



OHIO
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Emerging Ideas

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Development Studies Program

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EMERGING IDEAS

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Dr. Jie-li Li, Ravshan Grezov and Lori Sargent outside the World Bank

A Message from the Director

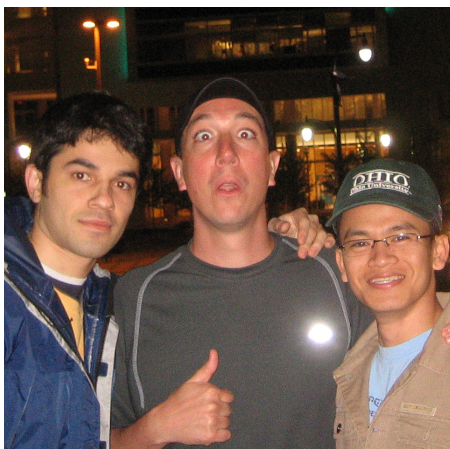
DR. JIE-LI LI

It is time to say good-bye to the graduating cohort. I just find it hard to believe that two years of their lives with the program have passed—time surely flies! For some reason, I often feel a special attachment to these graduates. It is probably because this class of 2005 started their study in the same year that I began my duty as the new program director and witnessed the changes I have brought to the program. These changes, however, also reflect the work of collaborative enterprise of myself and the class of 2005. Indeed, through my constant interaction with them, I have appreciated more of how different our IDS program is from other academic programs on the OU campus. Since our students' interests are so diverse in terms of international development areas, it is imperative that we strive to make the core curriculum more flexible and practical to fit each individual's need but without compromising the existing rigor of academic requirements.

The past year was particularly fruitful for IDS. What is worth mentioning is our successful field trip to Washington, D.C. The trip was designed to expose IDS students directly to the working environment of international development agencies, especially those non-government and non-profit organizations. The trip was indeed memorable. We drove three rented vans from Athens to D.C. and stayed in a hotel not far from a subway station. We went by subway, back and forth from yellow line to red line, then to orange line, to visit six major development agencies including the World Bank and AED. Through informative sessions, and especially through direct and candid communication with development-experienced project managers, the participating students and faculty acquired a great deal of "insider's information." This included what major development issues those top-notch agencies are most concerned with, what projects they are working on, and what difficulties and problems they have encountered in carrying out the projects. The knowledge we obtained from the trip, as one participating student put it, "is absolutely not available in the textbook nor in the classroom."

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Reflections on the Winter International Forum



(from left) Ravshan Grezov, Nathan Olah, and Sothy Khieng

"Microfinance: What to Expect?"

Dr. Claudio Gonzalez-Vega, The Ohio State University

"LATIN AMERICA'S NEW WEALTH" — NATHAN OLAH

Dr. Gonzalez-Vega was one of my personal favorite speakers of the quarter because he presented microfinance from an economist's point of view. He showed that it is valuable to look at the "efficiency" and "equity" of such programs in order to battle "stagnation" and "exclusion." Another key point that the presenter made was that microfinance works because of the "economies of scale" and "economies of scope" that allow the credit to reach more people. This can only be successful when new financial banking technologies are used to monitor small amounts of money loaned out to distant communities. Although the speaker proposed many economic reasons for microfinance and warned of its possible dangers, he was most convincing when he discussed his extensive research findings from Latin America. His most profound message of the speech for me was his observation that human capital and information technologies are the new wealth. This becomes especially important for Latin America where land has been the historic source of wealth in the past.



(from left) Julieta Barcaglioni, Maira Quintao and Allie Hunter at a birthday party

"MICROFINANCE CAN SHAPE THE FUTURE" — JULIETA BARCAGLIONI

... [Dr. Gonzalez-Vega] concluded that microfinance improves the financial system itself. Or in other words, he states that it "is a mechanism for having a better financial system." Microcredit can contribute to simultaneous achievement of efficiency (reduction in the costs of transaction) and equity (access for the excluded clientele). In his conclusion, the speaker emphasized that microfinance is a critical component for financial deepening in countries with low income and exclusion and that it expands services to marginal clients.

By experimenting with new technologies and new ways for reaching the poor and the excluded, microfinance can shape the future financial systems and contribute to improvements in the welfare of the excluded. More importantly, microfinance gives people loans based on their incentives, their ideas, and their willingness to work; as opposed to their credit history, their current salary and the size of their bank account.



