

Canadian Association for the Study of
International Development (CASID)

and the

Canadian Consortium of University Programs
in International Development Studies (CCUPIDS)

The Career Paths of IDS Graduates in Canada

A joint CASID/CCUPIDS Project

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<http://idsemployment.weebly.com/>

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Executive Summary

This report addresses questions about how IDS education in Canada impacts on the careers of IDS graduates and their pathways from university into the workforce: Are IDS graduates happy with their careers? How much money do they earn? What kinds of jobs and what sectors do they work in? What pathways do they take to reach professional employment? Do IDS degrees prepare them for the jobs they seek?

The report is based on 1,901 responses from graduates of 14 IDS programs across Canada that was administered between March and May 2016. The median age of respondents was 26 and the median years of work experience was 7.7, which makes these results particularly relevant to recent graduates.

The findings in this report are significant for IDS students planning their education, IDS graduates planning their careers, and IDS professors and administrators who plan the curricula of IDS programs. This study also provides insights into the career paths of students graduating from IDS programs in Canada and how their education impacts them beyond salaries and work experience on their values and behaviour as global citizens.

The report highlights 6 central findings:

- IDS graduates find well-paying, satisfying professional jobs in a wide range of fields. At the time of the survey, 86% of IDS graduates were employed and just 4.8% were unemployed and looking for work. In total, 40% of IDS grads earned over \$60,000 and 65% earned over \$40,000. These figures are promising given the early career stages of most of the respondents. Over 80% of IDS grads were satisfied or very satisfied with their career trajectories.
- IDS graduates are also highly educated. Over 57% had an additional degree beyond the Bachelor's level and almost 50% had plans to pursue further education and professional training.
- IDS graduates experience significant challenges in breaking into the job market, particularly in the international development sector. Just 19.2% of IDS grads reported that their jobs were directly related to international development, while almost 40% reported that their jobs were not related at all. However, respondents also reported that regardless of their careers, their IDS educations had profound impacts on their world views and their ongoing values and behaviours as global citizens.
- The most significant barriers to employment reported by IDS grads were 'not enough jobs' and 'too much experience' required, but many of them also highlighted the need for particular skills which they did not have and which IDS programs did not help them to develop, in particular second language skills, and financial management skills.

- The skills and competencies that IDS grads identified as most important for finding a job included the transferrable skills of writing, communications, interpersonal and cross-cultural communications and especially networking. Respondents emphasized repeatedly that finding a job requires the capacity to build strong professional networks.
- IDS grads considered their educational experience to be directly linked to lifestyle factors and values related to global citizenship. Their studies shaped their activism, political activities, consumer behavior, environmental practices, commitment to development charities, careful following of the news, and community engagement. Thus, IDS degrees prepare students for professional careers but also foster their capacities for active citizenship in Canada and globally. Furthermore, the participants highlighted how IDS shapes their worldviews even if it does not correlate with career outcomes.

Acknowledgements

This study brings together scholars from the Canadian Consortium of University Programs in International Development Studies (CCUPIDS) and the Canadian Association for the Study of International Development (CASID), under the primary guidance of Dr. Rebecca Tiessen (University of Ottawa) and Dr. John Cameron (Dalhousie University).

CCUPIDS and CASID would like to thank the members of the steering committee who oversaw this project (Leslie Chan, Marc Epprecht, Charmain Levy, Liam Swiss), our colleagues and their student research assistants in 14 IDS programs across Canada who oversaw data collection and contributed ideas and support throughout the project, and the International Development Research Centre of Canada (IDRC), which provided not just financial support but also highly constructive suggestions and ideas throughout the research process.

We also want to thank research consultants Shannon Kindornay and Aniket Bhusan who designed the survey instruments, administered the survey and conducted background research for the project as well as research assistants at the University of Ottawa (Katherine Lemay, Midori Kaga and Katelyn Cassin), who provided support with data collection and report writing.

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Introduction

Since the first International Development Studies (IDS) program in Canada was established in 1974, this field of study has grown to include over 20 universities and colleges with more than 15,000 graduates of programs at the Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral levels. While interest and enrollment in programs for the study of International Development have grown, little is known about the career paths and employment outcomes of these students. The dearth of research, either quantitative or qualitative in nature, impedes responsive program design by the administrators of IDS programs, and limits informed decisions by students about how to prepare for future careers in a range of fields, including but not limited to the so-called 'development industry' of aid agencies and non-governmental organizations. A better understanding of the career paths and employment outcomes of IDS graduates is particularly important given that the number of graduates is far greater than the availability of paid positions in the development sector and at a time when the 'barista myth' casts doubts on the employability and income earning potential of graduates with social science and humanities degrees (Finnie et al. 2016).

We recognize that the purpose of higher education extends far beyond training for the workforce, particularly in IDS, where values of global citizenship are central to the mission of our programs. However, the evidence presented in this report also suggests that IDS programs in Canada may need to do more to help their students prepare for an uncertain and highly competitive job market.

The goal of this project was to better understand the ways in which IDS education in Canada impacts on the subsequent careers of IDS graduates and the pathways that IDS grads traverse from university into professional careers. Based on conversations with our IDS colleagues and with many IDS students and graduates, we wanted to know: Are IDS graduates happy with their careers? How much money do they earn? What kinds of jobs and what sectors do they work in? What pathways do they take to reach professional employment? We also wanted to find out how IDS education influenced the values and civic engagement of IDS alumni in the years following graduation. And finally, we wanted to know what lessons the employment experiences of IDS graduates hold for IDS programs so that they can better prepare their students for professional employment in a range of fields.

