



International Development Studies Newsletter

Message from the Director, Dr. Tom Smucker

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Greetings to the International Development Studies community in Athens and around the world! Winter Quarter has brought a flurry of new activities as first year students settle into their academic programs and second year students begin the final stretch of this phase in their academic careers. In this newsletter, we highlight just a few of the recent activities of IDS students and faculty. Sadly, our work this quarter was overshadowed by tragedies that struck near and far. The January 12 earthquake in Haiti and the humanitarian disaster that followed brought students together in a spirit of solidarity with those impacted by the quake, including our Haitian colleagues at Ohio University and recent alum Frednel Isma. IDS students were involved in fundraising for the emergency response and working with Haitian students and alumni to identify opportunities for Ohio University to develop a deeper engagement with Haiti. In Athens, we were deeply saddened by the loss of IDS alum Collins Annin. Collins had recently received his PhD in Cultural Studies from Ohio University. He was a great friend and respected scholar among his peers and the faculty. As we proceed through the quarter, let's take time to remember Collin's passion for education and the Haitian peoples' perseverance and resilience in the face of unthinkable loss.

EMERGING IDEAS

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IDS students bundled up against the Southeastern Ohio winter.

Are you on Facebook or LinkedIn? We are!



Join the Ohio University International Development Studies social networking pages and start connecting with current students and IDS alumni. Check out our groups 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 on LinkedIn, join us at "Ohio University International Development Studies."



Alumni Corner: Spotlight on Cambodia

By Jennifer McArdle

This segment is the first in what will be a series that highlights the experiences of former International Development Studies students. Our department is fortunate to have hundreds of alumni all over the world engaged in stimulating, life-changing work. Here, we highlight just a small sliver of all those individuals whom we are proud to call alumni.

This inaugural segment focuses on the work that two former IDS students are carrying out in Cambodia. **Vishalini Lawrence ('97)** is currently working for Development Alternatives International (DAI). **Sothy Khieng ('08)** is working as a research associate at Cambodia Development Resource Institute.

Why did you come to Ohio University and what was your focus while you were here?

Lawrence: I went into the MAIA program at Ohio University immediately after undergrad. At the time, I was very indecisive and could not narrow down a thematic area of focus. Therefore, the multi-disciplinary nature of the OU MAIA program appealed to me. I received funding and graduate assistant stipend, so that was a big help! At OU, I studied Political Science, International Business (including Economics) and Geography.

Khieng: Ohio University was one of the three universities I applied to through the Fulbright Program. It turned out to possess one of the best programs in International Development Studies, mainly because of its interdisciplinary approach and diversity of international students and cultures and arts in the community. My concentration was on Environment and Development, a field which is very relevant to my country's development dilemma (e.g. building hydro electricity dams to supply the great shortage of electricity or protect the flooded forest for better fishery and biodiversity). I graduated with an MA and a graduate certificate in GIS.



Sothy Khieng

Since leaving the program, what have you been up to?

Lawrence: After graduating from OU, I took a break for about a year to travel around the US and re-connect with family and friends. I stayed in touch with my academic advisor from OU, Dr. Bob Walter, who was doing some consulting work for DAI and encouraged me to apply for an opening in the DAI head office based in Washington DC. I worked out of the DAI head office for 4 years backstopping economic policy reform projects in the Philippines and Ukraine. In 2002, I got my overseas assignment working as M&E and Operations Manager on a conflict mitigation program in Indonesia. In



Vishalini Lawrence

2004, DAI offered me a Program Manager position on a USAID Regional Conflict Management program based out of Nairobi. The project worked on cross-border conflict resolution in the Greater Horn of Africa. I also coordinated a regional anti-corruption project which aimed to reduce the opportunities for corruption in the import and export of goods in East Africa. . My husband and I now live in Phnom Penh, Cambodia where I work as Deputy Director of a \$22 million USAID development project. We've been here since June 2007. I work with a team of 50 Cambodian professionals in 17 provinces. This is a pretty broad project involved in everything from micro enterprise and private sector development in 9 sectors, to policy and regulatory reform capacity building for public sector, to biodiversity conservation and water and sanitation.

