



Society for International Development
Washington Chapter



FY 2019

ANNUAL REPORT

Young Professionals in Development Network (YPN)

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YOUNG PROFESSIONALS IN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK (YPN)

The SID-Washington (SID-W) Young Professionals in Development Network (YPN) is a group of young professionals in the arena of international development dedicated to strengthening our impact both at home and abroad by building partnerships among peers and facilitating and empowering a peer initiative. Its goal is to promote information-sharing and skill-building for professional development.



LETTER FROM SID-WASHINGTON

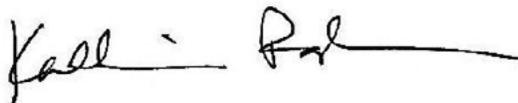
Dear Members of the Young Professionals in Development Network (YPN),

We are happy to report that we had another exciting year! As we reflect on last year, YPN produced several great events, ranging from [SID-Washington Wine Tasting from Developing Countries](#) to [Pathways into Global Careers: Young Professionals Working Abroad & Home](#) to [Gender and Sexual Minorities in International Development](#) to [Experiences and Challenges of LGBTQI Aid and Development Workers in the Field](#).

Since its launch in 2017, YPN has continued to build on its mission to create a space for young professionals in international development to grow professionally through new networking opportunities and event formats. We hope to continue explore new event formats over the course of the next fiscal year!

If you have any questions about YPN, please feel free to send an email to events@sidw.org. We have several events in the works, including a new series, so please stay tuned for more information throughout the year. We look forward to seeing you in the near future!

Best regards,



Katherine Raphaelson



Paul A. Sherman





**Lydia
Cardona**

Manager,
Conservation International

Lydia Cardona is a bilingual international development professional with 6+ years of experience in training, research, and project administration. In her current role at Conservation International, she helps to build staff capacity on environmental peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity through technical support, training design and facilitation, and development of educational resources. Her interest in supporting gender-sensitive and conflict-sensitive conservation through dialogue and consensus building that integrates diverse stakeholder groups is rooted in prior cross-sectoral experiences and time abroad. This interest has since extended to supporting dialogue and peace initiatives within her own community.

Lydia's past experiences include working domestically in public sector consulting, internationally with UN Women and UNICEF, and teaching English in Georgia and China. She holds a master's degree in International Peace Studies from Trinity College Dublin, with a focus on women, peace, and security, and a B.A. in International Affairs from the University of Georgia.



**Jamila
White**

Senior Africa Representative,
Mercy Corps

Jamila White is an International Development Specialist, Humanitarian, and Pan Africanist with more than 12 years of experience managing, designing, implementing multi-million-dollar complex donor funded agriculture/agribusiness, economic growth, ICT, and emergency response programs in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean. Before starting her career, Jamila obtained a Bachelor's degree in Business Management from Hampton University and a Master's in Public Administration with a concentration in Economic Development and International Affairs, from Indiana University. Jamile started her journey in international development after studying abroad in Senegal her sophomore year of college and has spent the majority of her career living in West Africa working on development initiatives in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mali, Ghana, Guinea, and Nigeria for both the private sector and INGOs. Her most rewarding and humbling opportunity was being an Ebola fighter where she managed the National Ebola Response Call Center in Sierra Leone which was the first leg of the response.

Jamila is the Senior Africa Representative for Mercy Corps. Mercy Corps is a global team of humanitarians who partner with communities, corporations and governments to transform lives around the world by alleviate suffering, poverty and oppression to help people build secure, productive and just communities. Jamila helps drive implementation of Mercy Corps Africa's strategy to: Champion and Empower the Young African Leader and co-chairs Mercy Corps DC based People of Color Affinity Group.

Full bios can be found at <https://sidw.org/workgroups/young-professionals-development-network-ypn>

EVENTS CALENDAR

Wednesday, July 25, 2018 SID-Washington Wine Tasting from Developing Countries
6:00PM - 8:00PM | SID-Washington

Thursday, August 15, 2018 Navigating the ICT4Dev Field
6:00PM - 7:30PM | SID-Washington

Thursday, November 29, 2018 YPN After-Party
9:00PM | Proper 21

Wednesday, January 23, 2019 YPN Resume Workshop: Day 1
5:00PM-7:00PM | SID-Washington

Thursday, January 24, 2019 YPN Resume Workshop: Day 2
5:00PM-7:00PM | SID-Washington

Wednesday, February 6th, 2019 Pathways into Global Careers: Young Professionals Working Abroad & Home
5:30PM - 7:15PM | SID-Washington

Thursday, February 28, 2019 Gender and Sexual Minorities in International Development
4:30PM - 6:00PM | SID-Washington

Tuesday, March 26, 2019 Experiences and Challenges of LGBTQI Aid Development Workers in the Field
5:30PM - 7:00PM | SID-Washington



