



Society for International Development
Washington Chapter



FY 2020

ANNUAL REPORT

Young Professionals in Development Network (YPN)

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YOUNG PROFESSIONALS IN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK (YPN)

SID-Washington's Young Professionals in Development Network (YPN) is a collaborative space for young professionals (under the age of 32) interested and working in international development and dedicated to strengthening its impact both at home and abroad by building partnerships among peers and facilitating and empowering a peer initiative. YPN's goal is to provide a space for young professionals to network, learn more about the sector, participate in cutting edge debates and discussions on current development issues, and access professional development tools, resources, and skill-building workshops.



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

Our Fiscal Year 2020 was an unusual for us, as it was for so many, ending during a global pandemic. This certainly affected our ability to deliver programming, but despite this hurdle, the Young Professionals in Development Network (YPN) still produced numerous excellent events, both on its own and in collaboration with various Workgroups. These events included [Working to Solve the Climate Crisis: Entry Points to Sustainable Careers](#), [Resilience and Adaptability in the Job Search](#), and [COVID-19: The Rise of Food Insecurity at Home and Abroad](#).

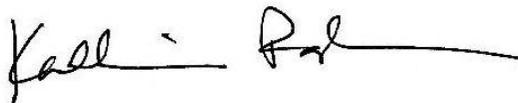
We would like to thank former Co-Chairs Lydia Cardona (Conservation International) and Jamila White (BlaKQuity). They helped us put on many fantastic events during their tenures. We wish them the best in their future endeavors. That being said, we welcomed Chizi Igwe (Dalberg Advisors) as the new Co-Chair. We are excited to work with her over the next few years!

Now that we have mastered the art of virtual programming, we look forward to offering more events accessible to a wider audience and providing an even more dynamic community for interaction. You can see all of our programs on our [website](#) – and please check back often as we add new ones regularly.

Thank you for your continued interest in and support of our Workgroups and Networks. If you have any questions, comments or ideas, please feel free to send an email to events@sidw.org.

We hope to see you at future SID-Washington events!

Best regards,



Katherine Raphaelson



Paul A. Sherman



Chizi Igwe

Associate Consultant,
Dalberg Advisors

Chizi Igwe is an international development professional with 4+ years of experience in program management. In her current role at Dalberg Advisors, she helps governments, NGOs, foundations and social enterprises around the world address their most pressing development questions. Her interest in the development world was inspired by her study abroad experience in Europe and solidified by her experience in the WASH sector in Beijing, China and Seattle, Washington.

Chizi's past experience includes working with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to elevate the status of fecal sludge management within WASH, designing and managing programs in the tourism sector and teaching English in China. She holds a master's degree in International Business from the University of International Business and Economics and a B.A. in Business Administration with a focus in finance and international business from the University of Cincinnati.



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

Principal, BlaKQuity

Jamila White is an International Development and Humanitarian expert with 15 years experience managing, designing and implementing more than 100 million dollars in complex economic and social development initiatives in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Americas. Raised in Virginia and Southeast D.C., Jamila's life's work has been focused on opening doors, creating access, and supporting Black, Indigenous and people of color worldwide. Jamila holds 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. She was recently elected to local office in Washington D.C. and was sworn in as a Commissioner in January 2021 to a two-year term.

Tuesday, August 6, 2019 YPN Happy Hour
5:30PM - 7:00 PM ET | Eighteenth Street Lounge

Wednesday, September 25, 2019 YPN Resume Workshop
5:00PM - 7:00 PM ET | SID-Washington

Wednesday, November 13, 2019 YPN Planning Meeting
4:30PM - 6:00 PM ET | SID-Washington

Wednesday, January 22, 2020 Working to Solve the Climate Crisis: Entry Points to Sustainable Careers
5:30PM-7:00 PM ET | SID-Washington

Thursday, January 23, 2020 YPN Resume Workshop
5:30PM-7:30 PM ET | SID-Washington

Tuesday, March 10, 2020 Global Health Career Panel
5:00PM - 8:30 PM ET | Recessions Bar & Grill

