different approaches to research as well as their own role in the process.

Self-Reflection

The ability to be a reflective practitioner is vital when studying and working closely with people from varied cultures and backgrounds. The skill is useful both professionally in many fields and in one's personal life. Development Studies challenges students to question their assumptions and attitudes and to keep a curious and open mind throughout their studies and working life.

WHERE DO DEVELOPMENT STUDIES GRADUATES WORK?

The field of development and international aid is immense. Many roles are suitable for new graduates. Others require years of experience as well as qualifications.

Careers may include: public sector research and policy analysis; NGO and humanitarian work; advocacy/lobbying; education; development programme planning and/or implementation; managing volunteers; local and international journalism; immigration and refugee services; travel and tourism work; cross-cultural relations consultancy; public relations and communications; urban planning; international development; public health; community work; English language teaching abroad; local government advisory work; social science, environmental and climate change research among others.

Across public and private sectors employment options are diverse and exciting. In development work passion is a pre-requisite and people are motivated largely by their values and principles. From entry-level through to senior positions, the abilities to understand and work with others are essential, along with well-developed communication and thinking skills. Expertise in finance, information technology, human resources, management and administration, science and law is also sought after. A double major or double degree can be very useful.

Public Sector

Government departments, ministries and government agencies employ graduates to entry-level positions such as policy analyst, policy advisor, ministerial writer, communications officer/advisor, researcher and research assistant. Some ministries have graduate development programmes, depending on their recruitment needs and the economic climate. The Ministries of Social Development, Foreign Affairs and Trade and Internal Affairs are large ministries that need graduates with excellent generic skills. Development Studies graduates may work on policy issues concerning access to education, health and welfare. Climate change issues are of interest to Ministries for the Environment, Economic Development, Agriculture and Forestry, which include Fisheries.

The NZ Aid Programme, run by the International Development Group (IDG) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade recruits Development Studies graduates. The mission is to support sustainable development in developing countries in order to reduce poverty and to contribute to a more

secure, equitable and prosperous world. IDG has responsibility for the effective management of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) programme. Depending on a person's background and experience, development specific roles in IDG include Development Support Officer, Development Officer, Development Manager and Principal Development Manager. All of these roles work on aid and development projects and in varying degrees are responsible for managing the effective delivery of financial assistance for development outcomes in developing countries. These may include the following elements: strategy, programme management, technical advice in a specialist area, policy development, sector briefing, activity management, financial and contract management and Ministerial servicing. Progression to higher positions can involve hands on/field experience in the delivery of international aid or development projects (sometimes gained in other organisations) and also combining policy development and strategic planning skills, activity design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation skills. Competencies sought when recruiting include work experience, a relevant tertiary degree such as Development Studies, teamwork, excellent oral and written communication, problem solving, relationship management, research and analysis skills.

Local Government

Local government – councils and regional councils – manage a very wide range of services for the community. Graduates with special interests and humanitarian values may find employment in areas such as: housing, disability, sport and recreation, public health (e.g. homelessness), event management, emergency management, health and safety, community centres, holiday programmes, urban design and planning.

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

NGOs are not-for-profit groups, organised on a local, national or international level. NGOs perform a variety of service and humanitarian functions. They bring citizen concerns to Governments, advocate for and monitor policies and encourage political participation through provision of information. Some are organised around specific issues such as human rights, environment or health. They provide analysis and expertise, serve as early warning mechanisms and help monitor and implement international agreements. NGOs may also have a relationship with the United Nations, a large organisation that employs many people with a development and social science

background. NGOs are diverse. Some such as Red Cross, Oxfam, Amnesty International, Greenpeace, Save the Children and World Vision are connected with international organisations. New Zealand NGOs such as Presbyterian Support Services, Anglican Care, Salvation Army and Barnardos provide services to specific groups in the population - children, elderly and families. They may do research on improving service provision and good practice in relation to their clientele in particular regions. In New Zealand the staff of NGOs is often small. The ability to be versatile is important. Work may involve research, surveys, advocacy, fund raising, giving policy advice to government, designing and/or running programmes and events, communications, publicity and general administration. Other New Zealand NGOs include the Council for International Development, The Peace Foundation, Global Focus, Global Volunteer Network, Volunteering New Zealand, Refugee Services Aotearoa New Zealand, Volunteer Service Abroad, the Tindall Foundation and many more.