Masayasu Higuchi at the farewell party

"MICROFINANCE" - MASAYASU HIGUCHI

... To start with, Dr. González-Vega explained that the occurrence of microfinance is based on mitigating or protecting the poor from problems of exclusion and stagnation that cause poverty. Accelerating economic growth and preventing the poor from exclusion results in escaping from the poverty trap. However, he stressed that efficiency and equality are both necessary and also discussed the paradox of improving these two concepts. Both are incompatible, creating difficulties and inequalities. In reality, I think that the reason why people in rural areas are poor is that they cannot access microfinance or the market because of the distance; thus, his point makes sense and is critical.

... Finally, micro finance helps the poor, who have visions and strategies for their future to improve their living standard, but does not help the absolute poor. The extreme poor cannot utilize microfinance due to lack of vision and basic loan requirements. As Dr. González-Vega asserted, microfinance itself does not create opportunities. It enlarges chances for people who are capable of meeting basic loan requirements.

“La Malinche: from Mexico to Vietnam”

Dr. Harry Aveling

“THE MYTH OF LA MALINCHE” - HAAJIMA DEGIA

. . . Dr. Harry Aveling discussed two authors’ work, demonstrating the two vastly different perspectives of La Malinche. ‘La Malinche’ was born into the home of an Aztec chief, but on the death of her father, her mother sold her to some traders, and she was later sold to Hernan Cortez as a slave.

He noted that author Laura Esquivel . . . demonizes La Malinche, seeing her as a traitor and as the person responsible for the Spanish colonization of Mexico. This author also portrayed La Malinche as a woman subject of Cortez (the man who conquered the Mayan kingdom for Spain). Therefore, for Esquivel, La Malinche was simply a silent and conquered woman. . . . [On the other hand], La Malinche is portrayed as confident and defiant by Le Fevre, and although she is raped by Cortez, she still triumphs in love because for her—by being in love with the conqueror—she ultimately conquers the conqueror. . . .

La Malinche is thus mythologized. On the one hand she is seen as a traitor and as a whore, and she has been cursed and reviled. On the other hand, she is portrayed as strong and defiant, and rather than being subdued, she glorifies the role of the intermediary, and she simply does not give in to the ‘other.’

“Realities and Possibilities of Ecotourism”

Instructor Christine Fahl

“THE POTENTIAL OF ECOTOURISM” - KINNALONE KITTIPHANH

. . . I was impressed by [Christine Fahl’s] case studies from Thailand, which demonstrated best practices and effective strategies where local people play a crucial role in managing natural resources. The Thai government also gives importance to tourism. As the speaker stated that “tourism is the national priority in Thailand,” the Thai government has set up a tourism authority, policies and plans to enhance local tourism and provide legal support for locals to generate economic benefits . . .

. . . [I]t is important that the government works closely with local communities to raise their awareness and understanding of ecotourism. . . It is necessary to enhance the understanding of its values and principles which means to preserve natural resources while also promoting local business to gain benefits from it. Therefore, there is a need for the government to build the capacity and skills of government staff and local people to be able to organize resource areas and manage natural resources effectively. In addition, the government might have to seek cooperation with private sectors and NGOs to help initiate in organizing community and providing technical support and facilities.

Although ecotourism would bring great potential for locals’ businesses, it is important to recognize its shortcomings if people do not use natural resources in the right way; this means protecting water quality and making sure that the wildlife is being protected. Otherwise, it is not worthwhile if there are more losses than gains. Furthermore, it is not solely the responsibility of local people or the government to protect natural resources: I think that we as tourists should also take responsibility and become actively involved in preserving a healthy environment.



Haajima Degia on the College Green



Kinnalone Kittiphanh at the White House



“UNFPA” — LORI SARGENT

Mr. Daduryan shared with us the most pressing matters facing the global population and what the UNPA is doing to address those issues. The UNPA began its mission after the 1994 Cairo Conference in which it was declared that “reproductive health is a human right.” Gender and inequality are the foci of UNPA programs because development is hindered when one half of a nation’s population is excluded from participating in the social, economic and political aspects of society. Mr. Daduryan said there has been improvement in legislation; however, there has been very little visible change on the ground. Youth, another focus of the UNPA, who are politically, socially and economically excluded pose a potential problem for developing nations. As such, I had the opportunity to discuss with Mr. Daduryan the current situation in East Timor where there are at least 20,000 gang members terrorizing the country because there are no employment opportunities and the youth feel excluded from the political process and have revolted against the government. Of course, HIV/AIDS is another major focus for UNPF since HIV/AIDS is not just a health problem but also a development problem.



Sumi Kato and Lori Sargent finding their way around D.C.