Friday, April 24, 2020 YPN Virtual Happy Hour
5:30PM - 7:00 PM ET | Online via Zoom

Thursday, May 14, 2020 COVID-19: The Rise of Food Insecurity at Home and Abroad
11:30AM - 1:00 PM ET | Online via Zoom

Thursday, May 21, 2020 Resiliency and Adaptability in the Job Search
12:00PM - 2:00 PM ET | Online via Zoom



Young Professionals in Development Network (YPN) Planning Meeting

Workgroup **Lydia Cardona**, Manager, Conservation International
Co-Chairs: **Jamila White**, Principal BlaKQuity

Event Description: The Young Professionals in Development Network (YPN) met on Wednesday, November 13th at 4:30 PM to plan events for the group in the next year. In recent months, the group organized events on topics such as [Pathways into Global Careers: Young Professionals Working Abroad & Home](#), [Gender and Sexual Minorities in International Development](#), and [Experiences and Challenges of LGBTQI Aid and Development Workers in the Field](#). All members were encouraged to join and to bring ideas for event formats and topics.

Key Takeaways

I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Vision Statement

YPN Co-Chairs Jamila White and Lydia Cardona asked the attendees to break into small groups and come up with a YPN vision statement. This vision statement described the main characteristics and purpose of the young professional networks. Since most of the attendees were new to YPN and the D.C. area, this exercise helped to conceptualize the core values of the network.

The most mentioned words and phrases were:

- Impact, resources, reach, connection, value, network.

Vision statement examples:

- #1: YPN is the core hub of the overlapping young professionals in development in Washington D.C.
 - Group 1 suggested that YPN can utilize workplaces, current students, subject interest/expert groups, YFPF, InterAction, school alumni directory, and RPCVs to expand its current network.
- #2: Young Professional's Impact doubled through YPN connection.

III. Current State

Lydia Cardona led the next discussion of reflecting on the current programs and communications. The discussion focused on:

Event topics

- YPN events aim to inform young professionals in the development space about the current development practices, and stay connected with the current news. With this principle, YPN has hosted time/topic-relevant events in the recent months.
- These events received great feedback from participants, and YPN will continue to present topic-relevant events in the future.

Communications and network

- The primary way to stay involved and connected with YPN is to attend events. However, members find it difficult to create personal relationship with others.

- Although a YPN Facebook group exists, it is underutilized (Most attendees at this event did not know about this group).

IV. SWOT Analysis

After reflecting on the current state of YPN, Jamila White and Lydia Cardona asked attendees to brainstorm topics of interest for future events and communications and think of the pros and cons:

- YPN Member Speed Dating
 - To strengthen the personal relationships between YPN members, a speed dating event will help members get to know each other, and build stronger and more long-lasting connections.
- Common Interest/Area Group
 - A new way to attract potential members and engage with Institutional Members.
 - Eg. Africa Group can invite a SID-W Institutional Member such as African Services Committee to facilitate event.
- Flash Mentoring with SID-W Board Members
 - A long-term mentorship program is preferred, but it is difficult to implement, considering board members are busy.
 - Flash mentorship session (1 to 3), similar to the one during the 2019 Career Fair for YPN members. This will be extremely helpful for young professionals seeking advice in career development.
- Membership Directory & Google Form
 - YPN members can create a directory within the group themselves. A google form will be used to collect member info (area interests, employment info, education background, etc.).
 - Current YPN members can volunteer to be the point of contact for this project. Once information is collected and compiled, YPN can talk with SID-W staff to find a place to publish the information.

V. Action Planning and Next Steps

Based on the discussion, the Co-Chairs will compile the feedback from the meeting and coordinate with SID-W staff to roll out exciting events over the course of the next year.