Khieng: Immediately after graduation, I packed up for my internship at an international development company Management Systems International based in Washington D.C. I worked there for 6 months earning great experience not

only just from the work at the company itself but about being in DC, witnessing the hot political debates in the capital during the election season. I returned home with pride and great excitement, both to see my family and friends after two and a half years away from home and to have a job waiting for me in Phnom Penh, Cambodia's capital. Since then, I have been working as a researcher in the Economic, Trade and Regional Cooperation Program of a local independent research think-tank called Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI). I have been involving in various research projects: some regional ones in the Greater Mekong Subregion while others include project impacts assessment and research on impacts of the global financial crisis on vulnerable workers. I have learned and enjoyed so much working at CDRI in the research projects of my interest and the travel and capacity building opportunities I have been given.

How did IDS prepare you (and not prepare you) for your work? Were there surprises?

Lawrence: The best thing that happened to me at OU was having the pleasure of having Dr. Bob Walter as my advisor. He was an inspiring professor who was genuinely concerned about giving his students direction about how they could shape their career paths. Dr. Walter was the Director for Development Studies when I was at OU, and despite his busy schedule, would spend hours talking to me and giving me ideas about what sort of things I could get involved with. He has been the most influential person in helping me get my foot into the right door! I credit him with giving my career a jump start. I think the great thing about a place like OU, as opposed to some of the more well renowned universities, is that your professors take personal interest in you. In addition to Dr. Walter, I had a really inspiring business professor named Dr. John Schemerhorn who got me interested in Southeast Asia.

Khieng: Academic life at OU was very demanding and challenging, but this has made me stronger mentally and professionally for my career. Some of the courses I undertook through the IDS program like GIS, World Economic Geography, SPSS, Foundation of Macroeconomics, Development Seminar and the Weekly International Studies Forums have provided me very useful skills and knowledge, getting me more ready for my current research projects. Surprises? Of course, not everything in class is practical and relevant to your immediate job in the real world. The important thing is to make sense of what you have acquired at school and put it to best use in your job. For instance I have had to keep myself open to learning new skills, including new statistic software such as STATA, and different key tools for conducting research.

OU and Center for International Studies Lose a Good Friend

This winter quarter, the university community is mourning the passing of **Collins Annin ('05)**, a graduate of the Ohio University International Development Studies program. A native of Ghana, Annin had also earned a PhD in Cultural Studies from OU. He had been working for several years in the Department of Residence Life, and had plans to return to Ghana shortly. Annin died at the age of 38, and leaves a wife and two young children behind.

Annin was a beloved figure at Ohio University, and his sudden death has greatly impacted his many friends and colleagues. Below is a tribute to Annin that was written by his close friend and fellow Ghanaian student Grace Annor, a current IDS student:

“Brother Collins Annin's death is a big blow for me in person, the Ghanaian community and all who know him at OU. I met Collins the first time last year when we met for an evening prayer meeting in the apartment I shared with another Christian brother. I was met with a broad smile, which made me inquisitive to know more about him. After knowing he was a Ghanaian, a nice relationship emerged, and he has been like a brother to me. All I



Collins Annin

needed to do is call Collins to give me a ride and he was available to do so. I got interested in his research on girls and education in Ghana and always relied on him for articles to write papers when I needed to do so. He would send me emails reminding me of our prayer meetings when the group met in his house after our apartment was vacated. He has always been a reminder, for Collins was a nice man: God-fearing, kind and just ready to keep one on his toes in his service to God. I needed information to contact alumni from Ghana and Collins was the fellow who gave some contact numbers and addresses. He told me he will soon follow the wife to Ghana to work. Little did we know that such a tragedy will soon fall on him. But what can we say? Who are we to question God? We have lost a great man, friend and brother, but I know the Good Lord is the one who knows best. May his soul rest in perfect peace. Collins, da yiye!!!; Collins, hedenyuie!!!; Collins, ya wo gyogbann!!!