Volunteering or doing internships with NGOs is a valuable way to gain experience at grass-roots level during undergraduate studies. While some graduates may eventually decide to work in policy and strategy, some practical knowledge of the development sector will add value to a CV. Depending upon the organisation, positions in the NGO sector can sometimes be gained through working as a volunteer. This is the case for example in Refugee Services Aotearoa where cross-cultural knowledge and respect for other cultures are key requirements for employment. These skills are strengthened through their volunteer programme. Former volunteers have gone on to become employed as intake coordinators, members of the volunteer support team and managers. Volunteering with organisations in the sector is likely to help job applications both within the Service and in related organisations. Volunteers also develop other transferable skills such as working in a team, communication and listening skills, problem solving, empathy, familiarity with other cultures, planning and organisation, increased knowledge of New Zealand systems and agencies, and more.

Trans-Governmental Organisations

Graduates may find roles with United Nations agencies such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Women, The World Bank, World Health Organization (WHO) and others. There are many fields of

work under the UN umbrella that include peace and security, development, human rights, humanitarian affairs and international law.

Trade Unions

Unions work to protect the rights of workers. Large unions employ researchers, policy analysts, communications, health and safety and training officers. Unions Aotearoa International Development Trust (UnionAID) is a charitable trust established by the NZ Council of Trade Unions – Te Kauae Kaimahi to express its solidarity with partners in developing countries struggling to protect and promote the rights of workers and their families. It was established to provide a channel for New Zealand workers to contribute to international development through support for programmes that assist unions and workers and their families in developing countries.

Education Sector

Teaching at university level usually requires a PhD. Graduates can advance their research and teaching skills by undertaking a Master’s degree or PhD and may have the opportunity to tutor undergraduate students. Many students also go overseas to study. Other roles in tertiary institutions include academic advisors, career consultants, trainers or administrators. Teaching in the primary or secondary school systems in New Zealand and overseas are other options, as are educational research and policy work.

Journalism

Graduates intending to work as permanent editorial staff (reporters, sub-editors, editors) in the media usually require a Diploma in Journalism. It is possible to write freelance for niche publications without an industry qualification.

Public Relations, Communications, Marketing

Organisations need to establish a distinctive profile, and maintain goodwill and understanding with the public and other stakeholders. Excellent written and verbal communication and interpersonal skills are required as are skills in using social media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Industry specific qualifications are an advantage. Public relations seeks to manage public opinion by transmitting positive information to those the organisation wants to influence. The related functions of communications and marketing are responsible for promoting an organisation’s image and reputation to the public, as well as informing staff and clients about what is happening within the organisation. This may involve writing web content for Intranet or public websites as well as material for pamphlets, articles, annual reports,



Photo courtesy of VSA - Pete Colville

media releases and so on. At higher levels advisors will advise on communications policy and strategy. Entry-level positions such as communications advisor/officer may require additional qualifications such as media studies or journalism.

Industry Bodies

Development Network (DevNet) links people and organisations involved and interested in the broad field of international development in Aotearoa New Zealand and wider. Members include university students, development practitioners, NGO and government workers, university lecturers, teachers and librarians. Conferences are held every two years. DevNet also posts jobs in the field of international development.

JOB TITLES

Following is a list of sample job titles reported in graduate employment destination surveys. Some roles may require additional qualifications and training.

- Communications and marketing assistant
- Communications and programme assistant
- Communications officer/advisor
- Community liaison advisor
- Development coordinator
- Development officer
- Education/Information officer
- Environmental specialist
- Employment equity advisor
- Events coordinator
- Fundraising assistant/manager
- Food security advisor/consultant
- International aid and development officer
- Marketing assistant/manager
- Media support officer
- Native affairs officer
- Policy analyst/advisor
- Planning officer/advisor
- Project monitoring and evaluation advisor
- Programme assistant
- Programme planner
- Researcher

GRADUATE PROFILES

Colin Kennedy

*Manager, Student Recruitment Programmes
Guest Lecturer, Development Studies
Victoria University*



My undergraduate years in Trinity College, Dublin were actually spent studying Psychology and English Literature, and it wasn't until I started out on my travels (I spent almost ten years on the road before arriving in New Zealand) that I discovered my fascination with spaces and structures and how those spaces and structures shape human interaction, opportunity and dignity. Travelling and working in India, Cambodia and Russia exposed me to heartbreaking destitution. It is hard not to want to understand how such injustice has become established as 'normal'. When I arrived in Wellington I decided to follow up on my experiences by engaging with International Relations, but it wasn't long before I was persuaded by the combination of theory and practice in Development Studies, and I started my PhD in that discipline.