The findings presented here offer a national picture of the employment outcomes of IDS graduates. A French version of this report is also available at www.IDSEmployment.weebly.com Each IDS program will have unique findings based on their specific models and approaches¹. Some of the results (on rates of employment and incomes) from the survey should be reassuring to IDS students, while other results provide important food for thought, both for the design of IDS programs and for the

¹ Individual confidential data reports for the 14 IDS programs that participated in this study were sent to the Program Chairs.

specific choices that students make within IDS programs (such as whether to study a second language, study abroad, and undertake volunteer work).

Methodology

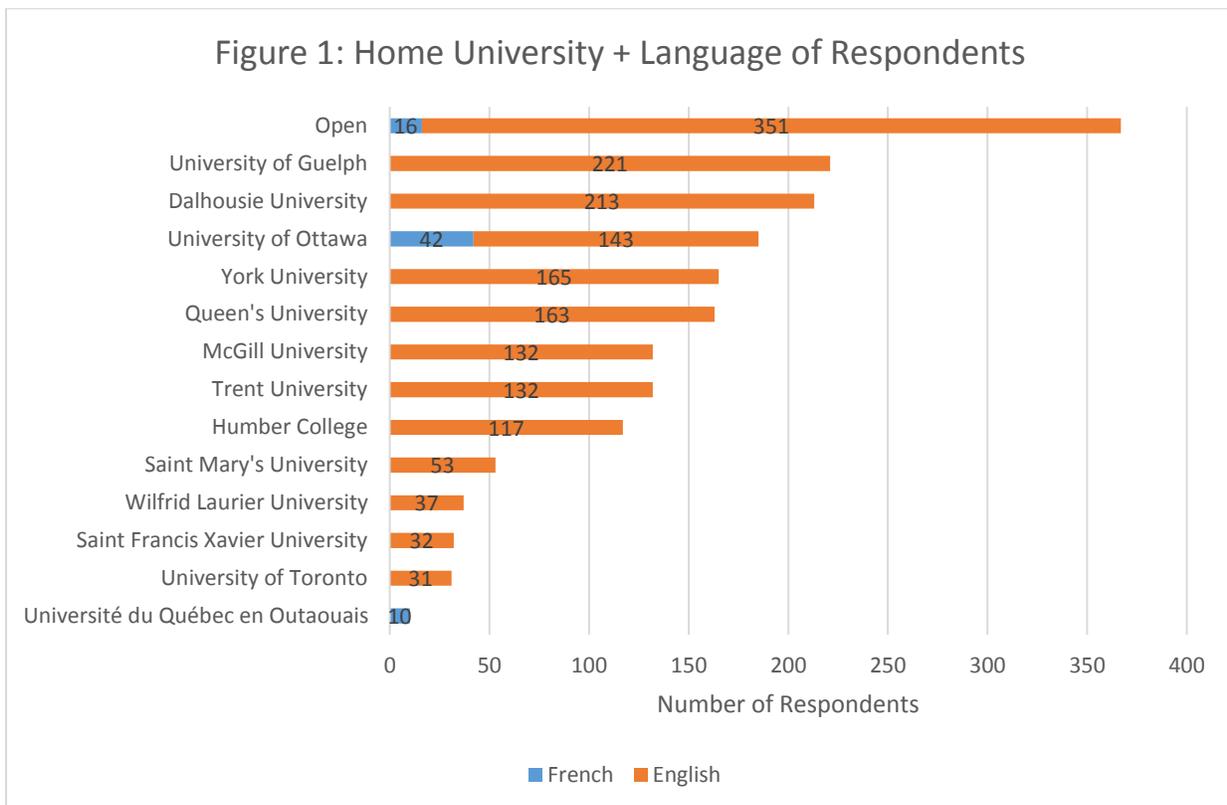
The data presented and analysed in this report were collected in a survey of IDS graduates from 14 universities and colleges. The survey was conducted in French and English and was available between March and May 2016.² The participating programs were selected based on their program's student population size and the number of years the program has been offered as well as variations in program design and regional location. The survey included 146 questions about career paths, employment history, and educational experiences, as well as an open-ended question that allowed IDS graduates to provide their own narratives of their post-graduation employment experiences (See Appendix 1). The survey was distributed by each of the participating IDS programs directly to their respective alumni. An open version of the survey was also promoted through CASID and other networks which generated responses from 351 IDS graduates, the vast majority of whom had studied at one of the 14 participating institutions. In total, the survey received 1,901 completed survey responses, with 520 relevant responses to the open-ended question. The data from the quantitative section of the survey were then analysed to examine possible correlations between specific features of a graduate's education and the subsequent employment experiences. The data from the open-ended qualitative section of the survey were coded and analysed to identify key trends in the career paths of IDS graduates and their reflections on their post-secondary education.

As the first such study within Canada, the data and this report offer some initial insights into career paths and employment outcomes. Additional research questions emerge from a pioneering study such as this and we recognize that more research would offer additional insights and information that may be useful to students, IDS program faculty and staff, and employers. As we concluded the analysis we also identified correlations between survey responses that we wished we had examined more carefully, but didn't. Given the large number of questions (146) and large number of responses (1901), it was beyond the scope of this project to examine all of the possible correlations between education experiences and career paths. For example, we did not examine academic performance and the subsequent career paths of IDS graduates. Survey data collected for this study are available for further analysis. You can access the data on the project website: <http://idsemployment.weebly.com/>

² The 14 participating institutions were: Dalhousie University, Humber College, McGill University, Queen's University, Saint Mary's University, St. Francis Xavier University, Trent University, University of Guelph, University of Ottawa, Université du Québec en Outaouais, University of Toronto, University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University, York University.