“AVENUES OF DEVELOPMENT” — JOSHUA BEAR

Development, Dr. Walter contends, is performed in two segments: funding and implementation. The former can be accomplished through national departments, such as a city health department, donor organizations including USAID and JICA, multilateral organizations such as the IADB or the World Bank, international organizations including the many branches of the United Nations, or grant-providing foundations. Donor organizations, while they can have a large impact on specific problems, are typified by two major concerns: they represent large bureaucracies that squander the majority of their money on administrative duties rather than the countries they are attempting to help, and their policies regarding what they do and who they help reflect the political ideologies of the states to which they belong. Thus, it is up to us—the future development planners and implementers—to help create a system in which money ear-marked for development actually leads to development.

“OHIO UNIVERSITY AND AL-JAZEERA TV” — ALEXANDRA HUNTER

During [Roger Cooper’s] session, the telecommunications professor and director described his experience teaching a week-long intensive course in leadership management at Al-Jazeera Training Center in Doja, Qatar. Although many Americans have a negative perception of Al-Jazeera and the message it is disseminating to the Arab world, Cooper noted that this news source is highly respected in the region not because of anti-American rhetoric but because it truly is an independent news source. Although the station often receives criticism about its inclusion of the Israeli point of view, for example, this non-partisan and non-aligned style of reporting is something that should be held in high regard. As Dr. Cooper noted, Al-Jazeera is a better representation of a free press than many American news stations. As far as the leadership-training course itself, Cooper noted the diverse backgrounds of the participants, including one woman. What was encouraging to me, and to Cooper, was the degree to which these participants could share common and controversial points of view alike, while moving forward based on these commonalities, and relate to one another. Although Cooper faced a number of challenges throughout this experience, he shared his story with us so that we might see the positive aspects of Al-Jazeera and move forward with an open mind when relating with people who are different from ourselves.



D.C. Trip: Much more than expected...!

BY SOTHY KHIENG

“What are some of the most successful organizations in D.C. and in what areas are they doing development work?” “What specific development fields are they working on and how can you learn from their great success?” “What internship and job opportunities are out there for you and what is the process of application?” These are just a few of many questions that were answered and discussed at each visit to the six development institutions, [including] the World Bank, Development Alternatives Inc., [the] Academy for Educational Development (AED), [and] Population Services Inc. Each visit was very warmly welcomed by [the] organization and each of them was unique in term of their diverse fields of focus (ranging from health [and] education to environment/natural resources management and policy change. . .) and the type and structure of the organizations (for example, profit versus non-profit).

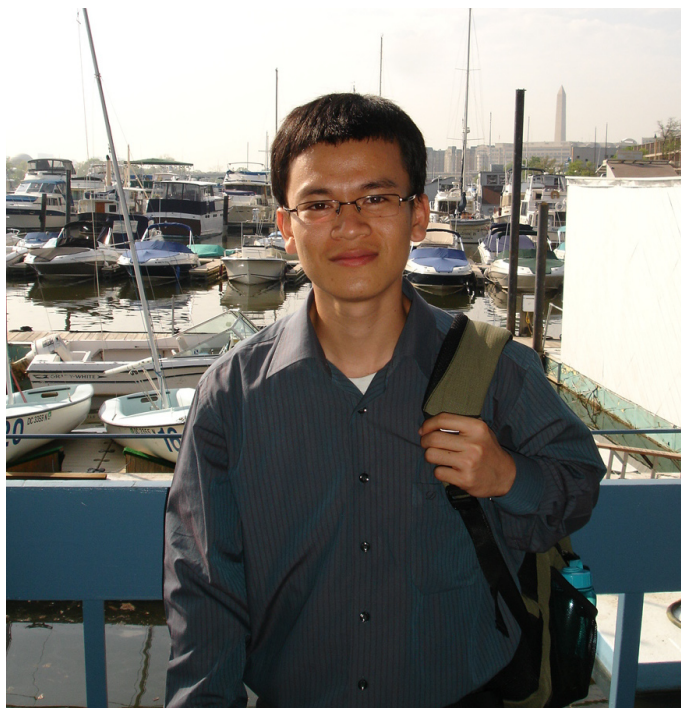
Four of the institutions visited were [particularly] well prepared to host us -- a group of experts and senior officers of each organization would form a panel to present their organization's works, internship and job opportunities and answer various questions based on students' interests. It was just fascinating how big their projects were (in term of both grants received and number of countries involved) and what made them so successful. It was something I feel that I have learnt very little from class and on-campus lectures or forum!