Development Studies challenges people to make a difference; it is an optimistic, solution-seeking subject that doesn't stay still. I love it because it lives and breathes across scale (time and geography); because it lives in the flux between the perspectives of the subject and of the theorist; because it is multi-disciplinary and complex. One week we might be discussing the causes of famine in the Horn of Africa or the 'green' marketing of multinational corporations, and the next it is how Latin American theorists changed the economic structure of the continent.

As a social science, Development Studies requires the combination of qualitative and quantitative processes, and that has been a great learning to balance critical theory with scientific enquiry. I have been fortunate enough to undertake research in Chile, where I looked at the impact of socio-economic inequality on education outcomes and opportunities, and I learnt a great deal about how to approach and utilise research. Overall, Development Studies provides a space for students to unscrew the structures of the world and see how it is put together, and such skills of enquiry have been invaluable.

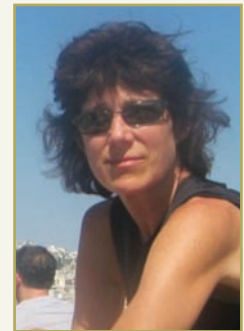
I currently have an interesting balance of work at Victoria University. I spend a lot of time with students coming into University for the first time, helping give academic advice and guidance, and this is a result of my undergraduate degree in Psychology, which fed

and further stimulated my interest in people and behaviour. However I am also a Guest Lecturer in Development Studies. Ultimately the combination of studies and interests will probably lead me into a full-time academic role and/or working with a development-focused agency.

Successful students in any subject are passionate, interested students and so my advice is to engage with the space around you. Look at the impacts of capitalism on Wellington's streets, watch the student protests in Chile on TV, read up on the difficulties of the newest nation in the world, South Sudan, and find connections between them. It is also important to be respectful of people and opinions, as there is no black and white in development topics. And just like all University study, students need to be inquisitive, challenging and dedicated.

Sarah Meads

*Senior Policy Advisor
Oxfam New Zealand*



I'm a career-switcher. I was working in the private sector and already had an Honours degree in Science and an MBA. But I wanted to learn more about the drivers of social injustice and equity issues and to bring in elements of development that are often left out when you do a straight Science or Arts degree. Development Studies has multiple dimensions to factor in because it involves people, their culture, wellbeing and rights as well as how we live in relation to earth's biophysical boundaries.

Self-development and self-reflection are inevitable components of Development Studies. Increasingly we are not getting it right. We have global economic crises, food insecurity and climate change among others. You can't do the course without having to think deeply about your position. Because of the social inequity and justice angles to development work you need to be thinking through where you stand. Your values system matures and grows as you work out how you think about things and put your values and skills into action.

I found the multi-cultural approach of Development Studies fascinating. The international students brought their own stories from the field, which injected a reality into the theory and gave a better understanding of what it's like on the ground.

The Master's thesis provided a stellar learning experience. It's a major piece of research often done

internationally, so you have to travel to the field. You learn a lot about yourself and your approach to research, including an awareness of the impact you may have working in partnership with groups in the field. You build your own internal resilience and learn to rely less on external validation. That's critical because the development sector can be very demanding. There are never enough resources and there are always critical issues around human rights and social injustices to work on.

My practicum at Oxfam and volunteering stood me in good stead when my current position came up. I'd advise students to remain passionate, to get clear on why they are compelled to work in development and to evaluate what skills they can bring to make a difference. From there they will find the job that suits them. Development Studies is a truly life-changing major and opens out into many different and fascinating areas of work.