The Survey Sample

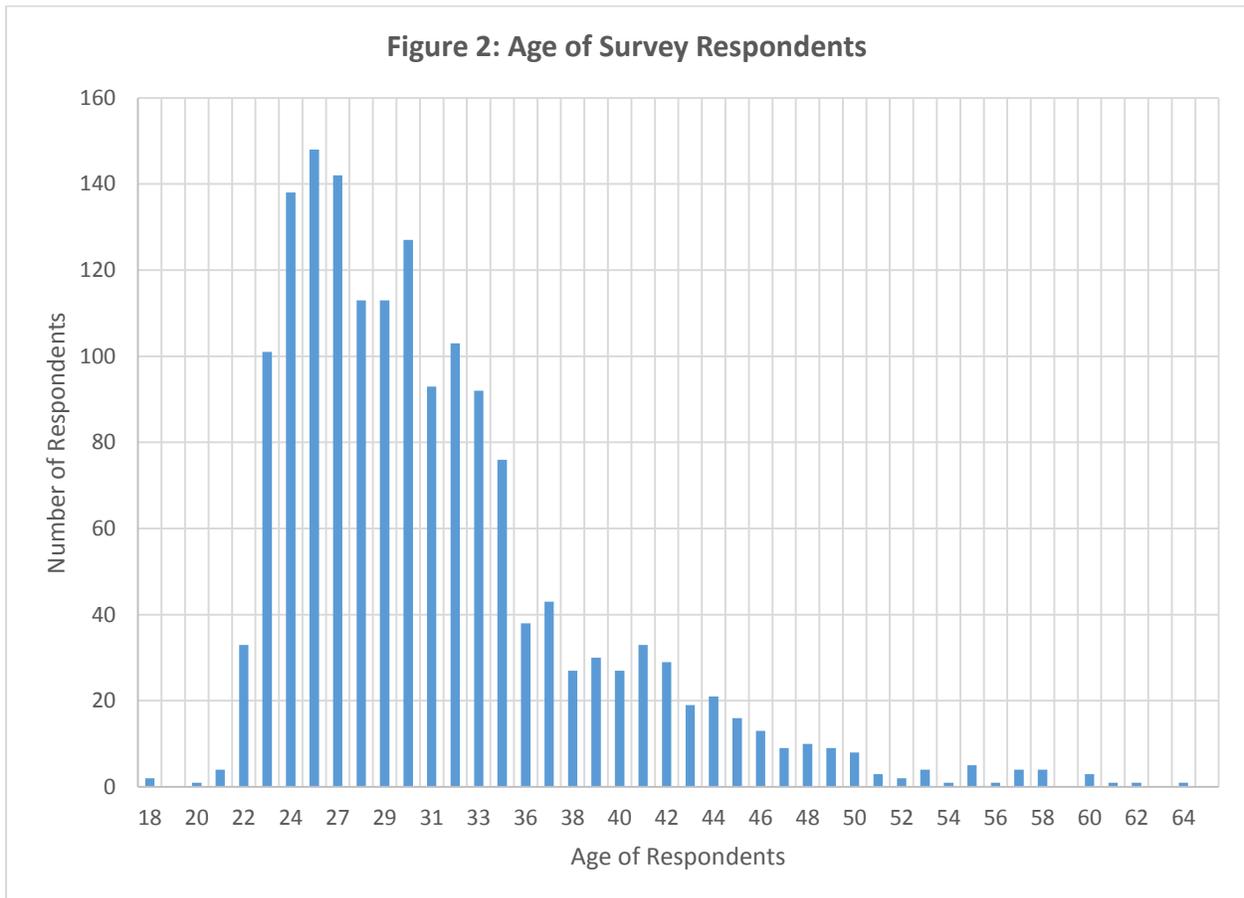
Home Universities and Language: Figure 1 outlines the number of responses from each of the 14 participating IDS programs as well as the open version of the survey. 95.6 % of the survey responses were in English and 4.4% were in French. The disproportionately small number of French responses reflects the small number of universities with large numbers of Francophone students that belong to CCUPIDS (McGill University, University of Ottawa and the Université du Québec en Outaouais).