Working to Solve the Climate Crisis: Entry Points to Sustainable Careers

Moderator: **Megan Evansen**, Conservation Science and Policy Analyst, Defenders of Wildlife

Speakers: **Erin Beasley**, Manager, Climate Change Policy, Conservation International
Milena Gonzalez Vasquez, Climate Change Specialist, Global Environment Facility (GEF)
Whitney Muse, Senior Consultant, Deloitte
Kathryn Stratos, Director, Office of Global Climate Change (E3/GCC), USAID

Event Description: Climate change has been called by many as one of the greatest global issues of our time. The impacts of climate change know no boundaries, making it a “threat multiplier” associated with conflict, migration, and global security implications. Earlier this year, climate scientists issued a dire warning: the world has one decade to act decisively to avoid 1.5C of warming and the catastrophic impacts that would follow. The catalytic moment we are living in has brought social and political conflict around this theme, as well as intrepid leadership from youth like Greta Thunberg. With so much momentum focused around this issue of global scale, young or established professionals alike may be wondering how to shift their career focus to contribute to generating key solutions. What does it really mean to work on climate change and international development, and what are entry points for professionals new to this field?

This panel discussion brought together professionals from diverse sectors, including government, environment, and business, who are working on addressing climate change from varied entry points. Panelists shared insights on entering into this field and discussed key sectors that must be engaged to generate meaningful impact on this issue.

This was a joint event with the Environment & Sustainability Workgroup.

Key Takeaways

1) Challenges of Working in the Field

Erin Beasley (Conservation International) explained the challenges of keeping up with exponential change. In her experience, it can be difficult to develop a specific world view, learn new tools and concepts, and get used to particular spaces of work while also assisting the growing urgency of the work that needs to be done.

Kathryn Stratos (USAID) added that communicating effectively about climate change and making it understandable to colleagues in other disciplines can also be very challenging. Although she appreciates that the urgency of the matter is increasing its presence on different social media outlets, it is still a challenge to engage others in the community as many senior managers are busy with other pressing issues. Stratos concluded by saying that the success of working in climate change will happen when we can engage effectively in economic policy and finance.

Milena Gonzalez Vasquez (Global Environment Facility) explained that regulatory work is challenging when keeping up

with the changing pace of things (innovation, environment, culture, etc.). In particular, Gonzalez Vasquez finds it difficult to wait and see how a project is executed and how its results might exceed expectations. Gonzalez Vasquez believes that, with the rapid change of innovations on the ground, it can be especially difficult to provide tangible results while managing the time lag of funding because it requires thinking five to 10 years ahead.

2) Working with Institutional Models

Whitney Muse (Deloitte) shared that the field needs more professionals on the risk finance, management, and transportation areas.

Milena Gonzalez Vasquez (Global Environment Facility) discussed that the field needs more people in its Green Finance area since many companies either hire a technical or finance person. Gonzalez Vasquez further explained that having someone who specializes in Green Finance brings both technical expertise and the finance knowledge.

3) Advice for Someone Looking into the Field

Stratos discussed the importance of social justice and practical solutions. Stratos advised that if facing a challenge where communities have to be resettled, strategically come up with a practical way to support other people and think about the benefits of the work and the solution.

Muse added the importance of having the ability to communicate clearly so others can understand the importance and benefits of the work being done.

Lastly, Beasley shared the significance of filling the gap in the scientific knowledge. Beasley advised the audience to read more science-based articles and look for partnerships in coalitions to contribute to the work that is already being done.

4) Surprises in the Work of International Climate Change

Beasley noted that she is very impressed by the engagement of other countries. She explained that although governments

are not designed to solve climate change, they have been provided the responsibility to contribute to the solution under the Climate Agreement.

Stratos shared her challenge in understanding what it will take for senior managers and colleagues in other disciplines to take climate change seriously. Stratos also added her surprise on seeing theory put into practice.

5) Hopes for the Future

Beasley shared that her hopes come from the youth climate movement. By listening to the words shared by youth climate activists, Beasley explained that their urgency helps create a sense of reality regarding what is going on.

Gonzalez Vasquez noted that energy transition is something that gives her hopes as it is good news from the finance side.

Muse shared that the increasing engagements between the local and national level initiatives is something that keeps her hopeful.