Navigating the ICT4Dev Field

Speakers: **Krista Baptista**, Senior Director, Center for Digital Acceleration (CDA), DAI
Ethel Mendez Castillo, America Hub Manager, Akvo
Kyle Duarte, Director, Digital Solutions, and Advisory Services, FHI360

Event Description: Information and communication technologies (ICT) are changing the face of development and driving impact like never before. The possibilities for innovation seem limitless. Companies are increasingly looking for the next innovator or ICT expert. Could that be you? On August 15th, SID-W's ICT for Development Workgroup and the Young Professionals in Development Network (YPN) learned about the field of ICT4Dev, how to develop expertise in the field (without being a techie), and the tools needed to obtain a job in this fast-evolving sector. Three experts—an entrepreneur, a recruiter, and an ICT specialist—led us through an engaging and participatory discussion, which left them with practical tools and an increased understanding of ICT4Dev

Key Takeaways

1) To develop a career in ICT4Dev, you need to understand the actors and issues in the space and possess various skills that organizations want.

To understand the actors and issues in the ICT4Dev space, the speakers underscored the importance of networking and reading up on issues. **Kristina Baptista (DAI)** mentioned that many events take place in DC where individuals can network with people in the ICT4Dev field, such as monthly happy hours. At these events, job seekers can learn the types of skills for which companies are looking and then highlight those skills in their resumes when applying for jobs. **Kyle Duarte (FHI360)** stressed researching the activities of different ICT4Dev actors and current issues to prepare for interviews. **Ethel Méndez Castillo (Akvo)** and Mr. Duarte also emphasized the necessity of having at least two different skillsets, including communication skills, proposal writing, and language skills. Each speaker also highlighted how invaluable field work can be.

2) The ICT4Dev field needs people to build the bridge between project teams and technologists

As technology continues to advance, more skilled engineers and technologists are needed to develop and operate ICT equipment. However, program implementers are often unfamiliar with the terminology and operations of the ICT field, so bridge-builders between technologists and project teams are necessary according to Ms. Baptista. Because using ICT in development is about working more efficiently, these bridge-builders must understand both the programming and technical sides of ICT4Dev projects to better manage said projects and communicate effectively.

3) ICT is a tool for development actors to solve a problem

In the field, the use of ICT allows development actors to work more effectively and efficiently. Ms. Baptista made clear that the goal is not necessarily to increase the application of ICT in development projects, but to improve the sector's operations. According to Mr. Duarte, every use of ICT in development must be connected to a mission or goal. For example, Akvo used data and mapping technology to improve the water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) sector in nine west African countries according to Ms. Méndez Castillo. The data collection and the mapping of these water points have enabled governments to reveal the non-functional ones and to find patterns in the problems that they encounter.

4) While adding more ICT to development projects may bring many benefits, actors must realize that technology can also do harm

Using ICT in development projects may have unintended consequences. For example, Ms. Méndez Castillo mentioned that the privacy and security of data varies among countries, so collecting data could make people more vulnerable to malicious actors. Furthermore, Mr. Duarte commented that the collection of data could alienate host government actors if it reveals corruption or the misuse of funds, which could lead to increased online censorship.

Pathways into Global Careers: Young Professionals Working Abroad & Home

Moderators: **Bunmi Akinnusotu**, Deputy Director, Rangel Fellowship, Howard University
Christina Hardaway, Foreign Service Officer, U.S Department of State

Speakers: **Amb. Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley**, Former U.S Ambassador, Republic of Malta
Francisco Bencosme, Asia Pacific Advocacy Manager, Amnesty International USA
Mena Cammett, Risk Management Officer, Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, World Bank
Brionne Dawson, Sr. Director, US Chamber of Commerce
Nadia Farra, Syria Desk Officer, U.S. Department of State
Tina S. Gaddy, Senior Manager for Employer Relations and Programming, George Washington University Elliott School of International Affairs
Freda Green, Director, Recruitment, Creative Associates International
Dominic K. Hawkins, Senior Associate, Public Affairs, SKDKnickerbocker
Charlotte G. Kea, Senior Advisor, Peace Corps
Heather Lane Chauny, Foundation Relations and Strategy Advisor, FHI Foundation
Chris Lara, Graduate Research Fellow, Duke University
Rosita Najmi, Program Officer, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Dana Olds, Director and Co-Founder, One World Foundation
Keetah Salazar-Thompson, Coordinator, Action Alliance for Preventing Sexual Misconduct, Office of the Administrator, USAID
Chris Watson, Business Development Manager, Premise Data

Event Description: It's a classic chicken and egg problem. In international affairs and international development, most global jobs require previous international experience either in the "field" or in some international capacity. How can you gain experience without obtaining a job? The Thursday Network and the Society for International Development, Washington Chapter's Young Professionals in Development Network collaborated to host this event that explored the skills required and opportunities to obtain a job in the field and home offices - in international affairs and international development

Key Takeaways

1) Maintain your relationships

Networking can be hard, but young professionals need to constantly reach out to new people while staying in touch with those they have met in the past. **Nadia Farra (State Department)** says finding the time to grab coffee with someone for 15 minutes can be tricky, but try it. These interactions create genuine relationships within networks, and those connections will be more willing to help in the future. **Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley (Former Ambassador, Malta)** stresses that having an outgoing personality makes networking easier, but discipline is what young professionals really need to maintain relationships.

