



# International Development Studies Newsletter

## WELCOMING OUR INCOMING CLASS

### Message from the Director, Dr. Tom Smucker

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I would like to take this opportunity to welcome back Ohio University's IDS Community from the summer break and to send warmest greetings to program alumni around the world! As I begin my first term as IDS Program Director, I would also like to express my gratitude to former Director Dr. Jieli Li and all affiliated faculty for the contributions they have made to the many past successes of the IDS Program. The program is moving in new and exciting directions. We hope that this newsletter gives you a taste of the innovative work that IDS students have undertaken in the last few months.

This Fall, we welcome an outstanding cohort of new students to the IDS fold. This year's incoming class includes 12 outstanding scholars from 10 countries (not to mention a breadth of professional and research experience that spans many more countries). This group brings to Ohio University substantial applied development experience in addition to impressive academic accomplishments. We are very pleased to count prestigious Ford, Fulbright, and FLAS Fellowship recipients among their numbers. The group is, therefore, particularly well qualified to work toward bridging the theoretical contentions of Development Studies to the practical problems – and often painful realities - of development practice.

We also welcome back our second year students who have returned to campus following their engagement in summer research and professional development activities, both in the United States and around the world. From rural Benin to the headquarters of the United Nations, our students were engaged in an array of new research and professional activities that will further enrich them individually and the IDS community as a whole. One objective for the program this year is to develop an updated alumni database with an eye to eventually creating a network of mentors who are active in the field of international development. We will be contacting our alumni over the next few months and we humbly request that you keep us posted about your career paths and current contact information. You can save us time by forwarding this information to [development.studies@ohio.edu](mailto:development.studies@ohio.edu). In future newsletters, we will launch a new section highlighting the work of some of our many hundreds of alumni and the important work they are doing around the world.

Dr. Thomas A. Smucker

### EMERGING IDEAS

EDITOR:

Jennifer McArdle

Please send your contributions, comments, and/or suggestions to:

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### Are you on Facebook? We are!

Join the Ohio University International Development Studies Facebook page and start networking with current students and IDS alumni. Check out our page to stay updated with the latest IDS news, post discussion topics, find interns or internships, or connect with long-lost classmates. We can all serve as valuable resources for each other! On Facebook, search for "International Development Studies (IDS) at Ohio University," and join today!



**Allison Adair**

I am from South Eastern Kentucky, however, I am coming here from Hanover College in Hanover, IN where I just finished my BA in Sociology with a focus in International Studies. Along with my studies, I also spent some time in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania serving as an intern with the Tanzania Association of Media Women (TAMWA). While here at Ohio my focus will be on Women and Gender issues especially in East Africa. I am also a participant in the FLAS program, studying Swahili.

**Tosin Akinola**

I am a Nigerian, a farmer with a BA in Agricultural Economics. After serving as a teacher in the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), I worked with OK Foods, a commercial firm getting basic home and nutritional essentials to rural people; Development Works, an NGO that assists rural people with development challenges; and the Nigerian Tobacco Control Alliance. Presently, I am a Ford Foundation Fellow with interest in environment and development.

**Saleem Almasyabi**

I am a Fulbrighter and came to OU from Yemen where I completed my undergraduate studies in 2003. Since then I have been working with several International Non-Governmental Organizations such as The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, The UNDP, and lastly in the World Bank Office in Yemen as an Administrative Assistant. I very much like to travel and get to know new people, cultures and countries. I plan to focus on social sciences, and then pursue my PhD if I get a scholarship. Then, I am planning to work in the field of development and improve my career and professional skills.

**Djeynaba Ba**

I am from Mauritania, and I arrived in the US in 2001. I have years of experience working in the non-profit sector with the local immigrant population. I graduated from The Ohio State University in International Studies in 2008. Afterward, I went to Washington, DC to complete an internship at the World Bank for three months. Since coming back to Columbus, I have been volunteering for Friends of the World Food Program, a non profit organization that works to build US support for the UN WFP. As a Columbus Committee Leader, I organize activities that revolve around fundraising, education, and advocacy about global hunger. I enjoy playing tennis, reading, scrabble, and movies. At Ohio University, I plan to study International Development with a focus on Economic and Social Development.