Junior Ulu

*Programme Manager Polynesia
Te Tūao Tāwāhi - Volunteer
Service Abroad (VSA)*



In a previous life I worked as a Secondary School Teacher for six years in Auckland after completing an undergraduate degree from Victoria University and a teaching diploma from Auckland College of Education. Then in February 2002 I began a career in development, working as a locally engaged staff member with the New Zealand High Commission in Apia, Samoa. In 2003 I moved to Wellington and started working for Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA) where I have been ever since. In 2008 I realised that I needed to couple my practical experience with theoretical knowledge and enrolled to do a Postgraduate Diploma in Development Studies. I had heard a lot of great feedback about the course at Victoria and the 'guru of development' John Overton, so the choice to study at Victoria was easy. Having a full-time job meant that I studied part time. The course was designed so that I was able to attend all lectures outside of work time and still fulfill a busy work and travel schedule.

I completed the course requirements in 2009 and because I enjoyed the course and staff so much I enrolled in a Master of Development Studies. I enjoyed learning about the origins of aid and development and how it has evolved over time. There are so many differing aid and development theories that I

wasn't aware of as a practitioner (quite embarrassing really). Now I have developed an understanding of where donors sit theoretically and how VSA can complement their work to ensure partner countries are drivers of their own development programmes. As part of my Master's degree I am undertaking a research project leading towards a thesis. My thesis is to examine to what extent the Government of Samoa has development sovereignty when working with donors.

Since completing my postgraduate diploma I was promoted from the position of Programme Officer in the Pacific team at VSA, where I worked in a support role, to my current role as Programme Manager, Polynesia. I manage the VSA programmes in Samoa, Tonga and Tokelau as well as Kiribati in Micronesia.

I would encourage anyone thinking of doing a course in Development Studies to find out more about the course at Victoria University. The course has experienced, interesting and skilled lecturers and tutors who have all worked in the development sector. You also have the opportunity to meet like-minded individuals who make the learning experience more enjoyable.

Rachel Meadowcroft

Teaching Intern



When I was young I often heard stories of my parents' travels and my father's childhood in Pakistan as the son of missionaries, so I was always aware of the bigger picture. I was also interested in doing work that would benefit other people. At school I enjoyed subjects like social studies, languages and classical studies, which involves the study of other cultures. I was also on the Student Council and involved with peer support, working to strengthen the school community. In year 13 I won a United Nations speech competition and the prize was to attend a model UN summit in Australia. After school, I went overseas for a year and travelled all over Europe and to Morocco. When I returned to New Zealand I was very attracted to Development Studies, which brings together many different disciplines and knowledge of the world.

I loved that multidisciplinary aspect of the course. I think that is real life, even though we cut things down into packages. I'm not an expert in economics, geography, history or sociology but I now know a lot more generally about how the world works and have

more insight. I really enjoyed the process of inter-connecting various things to arrive at a broader and deeper understanding of people and issues.

A key skill I developed was the ability to approach a situation knowing there are going to be multiple factors and ways of looking at something; no one of those factors is necessarily going to be right. I enjoyed the idea of being able to connect disparate groups, people, their intentions, and build a commonality. I think that definitely encourages broad-mindedness in your approach to things. You also develop compassion and learn to challenge your own ways of thinking.

As well as studying facts you learn about yourself and your own subjectivity. My way of approaching things isn't neutral; it carries its own values. I think that will be valuable for me going into teaching – knowing I'm a product of my culture and what I consider to be normal. It will be useful when teaching students from other cultural backgrounds within an education system designed by Pakeha. Subjects I plan to teach include social studies, geography and languages. I think my degree in Development Studies is going to help tremendously with teaching.

When I finished my Bachelor of Arts I worked as a performance auditor at the Office of the Auditor General. Development Studies was useful in that because I was able to look at the issues we investigated from many directions in order to understand what was actually happening.

Last year when I worked in Zambia I experienced the practical side of development. Unless you volunteer or do an internship while you study, undergraduate study gives you insights and theory but work in the field is totally different. I was helping to coordinate an HIV AIDS education programme and found it a real challenge trying to work out how to bridge the cultural gap – in some ways all people are essentially the same, but we are also products of our culture and society, and our cultures and society are tremendously different to each other. The moral and ethical issues of development work are also challenging. I think it's quite an addictive challenge though – perhaps I will end up bringing my teaching and educational skills into development work.