The opportunities for graduate students to sharpen theories they learn in class such as internship availabilities, which are offered to both foreign and U.S. nationals, were exciting to many of us. All of the six organizations offered some types of internship in their headquarters in Washington, D.C. and all are paid. For instance, an intern at AED (which operates in more than 150 countries [around] the world [with an] annual budget of about \$280 million) receives full benefits as a regular employee and has competitive advantage over outside candidates when it comes to recruitment for full-time employees (in some cases, there is possible visa assistance for outstanding foreign employees in senior positions).

I strongly advocate for more effort and financial support from the program to offer such study tours to students at least annually. I also strongly encourage students focusing in [the] development [field] to participate in any similar visits. It was really a worthwhile experience!

BY RAVSHAN GREZOV

Academia gives you a strong educational background on why and how international institutions function. However, to observe how development practitioners in international organizations work provides a clear and better picture, which was one of the main goals of our Washington, D.C. trip—to learn more about such organizations as the World Bank, Chemonics International, Population Services, Inc., Development Alternatives, Inc., Academy for Educational Development and Management Systems International. Another objective was to learn more about internship and employment opportunities where the International Development Studies graduate students had an opportunity to gain valuable information. In general, it was well worth [the] visit [to] all the aforementioned institutions. Therefore, I would highly recommend such trips be conducted annually not only to broaden our understanding and perceptions of development organizations, but also to have an opportunity to apply for jobs or internships.



Sothy Khieng on a boat house outside MSI



Ravshan Grezov in the World Bank



THANKS FOR THE PHOTOS!

Julieta Barcaglioni
Joshua Bear
Ravshan Grezov
Masayasu Higuchi
Kinnalane Kittiphanh
Nathan Olah

PLACES WE VISITED IN D.C.

The World Bank
Chemonics, Inc.
Population Services, Inc.
Development Alternatives, Inc.
The Academy for Educational Development
Management Systems International



Sumi Kato and Shamim Mohammad take a stroll near the White House

Field Trip to Washington D.C.

BY SUMI KATO

First of all, it was my first time to visit Washington, D.C. Just getting out of Athens and going to a big city was very exciting for me!

In studying about international development, we tend to focus on theories and academic issues surrounding development. Thus, it is hard for us to gain practical insights and lessons from the field and learn how the business of development actually works. Through our visit to the development organizations and meetings with people who are involved in development, I could learn what kinds of skills I need to acquire in order to work efficiently in the field of development and how I should set up my career goals with a realistic point of view.

Through the dialogue with officers in the World Bank and the Development Alternatives Inc., I felt the importance of interdisciplinary understanding of development. While it is crucial to have a specific focus as your strong asset, it is also indispensable to have a wide and deep understating of development so that you can work flexibly corresponding to the needs of the field and funding organizations. Even though I am graduating, it does not mean that I will graduate from studying. I have to educate myself everyday and get wide perspectives on development and other related issues.

BY SHAMIM MOHAMMAD

This trip enabled us to visit various development agencies working worldwide and provided opportunities for many students to explore internships and job avenues. Last but not least, it was great fun to be together with the fellow students on the trip.

We visited six development agencies including the World Bank. There was a great sense of cooperation and coordination among all the students. Students interacted very well with the officials of all the agencies we visited. The most enjoyable feature of this trip was that at the end of the day we went to dinner together. For every dinner, we chose a different restaurant, including Vietnamese, Ethiopian and more.

The trip helped us understand the realities of the profession that we have chosen for ourselves. It was equally useful to gain an insight from the employers' perspectives—what they look into while recruiting people. Finally, this trip also contributed to our understanding of the intricacies involved in development work.

BY KINNALONE KITTIPIHANH

Overall, I would give this trip the highest score! The IDS cohorts had fun together, and it made us closer. Thanks to [the IDS program], the trip was very well-organized. I was impressed by [Lori's and others'] work and effort to make this trip possible. The trip gave a good opportunity for IDS students to explore ourselves and learn about international development organizations. It created a good network with those organizations we visited and I think it provided a chance for IDS students to apply for internships or jobs in the future. I would strongly recommend this trip to be organized every year. It is very beneficial for me because I got a summer paid internship offered by MSI (Management System International)!

BY NATHAN OLAH

During our recent trip to Washington, D.C. with the IDS program, our group was able to visit with the Academy for Educational Development (AED). AED is a non-profit service organization that works in the fields of education, health, environment, information technology and youth development, just to name a few. They are based in Washington, D.C. with offices in almost 60 countries. Upon arrival, AED staff was ready to greet us, give us a quick tour of their office, and begin an open conversation concerning their mission, goals, projects and employment opportunities. International and domestic students of the IDS program were able to get a feeling of the day to day operations and structure of the organization as well as learn about the larger nonprofit sector of development work. I was impressed by the fact that AED provided a well-prepared, professional setting for our group and at the same time, created an open atmosphere for open dialog and honest feedback.