**Ivan Bakubi**

I am Ivan Bakubi from Uganda in East Africa. I graduated from Uganda Christian University. I worked with Reach the Children Uganda, a local NGO that is involved in helping vulnerable children through the "Stay Alive program," an HIV/AIDS prevention program. I also worked as a humanitarian volunteer for two years in Zimbabwe. Over the past years I have been thinking of how environmental issues could be linked to the development of third world countries and the world as a whole. I hope that my experience in the International Development Studies program will help me to understand the various aspects of development and most especially in the third world countries. I am so glad to be in this program because it is interdisciplinary and explores various aspects of development. I can't wait to experience new issues.

**Gonzalo Perez Beck**

I am from Rio Cuarto, Argentina. I am 23 years old and have a BA in International Relations with a minor in Business from Shawnee State University. I do not have much work experience in the international field but hope to learn from the other IDS students since most of them have vast experience throughout the world. I am very much interested in US- Latin American relations and hope to contribute to the development of Argentina by facilitating business between it and the US. I enjoy the outdoors and love sports, especially soccer and tennis. I have been interested in development since I visited the US for the first time in 1995.



**Christopher Flower**

I earned my M.A. in Political Science (International Relations) from Ohio University and my B.A. in Political Science and Social Justice from Ohio Dominican University. My work experience involves being a wage slave in the service sector. As far as the OU IDS program, I hope to gain theoretical and practical knowledge to guide my actions in hopefully helping to create a better world. I am interested in development/underdevelopment, social justice, social change, structural violence, critical theory, cultural hegemony, leftist thought...



**James Laske**

I come to OU after spending the past five years working and traveling overseas. I graduated from Miami University in 2004 with a degree in business economics, and left my home state of Ohio to serve in the Peace Corps in the Kingdom of Tonga. After three years of working in remote areas of the Tongan islands, I proceeded to sail, hitchhike, work, and travel my way around the world through parts of New Zealand, SE Asia, Europe, the US and South America. I looks forward to gaining skills at OU that I can use in the future working in developing countries with NGOs and local communities.



**Kaltuma Sheikh**

I come from Columbus, Ohio where I have been working for Community Refugee and Immigration Services (CRIS) as an Employment Counselor and Instructor. I am originally from Kenya. I did my bachelors in BSC. Mass communication at UIIU, Mbale Uganda and graduated in 2001. I worked for Care International at the Dadaab Refugee Camp in Kenya. I am interested in Gender.



**Laurentina Mica Barreto Soares**

I am from Timor-Leste. I earned my B.A. in Psychology from Catholic University of Soegi-japanata in Indonesia and my M.A. in Peace Studies from Notre Dame University. I worked for the United Nations for the last 7 years, both in my home country Timor-Leste and Eritrea--2 years with a UN peacekeeping mission and 5 years with the United Nations Development Programne (UNDP). I also volunteered as a lecturer for 4 years at one of the private universities in my home country—a modest contribution as part of sharing knowledge with my fellow Timorese. I am a board member for a local environmental NGO in Timor-Leste called HABURAS (Nurturing). At OU, I hope to gain sound theoretical and analytical knowledge in international development studies with particular concentration in social sciences and economic policies.



**Maria Victoria Suarez**

I come from Ecuador, a small South American country with huge environmental diversity. I always liked animals and nature, and I knew before I finished high school that I wanted to study biology. Before university, I did an exchange year in Germany, where I learned a lot about different cultures. I went back to Ecuador, and I studied biology. I did my thesis and worked for 3 years with bugs and vectors of Chagas disease,. As I worked in poor communities looking for the bugs and giving educational talks to prevent the disease transmission, I got interested in peoples' welfare, too. I was amazed at how generous, nice and happy these humble people are. So, I came to do my master in international development to combine my interests in nature conservation and poor people's well-being. I am interested in working in environmental policies and projects for more sustainable resource management.