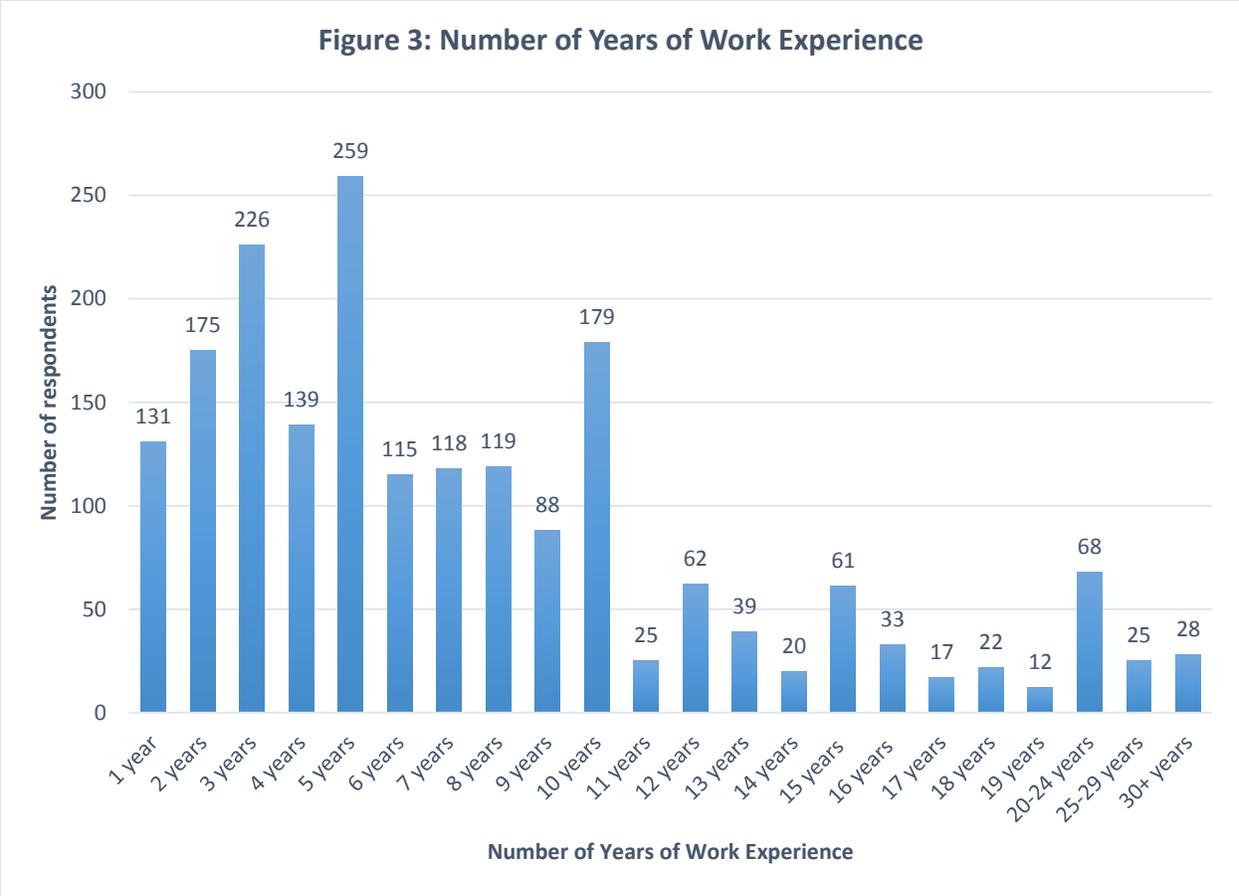


Gender: The majority of participants identified as female (76.3%), which matches the enrolment patterns in most IDS programs in Canada, and is slightly higher than the proportion of women (63%) in the 2009-10 cohort of social science graduates in Canada (Ferguson and Wang 2014).

Age and years of work experience: 81% of respondents were between the ages of 21 and 35 (Figure 2) and the average number of years of work experience post-graduation was 7.7 (Figure 3). As a result, the data analysed in this report primarily reflect the experiences and perspectives of IDS graduates at relatively early stages in their

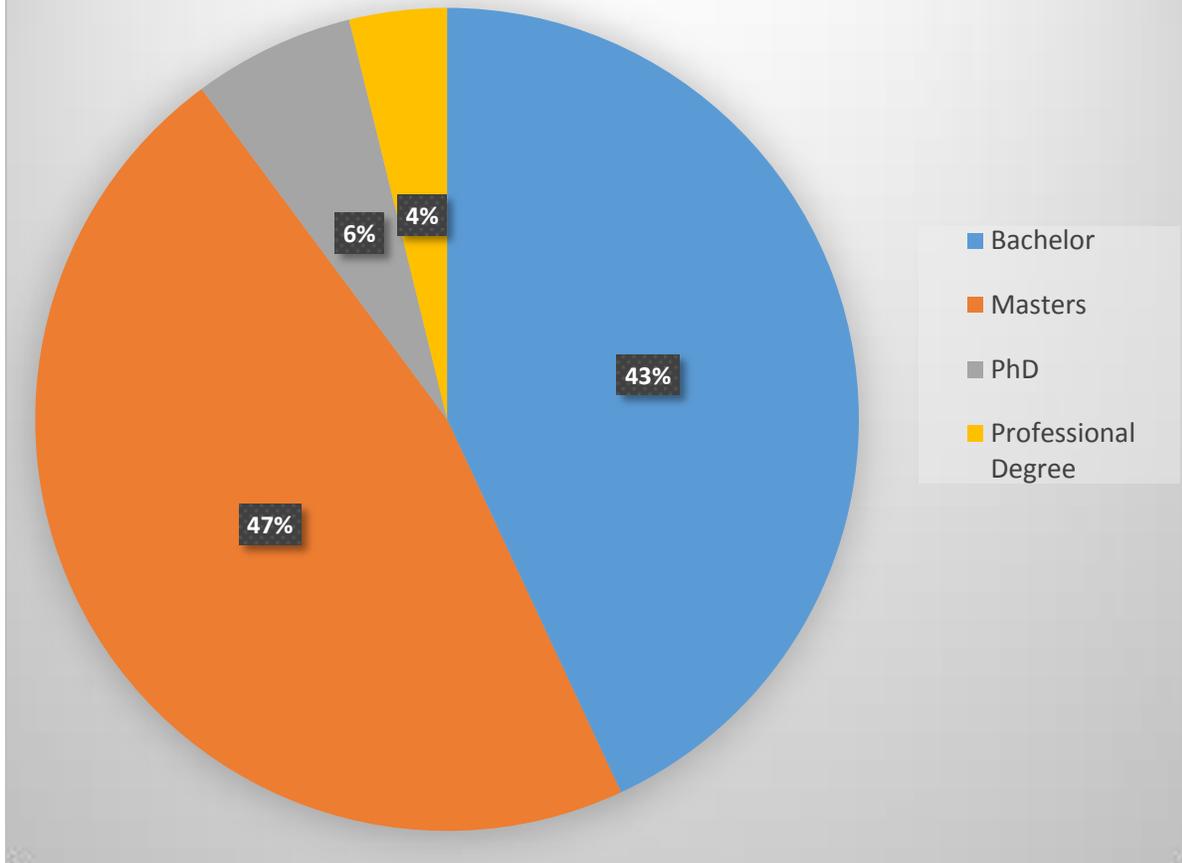
careers. While this particular group may not represent the entire spectrum of IDS degree holders in Canada, the employment experiences of these relatively recent graduates are likely to be of particular interest to students currently in IDS programs or considering those programs as well as to other recent graduates.