I have learned so much both personally and professionally through taking Development Studies. I recommend the course and also recommend that students do some voluntary work in the sector, while they study and/or travel to projects in developing countries.

Anna Reid

*Policy Officer
Special Relations Unit (with
Tokelau and Niue)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and
Trade*



When I was at school my dream job was working at an international aid organisation like Red Cross or something like that. I realised that Development Studies was a mix of history, politics and economics – with a focus on using those tools to examine social justice – exactly what I wanted to study at University.

I did a BA in Development Studies, International Relations and Law at the same time. The range of topics studied was fantastic. I enjoyed the flexibility to be able to study what I thought was most interesting or relevant to me. I had originally planned to major in Economics, but Economics wasn't quite what I thought it would be. My Dad said economics made the world go round but that wasn't quite what I was studying.

Development Studies offered a different perspective. I also enjoyed the different theories and ways of thinking about things, for example how different countries might perceive particular actions of other people or the assistance they are given. Development Studies gave me a series of tools to help me look at the challenges facing developing countries. Cultural theories and understandings were particularly useful. I also gained some practical experience during my undergraduate degree.

After my second year I went to Ghana on a programme volunteers pay to do, helping with HIV outreach education, and then I volunteered for Refugee Services in New Zealand. I was able to apply for the Volunteer Service Abroad UniVol programme, which gave me first-hand experience of “development” in a developing country. I have since started at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade which I'm sure is a result of my UniVol experience and my background in Development Studies.

I would definitely encourage students to look hard at Development Studies. It gave me what I wanted out of university - something that subjects like Economics and Politics on their own weren't able to provide - a start in a career in the development field.

DEVELOPMENT STUDIES AT VICTORIA

Victoria's Development Studies programme is the first major of its kind in New Zealand. It's an umbrella under which you can study almost any aspect of the development of human societies, and their relationship to the Earth we live on. This multidisciplinary field is concerned with studying inequality between people and nations, and the ethical issues that poverty and inequality create. Because Development Studies investigates the world and the people who live here, it encourages you to be confident and tolerant with cross-cultural issues, and to analyse and solve global problems.

The major in Development Studies can be taken as part of a Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree. With guidance from the Geography programme within the School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences, you can shape a degree that is tailored directly to your abilities and interests. Building on a core in human geography, you are encouraged to take this major combined with another in a linked discipline – like Cultural Anthropology, Asian Studies, Biology, Economics, Environmental Studies, Geography, History, Maori Studies, Pacific Studies, Political Science, Public Policy, Sociology or Tourism Management. The major has been designed to give students a good grounding in both the themes and the places that are central to Development Studies. In terms of the latter, Victoria has internationally recognised expertise in Asia, the Pacific and Latin America and students can also take Africa options within the major.

The rationale for providing students with the possibility of gaining either a BA or BSc in Development Studies is to accommodate the breadth of issues covered by this subject, as well as to provide different foundations for subsequent graduate research and

careers. For instance within the BA programme, students may pursue course options focusing on broad analyses of economic, political, cultural, and/or regional development, or more specifically target their options around key issues or sectors such as gender, policy, tourism, education and so forth. Much development practice requires knowledge and skills in these analytical or sectoral areas to address current problems or challenges.

With respect to the BSc it is widely recognised that physical factors (soil type, ecology, mineral resources, water sources etc) as well as climatic and tectonic patterns in different parts of the world influence social and human development possibilities. Much development practice focuses on the interface between natural and human resources through infrastructure projects, agricultural development, conservation management, disaster management and so forth. The BSc provides scope for students to specialise in the natural and physical sciences associated with this type of practice.

The range of possibilities open to students within both BA and BSc programmes enables them to establish a strong core of theoretical, disciplinary and regional knowledge, complemented by particular strands that will support their progression into research degrees and/or development-related careers.

It must be noted however that the growing trend in the professional labour market is towards employing students who possess postgraduate qualifications as well as a first degree. Towards this end, the School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences offers Honours and Master's degrees in Geography (which can focus on development studies-related subjects) and a Postgraduate Diploma, Master's and PhD in both Development Studies and Environmental Studies.

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