Global Health Career Panel

Moderator: **Kris Panico, MSPH**, Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCV), Kyrgyzstan '13, Ukraine '14

Speakers: **Julie Becker, MSc**, Senior Vice President, Global Health Division, Chemonics International
Cristine Betters, Managing Director, International Development Division, Abt Associates
Farley Cleghorn, MD, MPH, Global Head, Health Practice, Palladium
Loyce Pace, President and Executive Director, Global Health Council (GHC)
Julie Wallace, MPH, Malaria Division Chief, Global Health Bureau, USAID

Event Description: SID-Washington's Young Professionals in Development Network (YPN) and the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Washington, D.C. (RCPV/W) hosted a career panel featuring RPCVs and career professionals working in Global Health. The panelists spoke about their career paths in this sector and shared tips for job seekers. This event was hosted at Recessions Bar & Grill.

Key Takeaways

1) Desirable Skills for Employment in Global Health

As job markets become increasingly competitive, potential candidates are always looking for ways to get ahead. **Loyce Pace** (Global Health Council) stated that she looks for a strong work ethic matched with strong interpersonal and communications skills in a potential employee. Pace highlighted the importance of intuition and feels strongly that an employee should not only be able to think critically, but should look at issues broadly to analyze how projects may be connected. **Julie Wallace** (USAID) feels strongly that technical skills can be learned in any position through training and practice, but that social and personal skills – more often referred to as “soft skills” – are the most desirable. Wallace stated that the art of communication, the ability to listen, and the willingness to participate and collaborate are often just as impressive, if not more impressive, than advanced technical skills. **Christine Better**s (Abt Associates) emphasized the importance of proficient language skills, mentioning French specifically. Better has used French in almost all aspects of her career, and she stated that her ability to speak a second language elevated her to senior-level management positions. Better added that strong writing abilities are a must; she highlighted the difference between writing a two-sentence Instagram post versus drafting a 25-page summary and encouraged the crowd to focus on enhancing their writing across all formats and assignments. **Julie Becker** (Chemonics) discussed the importance of field work, and the ability to “get your hands dirty.” To Becker, experience is everything when it comes to the field of global health. In her opinion, if a

candidate presents themselves for an opportunity with little to no field experience, they are much less likely to be offered a position.

2) Networking for Introverts: Advice, Tips, and Tricks

Networking can be intimidating and stressful for many, especially those who consider themselves introverts. The panelists shared their thoughts on networking for introverts and provided ways in which individuals can feel more confident networking with professionals in their respective fields. Better shared the importance of utilizing professional and alumni connections and emphasized reaching out to them to see what opportunities they may provide.

3) Best Foot Forward: Interview Advice and Skills

Wallace shared that getting ahead in the global health sector requires commitment and research during the interview process. According to Wallace, she interviews many qualified candidates for positions, but some fall short when they fail to explain the details of the desired position. Wallace underscored the importance of doing basic research at a minimum before an interview so that candidates can accurately describe the details of the position. **Farley Cleghorn** (Palladium) stated that job searches are about competition and that standing out from other applicants. He described how more individuals are graduating from MPH graduate programs today and are entering the workforce with an inadequate amount of job experience. Cleghorn emphasized that he is looking for employees who are personable, hireable, and have the potential to grow into leadership positions.

COVID-19: The Rise of Food Insecurity at Home and Abroad

Moderator: **Rebecca Middleton**, Executive Director, Alliance to End Hunger

Speakers: **Jim Flock**, Chief of Party, Feed the Future Tanzania NAFKA II Activity, ACDI/VOCA
Kim Ford, President and CEO, Martha's Table
Radha Muthiah, President and CEO, Capital Area Food Bank
Carrie Stoltzfus, Executive Director, Food & Friends

Event Description: The COVID-19 pandemic is poised to have a profound effect on the food security of millions of people globally. The World Food Program predicts that there will be more than a quarter of a billion people suffering from acute hunger by the end of the year, almost double the pre-pandemic level. Efforts to contain the virus, both here in the United States and around the world, have resulted in the unprecedented loss of livelihoods, disruptions to food systems, and massive demand for social safety nets. Domestic and international organizations have long worked to respond to food insecurity – both chronic and as a result of acute shocks. However, the covariate risk of COVID-19 and its global scale has resulted in urgent needs at home and abroad. In this special session we considered the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic both overseas and in the DC metro area. We heard from a panel of experts working to respond to the massive growth in hunger, and we discussed practical ways to improve our work overseas and help our neighbors here at home.