-Grace Annor (IDS '10)

Former IDS student making a difference in Haiti

When **Frednel Isma ('09)** graduated from the Ohio University International Development Studies program in 2009 and returned to his home country of Haiti, he could not have predicted the way his world would be turned upside down when the magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck his country on January 12, 2010. Thankfully, Frednel was uninjured, and dove into rescue work right away. However, he did lose many friends and family, as well as his home, office, and many of his belongings. For a while, Frednel was living on the streets of Port-au-Prince.

Frednel, at the time, was working voluntarily for a small NGO that he had helped to start named Collectif de Specialistes en Population et Developpement (COSPED). After the earthquake, COSPED shifted its focus from population issues to relief because of the gravity of the event. Frednel and COSPED are currently organizing and distributing food, water, face masks, and engaged in other recovery efforts in the areas that have received little or no assistance from international aid agencies.

It has now been over two months since this devastating earthquake struck the island of Haiti. But problems are still emerging, and thousands of people are still in desperate need of help. Now, the rainy season is bearing down on Haiti, and many are still living without a covering over their heads. IDS is honored to have an alumni like Frednel representing us in such a momentous time and place. If you would like to help support Frednel, please contact Erica Butcher, Ph.D. at ebutcher10@gmail.com. Ms. Butcher has remained in close contact with Frednel over the last few months and has organized direct donations to COSPED.



Two photos from Frednel. One shows a glimpse of the damage from the earthquake, another shows Frednel creatively using a generator to use his computer.

Alumnus Returns to OU to Speak with Current Students

The International Development Studies department was honored to welcome back alumnus **Diane Francisco ('00)** this winter. Mrs. Francisco is currently the country director of CARE International in Timor-Leste. She shared with the students her story of navigating the world of international development, and offered advice to students as to how they might find success in the field. Thanks, Diane!



Diane Francisco (center) with current IDS students in Yamada House

Impressive Endeavors of Current IDS Students

Siphokazi Magadla ('10) will present her paper "The Uberdiplomat: Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance and South Africa FIFA World Cup 2010" at the 41st Annual Meeting of the The National Conference of Black Political Scientists (NCOBPS) in Atlanta, March 18 - March 21. Also, **Siphokazi Magadla ('10)** and **Jennifer McArdle ('10)** recently presented at the Sports in Africa Conference held at Ohio University. Respectively, their papers were: "The Super-Diplomat: Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance and South Africa FIFA World Cup 2010," and "Gender Empowerment Through Sport: Some Considerations."

Chalisa Magpanthong ('10) plans to present her research this spring at the Communication and Development Conference at Ohio University, the Broadcast Education Association Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, and the International Communication Association Conference in Singapore. Wow!

"I am volunteering for Good Works, Inc., a local non-profit that assists those struggling with poverty in Appalachia. I work at the Timothy House on Central Avenue. It is the only homeless shelter in the 9 surrounding counties. I work there every Thursday night and am loving it."

—**James Laske ('11)**

Mica Barreto Soares ('11) will be attending the UC Berkeley & UCLA Joint Conference on Southeast Asia entitled "Space, Movement and Place in Southeast Asia" from April 2-3 2010. Then, she will be traveling home (East Timor) in July to conduct thesis research on foreign aid activities in East Timor, a comparative study between Australia and China's aid.

Leticia Agyemang ('10) is working on a project aimed at eradicating Buruli ulcer disease in Ghana.

Lilia Krasteva ('10) will be presenting at the Gender Across Borders conference April 2-3 at the University of Buffalo (NY). The tentative title of her paper is "Women, Economy, and the State in Ghana. "