**Min Zaw**

I come from Myanmar (Burma). Academically, I have an MA in psychology, and have done a one year study in Development Economics. I have worked for 6 years as a teacher, and one year as a Relief Officer in Nargis Operation. (In 2007, my country was hit by a severe cyclone named Nargis, and I took part in the Relief Distribution done by Red Cross.) From this IDS program, I hope to gain sound theoretical knowledge and a wide academic view in the international learning environment. Specifically, I am interested in Economics/Economic policies.



## Dumelang Borra le Bomma: Greetings from Botswana

By Jennifer McArdle

Even though I have studied the African continent since undergrad, this past summer was the first time that I was able to visit African soil. Ohio University sponsors a program through the Counseling Department to study HIV/AIDS in Africa. Since Botswana is one of the hardest-hit countries, and is at the same time politically, socially, and economically stable, it is there that OU students spend 5 weeks learning about the pandemic.

To do this, each student (about 20 of us went on the trip) completed a mini internship at an NGO in Gaborone  
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## Challenging UN internship

By Ifoda Abdurazakova



The UN headquarters' internship program is a unique approach to build a bridge between young professional graduates and professional practitioners. The interaction of those two brings positive input into the overall workforce and increases the capacity of the organization. One of the biggest advantages of the internship program is that students gain exposure to real UN work and, and the UN is able to promote its mission and values through training graduate students from diverse backgrounds and different academic/work experience. Because there is a demand for high quality work, graduate students are also exposed to a challenging task within a short period of time.

When my application to the internship program was accepted and followed by a telephone interview, I did not know what specifically would be the work requirements; during the application process, an applicant mainly provides general information about professional qualifications and interests. I was selected to be a team member at the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN DPKO), Division of Policy, Evaluation and Training (DPET) as a Coordination Assistant over several on-going projects.

However, I was a little bit challenged when I had to acquire new skills on E-learning, Community of Practice, Learning Management Systems (LMS) and other coordination/training related issues to provide support for Peacekeeping Training Institutions and Field Missions. I met many people from different UN agencies who work in this field and received their feedback on how to better integrate knowledge and information in highly technological environments to support development and peace efforts. Through my job experience, I became fully aware of the overlapping, but different field missions of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA). One of distinguishing differences is that the DPKO works with peacekeeping efforts, while the mandate of the DPA is to support post-war reconstruction and peace-building initiatives. Basically peace-building equals peace plus development.

One of the remarkable moments was meeting UN Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon and listening to his speech. Besides having access to resources and conferences, I was able to see the process of the high-level conference on Economic Crises held during this summer and met official delegates from different countries. We had many trips to other UN Permanent Missions and I was also able to participate in a session with USA Permanent Mission to UN.

In many ways, I think the internship experience in a graduate school brings positive results into what might be the cornerstone of practitioners, especially when you know that the development world and those who need your input are looking for specific talents and skills. You can't represent many fields and be professional; rather it is useful to be a bright part of what might be useful for everyone. I also think I benefited a lot from the International Development Studies program at Ohio University and the courses I had taken became a good foundation.



## Experiences of My Field Research with Indonesian worker in Philadelphia

By Faishol Adib

"I arrived at the Greyhound bus terminal, in Philadelphia at 8:00 am. Travel from Athens to Philadelphia had taken almost 19 hours. I was tired and I wanted to continue my trip to masjid (mosques) Al-Falah, where I would stay for a month in this city. I needed to call my friend, Jay, who stays in Al-Falah, but unfortunately, my cell phone's battery was low. When I was waiting for my cell phone to charge, somebody tried to grab my cell phone. I tried to defend it, but he tried to grab again. He also tried to grab my luggage. I collected all my stuff and went away from the guy, but he followed and tried to grab my stuff again. Another person witnessed this situation and asked a security man in the terminal to handle it. The security guard walked toward me and the man who was trying to grab my stuff. Then, the security guard called out '911' to ask for help."