Education: In terms of education, 2 respondents (0.1%) held a college diploma; 814 (42.8%) held a Bachelor’s Degree; 885 (46.5%) held a Master’s Degree; 119 (6.3%) held a PhD; and 72 (3.8%) held a professional degree beyond the Bachelor’s level (primarily Bachelor’s of Law) (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Highest level of education of IDS graduates in survey



1. Post-University Career Paths in Canada: What Research Tells Us

As tuition and student debt rise at universities and colleges in Canada and stories about youth unemployment and underemployment spread, growing numbers of students are concerned to know what kinds of jobs they can expect after graduation from particular fields of study, how they will need to prepare to compete for those jobs, and how much money they can expect to earn. IDS is not exempt from this trend. In this context, university administrators and professors are also under increasing pressure to demonstrate the links between particular fields of study and subsequent employment

and income. This pressure is particularly acute in the social sciences and humanities, where the ‘barista myth’ that graduates from these fields will not find rewarding or well-paid employment is leading many students into the so-called STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math). Recent research by Finnie and colleagues (2016) debunks the barista myth by demonstrating that social sciences and humanities graduates do find well-paying jobs, but fears of unemployment and low pay continue to shape the decisions of both students and university administrators.

Before examining the specific employment outcomes of IDS graduates in Canada, it is useful to place the data that we analyse in this report in the broader context of recent trends in employment and post-secondary education. Because of differences in methodology and scale, the data presented in this report on IDS graduates cannot be compared directly to research on employment outcomes from other fields, but a broader comparative perspective does help to understand the experiences of IDS graduates in relation to their peers with degrees from other programs.

Employment and Incomes of University Graduates in Canada

A number of recent reports have used Statistics Canada data to track the employment levels and incomes of university graduates across a range of fields of study. Although none of these reports provides data on the outcomes of graduates from specific programs, such as IDS, they do provide useful data on the outcomes of graduates of social science programs, which includes IDS. Significantly, all of the available data debunks the ‘barista myth’ that graduates from social science and humanities are destined to insecure, low wage employment. While graduates of other programs, such as Engineering, do earn higher incomes, the data indicates that social science graduates have performed well in the job market, including after the 2008 financial crisis (Ferguson and Wong 2014; Finnie et al. 2016).

In terms of employment, the Statistics Canada 2014 report, *Graduating in Canada: Profile, Labour Market Outcomes and Student Debt of the Class of 2009-2010*, found that 3 years after graduation, 95% of social science graduates were employed (84% full time, 11% part time), slightly better than the average rate of employment of 92% across all Bachelor programs (Ferguson and Wang 2014: Table A5).

In terms of incomes, the Statistics Canada data for the 2009-10 cohort indicate that social science graduates were earning good incomes. In 2013, the mean annual income for the 2009-10 cohort of social science graduates was \$47,000, in comparison with a mean income of \$53,000 for graduates of all Bachelors programs. The top 25th percentile of income earners in the 2009-10 cohort of social science graduates earned a mean income of \$58,000 in 2013, in comparison with a mean income of \$68,600 across all Bachelor programs (Ferguson and Wang 2014: Table A11).

The 2016 report of the Education Policy Research Initiative (EPRI) uses Statistics Canada data to track the incomes of graduates from a range of fields at 4 Canadian

universities over 8 years for the cohorts that graduated in 2005 through 2012 (Finnie et al. 2016). The data indicate mean earnings in the year following graduation of \$36,300 for social science graduates, in comparison with mean earnings of \$45,200 across all disciplines (Finnie et al. 2016: 10, 13). By eight years following graduation, data indicate that the mean incomes of social science graduates rose to \$61,900, in comparison with \$74,900 across all disciplines (Finnie et al. 2016: 10, 15).

Advanced Education and Employment Outcomes

Canada has seen a trend towards higher levels of education among Canadians, most commonly in fields related to business, management, and marketing (Statistics Canada 2015). While a smaller portion undertake study in the social sciences (7.5% of degree holders in 2011), a high proportion of those students (67%) pursue additional education beyond their Bachelor degrees (the average across all disciplines) (Statistics Canada 2015). For IDS students, this means that over two-thirds of their peers in social science programs pursue post-graduate education and training. In this context, an undergraduate degree on its own may not be sufficient preparation for a competitive job market.

The 2012 and 2015 Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC) graduating student surveys demonstrate that higher levels of education positively correlate with the likelihood of attaining “the job they had hoped for” within three years of graduation (Prairie Research Associates 2012; 2015). This is reflected in survey data on the relatedness of studies to areas of employment after graduation. While 81% of college students and 80% of undergraduates across all disciplines testify to a “close” or “somewhat close” correlation, that figure jumps to 92% for Master’s students and 96% for doctoral students (Ferguson and Wang 2014, 45).