This was a joint event with the Food Security & Agriculture Workgroup.

Key Takeaways

1) How are organizations responding?

Jim Flock (ACDI/VOCA) discussed how ACDI/VOCA is forming partnerships with major agricultural actors to increase the food supply during the current period of global pandemic. Flock added that ACDI/VOCA is responding to COVID-19 by encouraging farmers to focus on growing indigenous crops, as they are more suitable during extreme climate events, provide a long-term food security option, and help to curb poverty in rural areas during drought and other crop failure events.

Kim Ford (Martha's Table) stated that Martha's Table is working around the clock to register clients through its COVID-19 food relief program. At the same time, Ford is also committed to maintaining the same team members and not reducing salaries or working hours to protect her employees from food insecurity.

Carrie Stoltzfus (Food and Friends) highlighted that Food and Friends is delivering 5,000 more meals per week than it was before the pandemic started. Stoltzfus added that Food and Friends has introduced eleven meal plans that are medically tailored to client needs. This has helped individuals who are not able to prepare high nutritious meals on their own.

Radha Muthiah (Capital Area Food Bank or CAFB) mentioned that CAFB is responding to the pandemic using three phases: response, recovery, and rebuilding. According to Muthiah, CAFB uses data to determine where food-insecure clients reside and create drive-through models and food trucks based on those locations. CAFB is also working closely with producers, farmers, and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to further provide food from farms to trucks.

2) How is COVID-19 affecting food insecurity?

Flock expressed his concern about how food insecurity affects small farmers in the context of COVID-19. Flock mentioned that farmers are currently facing difficulties in finding markets for their products and potential customers. School feeding programs have also had to decrease the number of meals that they can provide due to the lack of communication between farmers and processors.

Stoltzfus shared the difficulties of creating tailored, medically-specific meals for people suffering from serious illnesses. Stoltzfus mentioned that immunocompromised persons are currently facing difficulties due to the need for social distancing and minimal access to health providers. Stoltzfus

added that health care providers face food insecurity at home because they are at a much higher risk of contracting COVID-19 and therefore need to be more frequently isolated.

Muthiah mentioned that there are about 400,000 food insecure individuals in the greater DC metro area. CAFB distributed over 30 million meals per year through a network of more than 450 regional nonprofit partners and 300 direct distribution partners. Muthiah highlighted that in addition to providing food through partners, CAFB also distributes food directly to the community. The direct food programs include after-school meals for kids, free produce markets, and emergency food distributions. However, there has been a dramatic decrease in the distribution of food due to increased demand. Muthiah expressed her concerns surrounding the number of food donations that CAFB has received since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, as there may not be a return to normal until late December in the best-case scenario.

Ford briefly shared that Martha's Table has changed its operations due to high demand from the COVID-19 pandemic. Ford mentioned that Martha's Table changed from distributing

500 to 2,500 bags of groceries per day. Martha's Table also introduced ten community drop off sites in the northwest and southeast DC to support families who are unable to afford essential needs like groceries.

3) What are the future solutions?

Muthiah mentioned that CAFB is already thinking about the long-term effects of COVID-19 so that it can build better and more resilient delivery services for its clients. Financial support is and will continue to be critical in delivering resource-intensive food acquisition. As an example, CAFB will continue to engage in public-private partnerships to increase its reach in the community. Muthiah also emphasized the importance of having regional development conversations regularly to discuss food insecurity and protecting vulnerable populations.

Additionally, Stoltzfus highlighted that Food and Friends expects the demand for its services to increase in the coming years. As a result, Food and Friends is planning to expand its partnerships with other food network organizations to accommodate its client's needs in the future.





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Photo Credit

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