2) Sell those soft skills

Soft skills are the most important, marketable and promotable to have according to **Heather Lane Chauny (FHI Foundation)**.

Having good interpersonal skills may not seem as important as having experience, but employers do look for them. Taking small skills from previous experience and bringing them to the table to sell to an employer will make a candidate stand out.

3) Two types of mentorship

Freda Green (Creative Associates International) believes a good mentor works in a position that someone aspires to have. They can offer guidance throughout careers and give advice for navigating the obstacles that they have already endured in their careers. **Chris Watson (Premise Data)** mentioned that a mentor does not always have to be older. They can also be other young professionals who are working in international development, but in a different area. With relationships like these both persons act as mentors and mentees, bringing their problems to one another and providing a different perspective to find a solution.

4) Making money in international development

Many panelists disagreed with the notion that young professionals cannot make a comfortable living while working in international development. By tracking their steps and planning for their career young professionals can fulfill their passions while providing for themselves. Making an investment in a job can pay off. A job may not be glamorous, but can pay off down the road in terms of senior positions. However, if an employer offers to conduct an interview while working somewhere else, take it and see what happens.

5) Specialize or Generalize?

The panelists debated the need to specialize or generalize. Opinions varied, but **Keetah Salazar-Thompson (USAID)** pointed out that young professionals should do what motivates them. Each person takes a different path to reach their goals, so young professionals should not feel that one way is wrong or limiting for a career. If someone has a passion for what they do, then they will find opportunities for themselves.



Gender and Sexual Minorities in International Development

Moderator: **Randal Mason**, Principal, Randal Mason Consulting

Speakers: **Urooj Arshad**, Director, International LGBTQ Youth and Health Rights, Advocates for Youth

Ryan Ubuntu Olson, Technical Advisor, Palladium

Dr. Chloe Schwenke, Adjunct Professor, University of Maryland

Event Description: In recent years, LGBTQ rights have increasingly become a focal point of international development agendas. Governments, corporations, and international organizations have instituted a range of new policies around the protection of gender and sexual minorities, and the world's largest donors have instituted new initiatives (USAID's LGBT Vision for Action and UK Aid's Leave No One Behind). Yet, gender and sexual minorities in aid recipient countries continue to face continued, and in some cases increased, violence and oppression.

In this panel discussion, we addressed key international development issues facing the LGBTQ community, including legal and policy barriers faced by gender and sexual minorities in developing countries, and the importance of supporting the rights of gender and sexual minorities in achieving inclusive development. Our panel also discussed programming examples and best practices to optimize support to gender and sexual minorities through development projects, and the importance of working with local LGBTQ advocacy and development organizations.

This was a joint event with the Gender & Inclusive Development.

Key Takeaways

1) The Importance of Data: The Starting Point to Stop Marginalizing Communities

Dr. Chloe Schwenke (University of Maryland) began the panel by addressing the main challenge of working with minorities in international development. She mentioned that the data marginalization affects policy and program arrangement to provide opportunities and access to minorities. Counting and recognizing their data holistically would help in achieving the goals of inclusivity. In addition, **Ryan Ubuntu Olson (Palladium)** added that communities have always been working underground, increasing the importance of creating supportive environments and encouraging solidarity.

2) Decriminalizing Sexual Identity and Creating Inclusive Spaces: South Asia Study Cases

Urooj Arshad (Advocates for Youth) shared her experience while working with communities in South Asia, especially in India and Pakistan. She stated that there are two important points for promoting inclusive spaces: (a) mutual acknowledgment and understanding that sexual identities are moral discourse subjects, not laws, and (b) using the term diversity inclusion instead of LGBTQIA, which would by itself deliver a robust foundation (most cases of inclusivity consist of the intersection of many identities, such as race, education, culture, gender, and sexual identities).

3) The Role of Promoting Diversity and Inclusivity in International Development's Traditional Sectors

Randal Mason (Randal Mason Consulting) highlighted the panelists' input about how policy analysis and best practices of programs has shown that political willingness of local and national governments in diversifying representatives for the social minorities played crucial roles in supporting international organizations' projects. According to Arshad, the international advocacy movement was often labeled as a neo-colonialist agenda while the binary gender perspective was perceived as westernization. Therefore, it is important for international organizations to have an in-depth understanding of the local context regarding gender and identity.