This story reflects my first experience when I arrived in Philadelphia, where I conducted my field research from July 23 to August 22, 2009. I rode the subway from the Greyhound bus terminal, then walked six blocks toward Al-Falah. I saw some toys under the traffic light near Al-Falah, but ignored them and knocked on the door of Al-Falah. Jay opened the door and I asked about the toys. He told me that two men were killed near the mosque and these toys were a symbol of the killing. My unhappy experience in the Greyhound terminal and my friend's story about a killing near Al-Falah not only scarred me but also strengthened Indonesian workers' impression that Philadelphia, especially South Philadelphia, is an unsafe place to live.

It is strange that South Philadelphia is known as an unsafe place among Indonesian migrant workers (IMWs), but most of them live here. I interviewed some participants and my informants to understand why they live in South Philadelphia. The first reason is that IMWs work for agency-identified companies or factories that mostly work in New Jersey and Delaware. The agencies provide transportation for the IMWs, but they only pick up IMWs living in South Philly. The agencies do not want to waste time picking up workers from different areas of South Philadelphia. The second reason is that IMWs can still have contact with other Indonesian communities in Philadelphia. Based on my observations, they tend to choose living together with other Indonesians. I think they need close friendships and brotherhood to cope with their life experiences, including their problems, in big cities like Philadelphia. The third reason is that they can gain Indonesian foods in this area.

My research location was one small area in South Philadelphia. I choose the mosque Al-Falah to be the research center. Al-Falah is the only mosque built by Indonesians in Philadelphia, although there are some churches built also by Indonesians. Indonesian workers are not the only community members who live near Al-Falah. Cambodians, Vietnamese, and African-Americans also live near the mosque. Some of them are refugees because of war in these countries. Since they are old-comers to this area, they dominate some small businesses, such as laundry shops. Most of laundry shops near with Al-Falah are owned by Cambodian and Vietnamese. Not one of them is owned by Indonesian workers. However, some Indonesian workers work in these laundry shops.



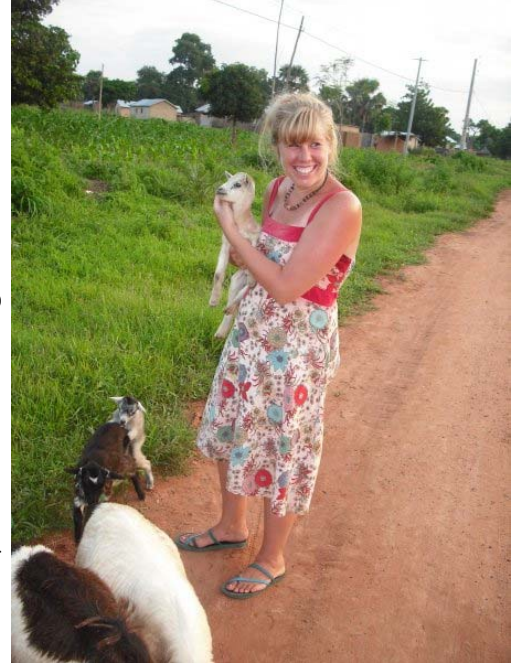
There is no international worker union or organization among Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Indonesians in this area. Indonesian workers tend to communicate and build relationships with other Indonesian fellows. Seemingly, Cambodian and Vietnamese also tend to communicate and build relationship with their countries' fellows. I found different situations when I visited Indonesian-worker communities in Hong Kong in 2005. IMWs in this country not only communicated with other IMWs, but they also built relationships with other workers from other countries. I even found some international worker unions in Hong Kong.

## A Return to Benin to Study Sexual Harassment in Schools

By Nickie Sene

Prior to coming to OU, I served as an education Peace Corps volunteer living and teaching in a small, rural community in northwestern Benin, a small francophone country in West Africa. The school where I was posted served the greater part of the region and maintains one of the widest gender education gaps in the country. Other than the school secretary, I was the only female faculty member on staff and, on average, I had 60-75 students per class, of which only 4-10 were female. Throughout my service, I witnessed acts of sexual harassment of female students by fellow male students, teachers, and school administrators. In spite of all of the wonderful people I met, friends I made, and experiences I shared, in my community, my immeasurably rewarding Peace Corps service also irreversibly changed the way I looked at the girl child's place in the Beninese education system and inspired my thesis research project.