For social sciences specifically, 44% of Bachelor degree holders in the 2009/2010 cohort reported that their work was “not at all related” to their degree, while 36% reported that their work was “somewhat related” and just 21% reported that their work was “closely related.” By comparison, just 19% of graduates of all Bachelor level programs taken together reported that their job was “not at all related” to their degree, with 22% reporting that their job was somewhat related and 58% reporting their job was “closely related” (Ferguson and Wang 2014: Table A7). Taken at face value, this data suggests a higher level of disconnect between field of study and field of employment for social science graduates than the average across all post-secondary programs, but it may also represent a lack of understanding among social science graduates of the transferrable skills that they acquired through their undergraduate degrees – and hence the significant scope for social science programs, including IDS, to improve the awareness among students of the employment-related transferrable skills that they possess.

The data on connections between field of study and field of employment also shows significant improvements for social science graduates from Masters and PhD programs.

At the Masters level, 61% of social science graduates reported that their current work was “closely related” and 23% reported their work was “somewhat related” to their highest degree, with only 15% reporting that their work was “not at all related.” At the PhD level, 80% of social science graduates reported their work was “closely related” to their highest degree while 17% indicated their work was “somewhat related” and just 3% reported their work was “not at all related” (Ferguson and Wang 2014: Table A7). In sum, higher education at the Masters and PhD levels significantly improves the likelihood that social science graduates will find employment in their chosen field.

The incomes of social science graduates also rise with further education beyond the undergraduate level. For the 2009-10 cohort of graduates, 3 years after graduation, social science Bachelor’s degree holders earned median incomes of \$47,000, while social science Master’s and PhD degree holders earned \$60,900 and \$78,000 respectively (Ferguson and Wang: Table A11).

Experiential Learning and Co-op Programs

As Ferguson and Wang point out in their 2014 analysis of the 2009-10 cohort of graduates, “there are many perceived benefits associated with co-operative education” (2014: Section 3, para 1). Anecdotal evidence indicates that both students and university administrators perceive a strong connection in co-operative and other forms of experiential education in helping students to access jobs in their field of study. The Statistics Canada data on the 2009-10 graduating cohort does indicate positive impacts of co-op education, but also makes clear that co-op programs are not a magic bullet for employment. Students who graduated from co-op programs in 2009-10 performed somewhat better in terms of employment, incomes and connection between field of study and subsequent employment, but only by relatively small degrees (See Figure 5). This data should be considered carefully by administrators of IDS and other social science programs when making decisions about how to deploy scarce resources to promote enhance employment outcomes of their students. Co-op programs are still relatively rare and exclusive in Canada: only 12% of Bachelor’s graduates in 2009-10 participated in a co-op program; within the social sciences the proportion was 6%, unchanged from 2005 (Ferguson and Wang 2014: Table A18). The data on the performance of graduates from co-op programs in comparison with graduates of non-co-op programs is outlined in Table 1 (below). This data represents graduates from all fields of study and it should be noted that co-op programs were heavily concentrated in three fields: Architecture and engineering; math, computer science and information science; and business, management and public administration (Ferguson and Wang 2014: Section 3, para 4), so the relevance of co-op programs to employment outcomes for other areas of study, including IDS, should be interpreted with caution.

Figure 5: Labour Force Activity in 2013 of 2009-10 graduates of co-op vs. non-co-op programs		
	Co-op	Non-Co-op
Employed	94%	91%
Employed Full-Time	90%	83%
Employed Part-Time	4%	8%
Unemployed	3%	5%
Extent to which job held was related to degree program, co-op vs. non-co-op programs		
Job was closely related	69%	57%
Job was somewhat related	18%	23%
Job was not at all related	13%	20%
Median Gross Annual Earnings		
	\$55,000	\$53,000

Source: Elaborated by the authors with data from Ferguson and Wang (2014: Tables A19, A20, A21).

Relationship between Current Job and Field of Study

As noted above, when 2009-10 social science graduates were surveyed in 2013, they reported lower degrees of connection between their field of study and their field of employment in comparison with graduates of other fields. 44% of social science graduates reported that their job was “not at all related” to their degree, while 36% indicated their job was “somewhat related” and 21% indicated their job was “closely related.” By comparison, the data for graduates of all Bachelor’s programs taken together found that 19% reported their job was “not at all related” to their degree, 22% reported that their job was “somewhat related” and 58% indicated their job was “closely related” to their degree (Ferguson and Wang 2014: Table A7).

Taken at face value, this data appears to indicate a relatively poor connection between social science education and subsequent employment. However, the data may also point towards missed opportunities to make social science students aware of the relevance of the broad range of transferable skills which they develop. These missed opportunities are likely even more significant in specific fields of study, such as IDS (or other social science disciplines), where the understandings of the relevance of employment to field of study are highly subjective. For example, one IDS graduate working as a journalist, teacher or lawyer might indicate that their employment is ‘not at all related’ to their field of study, while another IDS graduate in a similar position could claim their education and employment are ‘closely related’ – if they focus attention on transferrable skills of research, critical thinking, writing, oral presentation, team work, cross-cultural communication and global understanding. As we emphasize in the next section of this report, given the relatively small number of jobs in the international development sector in Canada, it is crucial for IDS programs to prepare students for employment in a range of sectors and to highlight the significance of the transferrable

skills that IDS students can develop for a range of careers outside of the narrowly-defined 'development sector.'

Statistics don't tell the whole story

The Statistics Canada data highlighted in the previous sections provides reassuring evidence on the rates of employment and incomes of social science graduates. However, the data alone do not tell the stories of how students transition from university into the workforce, the challenges they face in finding jobs, and the strategies that they adopt to confront those challenges. They data also tell us nothing about how students feel during this transition and whether they are satisfied with their career trajectories. Moreover, the data on social science graduates does not provide any specific information on IDS graduates, which may be different from other social science fields.