Nate Olah in Washington D.C.

BY RUNA NAGATOMO

The D.C. trip was a valuable experience for me in the sense that I was able to grasp the broad picture of how international development projects are implemented. The visits to different contractors made me realize the importance of initiatives and guidelines proposed by USAID, given the contractors' characteristics as private entities. It would have been more interesting if we could have visited more NGOs and compared the differences in their objectives, constraints, accountability and flexibility in their implementation of development projects. The visit to the World Bank was indeed a very exciting one, although I did not get much new information out of it. Knowing that it is the place where people from all over the world get together to make important decisions about development practices thrilled me and motivated me to come back as a development worker instead of a visitor in the near future.



Runa Nagatomo in the World Bank

BY MARK MASON

The potential employer exposure tour to Washington DC was very good and [IDS] did an excellent job organizing the trip, even down to a very accurate estimate of the total cost for using the metro line to and from hotel and employers. As an American IDS student, I was very satisfied with the number of USAID contracting agencies we visited, and each organization had the appropriate people we desired to meet (human resources) as well as seasoned practitioners that should serve as excellent contacts for jobs here in the US or internationally. . . One of the directors from MSI has verbally agreed to speak at a future forum and contacts were established for potential internships at other agencies. Overall the trip certainly made our program at CIS more recognizable. The only disappointment was that a significant portion of our funding support from CIS was pulled the day before our departure. I hope that the administration can secure some support funds in the future.



Mark Mason and Julieta Barcaglioni at the farewell party

In talking with my fellow students about the usefulness of the trip, some of us would recommend that the trip be conducted primarily for first-year students to provide them with the opportunity for potential internships during their first summer. Secondly, I'd recommend that the future cohorts visit three development contractors such as DAI and MSI, three world agencies such as the WB, IMF and UNDP as well as three large global NGOs like IOM, CARE, MSF, CRS, Grameen Bank and Kiva, Amnesty International, IRC and ARC. This would provide our international as well as American students with a potentially greater number of internship or employment opportunities in the future. Thanks to Lori Sargent for all the hard work she put in and to Dr. Li and Nathan Olah for driving to and from DC.

Continued from Page 1

An additional rationale for the trip is the expectation for career opportunities. It was clear that the participating IDS students impressed the people there so much that, as I was later told, some students got phone interviews soon after coming back from the trip, and three of them were eventually offered paid internship in D.C. this summer. What gratifying news!

In this newsletter, you will find the participants' feedback on the D.C. trip accompanied by some snapshots. You also will continue to enjoy reading IDS students' reflections on the guest lectures delivered at the international studies forum. As you may know, just like those pieces published in the winter issue, all the excerpts selected for publication here came from reflection papers the students wrote as partial requirement of the IDS colloquium in the winter quarter. I would like to congratulate those students whose thoughts are published in this newsletter. They deserve the recognition for their excellent work.

As I was about to finish writing this message, I received an email from Ysabel Estrada Bombardiere, a former IDS student who graduated last year. She informed me with excitement that she landed a new job as a manager with Trace International in Annapolis, MD, just 1.5 miles from her house. As she writes, "it was a long process to find this job, but I am glad things worked out for the best. Trace is a small but very progressive non-profit and I believe it makes a big difference in development issues ..." With this good news, I want you to share her excitement while knowing that the job market for graduates of development studies looks good. I hope that the current graduates will bring us the same good news in the near future, and I wish all of you the very best in your career development. Good luck, my dear fellows!

Thanks to Lori Sargent for hosting the 2007 IDS Farewell Party!

Thanks to Lori's generosity, beautiful home and large yard, we had a great time eating, talking and playing ultimate frisbee, baseball and American football. We would also like to thank IDS for its generous and delicious food contribution. Last and not least, thank you to all the students and professors for making the party possible, fun and memorable!



Yuko Nagata, Ayumi Hama, Julieta Barcagioni, Mai Phuong, Satoko Tsunoda



Joshua Bear, Ravshan Grezov, Masayasu Higuchi



Joshua Bear, Treasa James, Joshua O'Donnell

Farewell, IDS Class of 2007!

Congratulations for all of your hard work and accomplishments. IDS wishes you rewarding and fulfilling careers. We would like to offer specific congratulations to:

Xinxiang Wang who has been hired as the vice director of SOS Children's Village in China.

Treasa James who will work with the Global Young Leaders Conference in Washington D.C.

Marina Solakhyan who intends to return to Armenia and contribute her new knowledge to her homeland's development. She may return in the near future to earn her Master's in Public Administration.