4) Moving Forward

Olson also agreed that in terms of preparing for future programming, the upcoming five years would focus on engaging young people with cross-sector networks and organizations. Organizations should work with young people to duplicate what works for them at the local level using the previous policy reports and global best practices as the foundation. Dr Schwenke also mentioned the urgency of strengthening a "do no harm" approach in every aspect of program design and implementation, especially while working with the local activists and organizations.

Experiences and Challenges of LGBTQI Aid Development Workers in the Field

Moderator: **Jordan Long**, Director, Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity Programs; Senior Counsel, Center for Human Rights, American Bar Association

Speakers: **Miguel Baca**, Director of Environment and Health for the Latin American & Caribbean/Global Region, DAI

Panelist 3, Legal Advisor, Program Director Research, Evaluation, and Learning, American Bar Association Rule of Law initiative

Event Description: What is it like to live and work in a context in which homosexuality is considered “nonexistent”, perhaps illegal, or dangerous even? And what is it like to identify with others in the context where you work who are also LGBTQI but live without the same protections you do because of nationality?

These questions are part of an often-neglected discourse that has been missing among development and aid circles.

In discussions of power and privilege in international development, the theme of sexuality remains both taboo and neglected. From a high-level perspective in our context, the challenges and policy inequities that LGBTQI persons experience are often projected in the media and produce a public discussion that enables solidarity and activism. In the professional sphere, however, these experiences are far less evident, and strong barriers inhibit open dialogue about workplace inequities. This is far more compounded across the international development and aid sectors, which span globally across contexts where respect for local norms may be at odd with individual rights.

This panel featured LGBTQI aid and development professionals with experience working in the field who addressed the above questions and more. Panelists examined the challenges and barriers queer professionals face personally and professionally while working in this industry and offered insights and resources for coping and mobilizing change.

This event was co-hosted with the Gender & Inclusive Development Workgroup, who hosted an earlier event on February 28, 2019 on Gender and Sexual Minorities in International Development

Key Takeaways

1) The importance of Visibility and a Role Model in the Professional Environment

Jordan Long (ABA) opened the discussion by asking the panelists about their experience navigating their identities in the workplace and the diverse community. Panelist 3 (ABA ROLI) shared the challenges that she faced during the early stage of her career. As the visibility of LGBTQI professionals in the workplace is low, it is important to have a LGBTQI role models to feel included and to adapt with the professional world. She also shared her experience in protecting her personal information because of how people could react to her identity in a professional context, which has created limitations in her job.

2) Navigating the Environment: to be Open or to Protect Your Identity?

Miguel Baca (DAI) mentioned how a sexual identity is a political tool. He explained how it makes a statement to others and adds

additional value because of the way a LGBTQI professional views a situation compared to a cisgender heterosexual professional. Baca also stressed that with sexual orientation in the field, international development workers should be smart about acknowledging the safety of a working environment. Baca shared his story of navigating his identity professionally, as certain people in society and the working community made his situation more difficult. Another challenge in advocating for inclusive and safe spaces in the field is how local communities consider a professional’s identity. They may have labeled the international development worker as a stranger or visitor with temporary placement. It creates an expiration date for the tolerance and inclusive space in the workplace. This could harm local LGBTQI professionals who came out when the safe space was there but become vulnerable when that safe space disappears.

EVENT SUMMARIES

3) Training and Knowledge Learning About Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation in Headquarters (HQ) and the Field

Jordan Long (ABA) shared his experience working and living in the field and being part of the political process in promoting policy to support non-cisgender heterosexual partnerships. Moreover, Long mentioned two critical points: (1) the spectrum of gender identity and sexual orientation is developing, and policies must be revised at both the main office and in the field; (2) striving to eliminate discrimination in the workplace is a work in progress. Long supports a community that builds an awareness and an understanding about gender identity and sexual orientation at the workplace through tools such as offline trainings or online platforms. It helps to create inclusive and minority-friendly workspaces as well as provide teams the knowledge about identities that creates a safe working environment for all.





**Society for International Development
Washington Chapter**

1129 20th St. NW, Suite #500
Washington, DC 20036
+1-202-331-1317

@SIDWashington | #SIDWLive



For more information, contact us at events@sidw.org.

SID-Washington Staff

Katherine Raphaelson - President
kraphaelson@sidw.org

Paul A. Sherman - Senior Programs Manager
psherman@sidw.org

FY 2019 Network Co-Chairs

Lydia Cardona - Conservation International
cardona.lydia@gmail.com

Jamila White - Mercy Corps
jamilawhite08@gmail.com

Acknowledgement

We would like to thank former Program Associates Lauren Faloni and Maame Esi Eghan for their hard work to create this report.