Research on the Career Paths of IDS Graduates

A small number of studies specific to IDS in Canada have generated some valuable insights about the connections between education and employment on which this research report builds.³ Child and Manion's 2004 survey of 117 graduate and undergraduate international development students reveals that 90% of graduate and 93% of undergraduate IDS students expected to enter into careers in development after graduation, particularly in non-governmental organizations, government agencies and multilateral institutions (Child and Manion 2004). However, upon graduation, significant proportions of these students felt inadequately prepared to attain those careers (39% of undergraduates and 35% of graduate students). These opinions reflect a "relative (or perceived) scarcity of employment opportunities currently available in the development field" (2004, 177).

Child and Manion's research highlights one of the conclusions of Van Rooy's (1999) analysis of employment opportunities within the international development 'industry' in Canada: the number of jobs in the development sector is small and may be shrinking. For example, an analysis of the Canada Revenue Agency's 'Charity Listings' data for the member organizations of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) indicates that in 2014, the 58 CCIC members with charitable status employed a total of 5,152 full-time employees and 4,499 part-time employees in Canada and overseas. When the data for the largest employer (Canadian Red Cross) are removed, total full-time employment in CCIC member organizations with charitable status was 3,250 and total part-time employment was 1,195 positions.⁴ These numbers do not represent all of the paid positions within the international development sector in Canada, as they exclude smaller provincially-based charities, non-governmental

³ We searched for research on the employment outcomes of IDS graduates in other countries but found no studies that analysed the connections between education in IDS and subsequent career paths.

⁴ This data is available by contacting John Cameron: john.cameron@dal.ca

organizations without charitable status, as well as government (e.g. Global Affairs Canada), multilateral institutions and consultants who provide services to these other organizations. Furthermore, the data do not capture the number of individuals that may pursue employment in the private sector and/or social entrepreneurship. However, the CRA data do give some sense of the relatively small size of the narrowly defined international development sector in Canada. With more than 20 IDS and closely related programs in Canada producing more than 1,000 graduates per year, it is important to understand the kinds of employment these graduates find and to what extent they perceive their employment as directly or indirectly related to international development.

A review of the curricula of IDS degrees in Canada and of the employment outcomes of IDS graduates indicates that IDS students do acquire a broad range of valuable skills that transfer to a wide range of careers. It is crucial that IDS programs accurately represent the career opportunities for graduates and both foster and highlight the transferable skills that IDS students will need to flourish in a range of careers, which include but are certainly not limited to the 'international development sector.' However, it is not clear what skills remain the most useful in relation to employment outcomes.

Across several studies, students indicated that they saw co-operative programs or emphasis on practical skills training as key ways through which this perception of unpreparedness for employment could be remedied (Child and Marion 2004; Einsiedel and Parmer 1995; Grey et al. 2005; Morrison 2004). Similar findings about the perceived importance of internship opportunities or practicum training were reported in the CASID-NSI 2003 "White Paper" on International Development Studies in Canada, which noted specifically the need for development NGOs and governments to work together to review, redesign and expand funding for internship programs with the aim of providing IDS students with greater practical experience.

Notably, two studies have examined the topic of IDS employment from the perspective of potential employers. These studies revealed that the primary skill sets prioritized by employers were soft (transferrable) skills for IDS graduates, namely cross-cultural competence, interpersonal skills, flexibility, problem-solving, leadership, negotiation and self-management skills (Simbandumwe 2006). Further, 47% of the NGO leaders surveyed emphasized the importance of volunteering with an NGO for future employment along with the capacity to multi-task (Robinson 2013), suggesting that even within the international development sector, the skills that employers value most are the 'soft' skills that also transfer to other sectors.

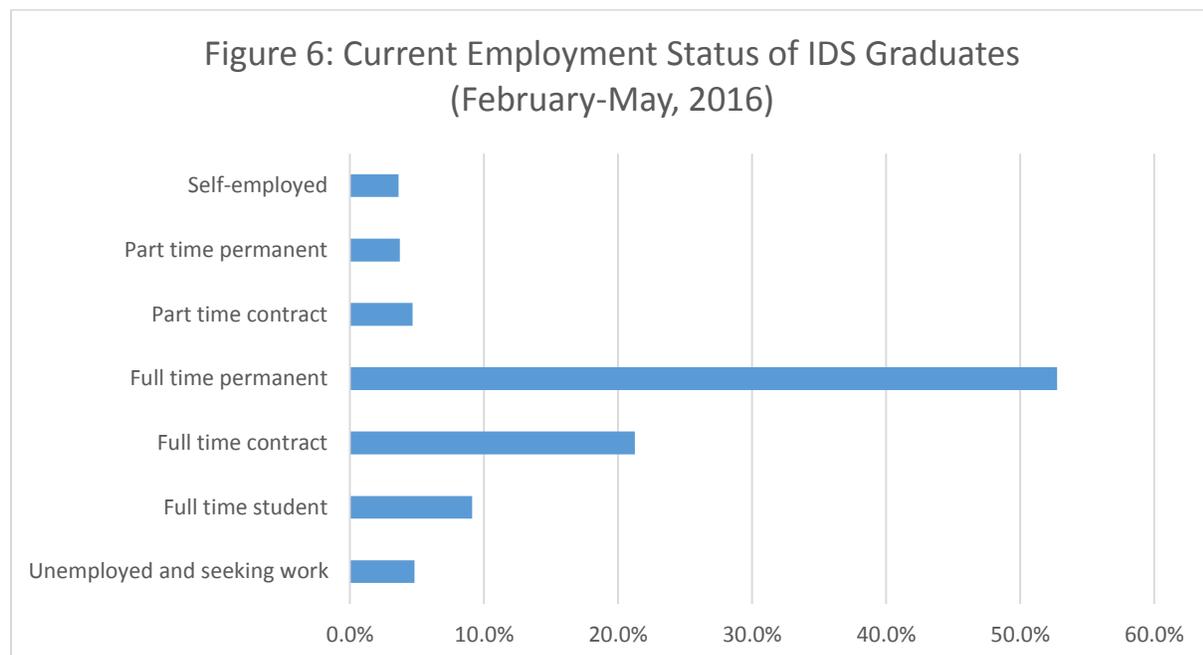
Despite this research, we still know relatively little about the relationship between IDS education and the career paths of IDS graduates, particularly the ways in the careers of graduates are influenced by specific elements of IDS education, such as experiential learning, language study, and overseas experience. The next section of this report seeks to address these gaps in our knowledge about the relationship between IDS education and the subsequent career paths of IDS graduates in Canada.