This summer I had the opportunity (thanks to IDS and GSS funding) to return to my old Peace Corps post and conduct original research for my graduate thesis on "Sexual Relationships between Teachers and Students". During my seven week field work, I was able to conduct a total of around 50 interviews among the various community stakeholders (parents, administrators, teachers, and students). My interviews were focused on perceptions of these student/teacher relationships, gauging prevalence, and awareness of the 2006 Sexual Harassment law in the country. All in all it was a very rewarding experience and I learned a lot about the research process through doing. Despite all the progress Benin has made since independence regarding women and children's rights, there still exists a dire need for more concrete sexual harassment implementation policies, reporting systems and enforcement.



### (Botswana – continued from pg. 4)

conducting HIV/AIDS work. I worked with three other students at SAPSSI, the Salvation Army Psycho-Social Support Initiative. This organization works with area middle schoolers to teach about safe sex, making positive relationship choices, gender roles and relations, and other areas in order to provide students with a holistic understanding and prevention of HIV/AIDS. There were definitely some challenges to working with SAPSSI, and much patience was required. However, it was beneficial to see some of the work that is being done, both at SAPSSI and in other organizations



around Gaborone, and I am grateful for the experience.

In addition to the internship, the OU students and I explored Gaborone and got to know some of the students at the University of Botswana. We toured game parks, attended a Botswana National Soccer Team game, and spent a day at the Bahurutse Cultural Village. We also got to travel to the northern border of Botswana to spend a few days in Chobe National Park, going on jeep and boat safaris. A few of us even ventured into Zambia to see Victoria Falls, where I got to go bungee jumping!

While this trip was more for pleasure than research or academic work, it was an invaluable experience just seeing a small part of Africa outside of textbooks. I can't wait to go back.



**Finding Development Opportunities in our own Backyard****By: Lilia Krasteva**

Athens city and Athens County offer valuable opportunities for internship for those who decide to stay here for the summer taking classes or working on their research project.

In Appalachian Ohio one of the negative effects of the deindustrialization is the high unemployment and poverty rates. Along with these challenges, however, goes the impressive work that local people are doing to sustain and develop the community. Athens is striking example of self-empowering (a fancy development jargon), strong and supportive community. Where the state social system is failing, local people are creating opportunities and mobilizing human and material resources for support. Even though this could generate temporarily asynchronies, the net social result is always positive, not to say vital. ACEnet, Rural Action, Passion Works, Athens Farmers Market and Community Action are some of the local NGOs working for economic or social development.

My internship with ACEnet discovered for me how important can be, even here, the first assistance to people who want to start their own small business. Often those are people that have the ideas and the professional skills but lack the business know how, the financial resources or simply the material basis – few elements that cannot miss in the start up. ACEnet business incubator offers this assistance along with what is complementary but for the small local businesses in this area critical, the information exchange and networking. IT, bakery, food production, art-crafts are 'cultivated' in ACEnet. The facts speaks for themselves, over time the supported businesses are steadily developing and expanding their activities.

Entrepreneurs coming from the ACEnet incubator are convinced of the importance of the local businesses for the development not only of the local economy but for the community as a whole. In time when tax breaking that single states are offering act as the main incentive for corporations to reallocate their facilities, locally owned and locally produced can be the durable (sustainable) guarantee for income generation and also for funding of schools and social services in a long term perspective.

For those IDS who did not do it, I encourage all of you people, to visit the nearest small town here – Nelsonville. Another community that will amaze every single visitor with the hidden treasures of art, nature, architecture and history. If you go over the weekend you can ride the old train and buy some nice pottery craft; Final Friday of every month, except the December is for those who are just art-passionate; the Opera house can attract the music lovers with country, jazz, rock, all good music. You will appreciate the community efforts to build Nelsonville as a valuable tourist destination.



Nelsonville - a place in the heart, the historic square restored with community efforts.



Stuart's Opera House inside - preserved as it was and managed by a local NGO.