2. Employment Characteristics of IDS Graduates

Students and recent graduates of all fields of study are grappling anxiously about their future careers: Will there be a job for me after I finish my degree? What type of program will give me the best chance of getting that job? Will a Bachelor's degree be enough? Will a Master's degree help me get a job that I enjoy? Should I take a co-op or internship option? Will study abroad help me to find a job? Will I make enough money in this career path? Will getting more education improve my chances of having a higher income? How much work experience will I need before I get a job in my field? In International Development Studies, students may also have questions such as: Will I need more than one language to get a job in this field? Will I have to work abroad, or will I have the opportunity to work abroad? In this section we present data that helps to answer these questions.

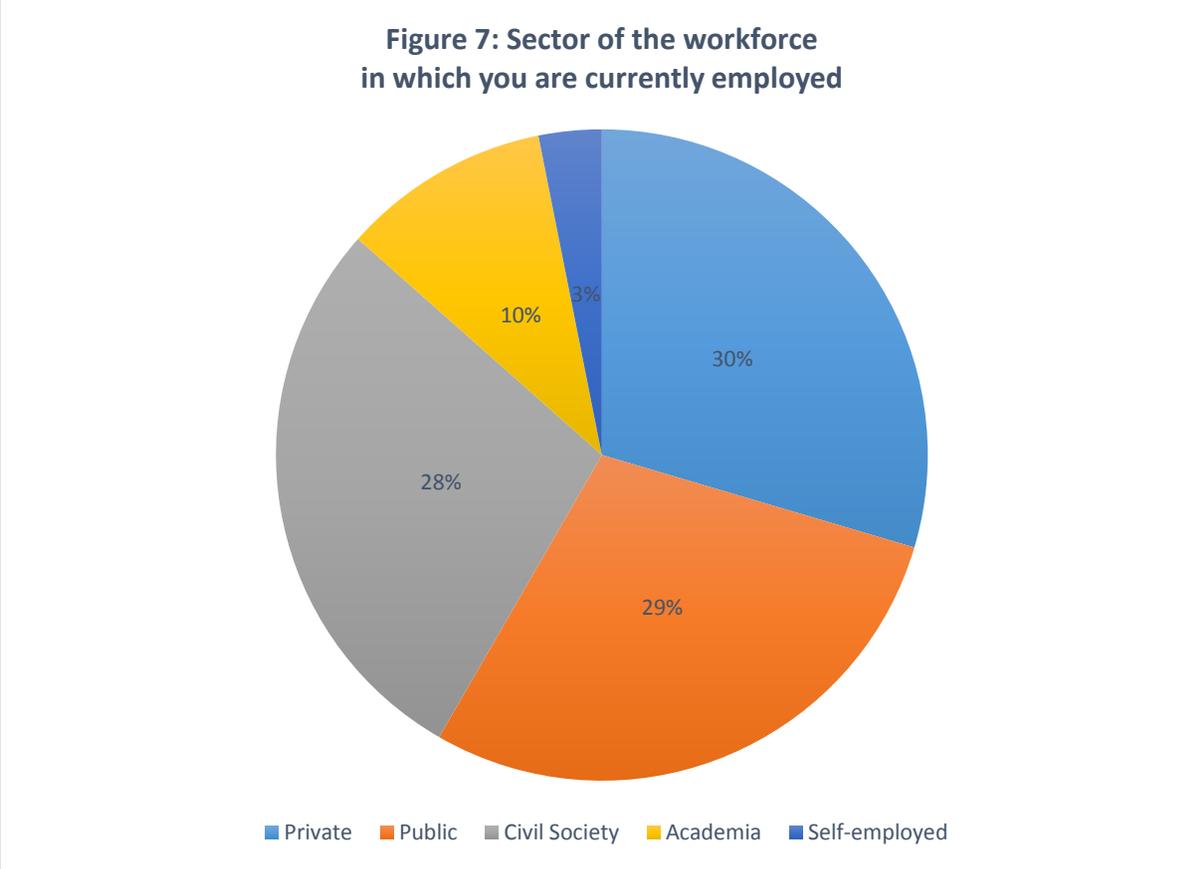
Do IDS Graduates Find Jobs?

Encouragingly, 86.0% of respondents were employed at the time they completed the survey in 2016. As Figure 5 demonstrates, the majority were employed in either full-time permanent (52.8%) or full-time contract positions (21.3%). Moreover, of the respondents who indicated that they were not employed, a significant proportion were engaged in full-time study completing professional or post-graduate degrees, so were not actually looking for a job. Only 4.8% of respondents indicated that they were unemployed and looking for work (See figure 12).

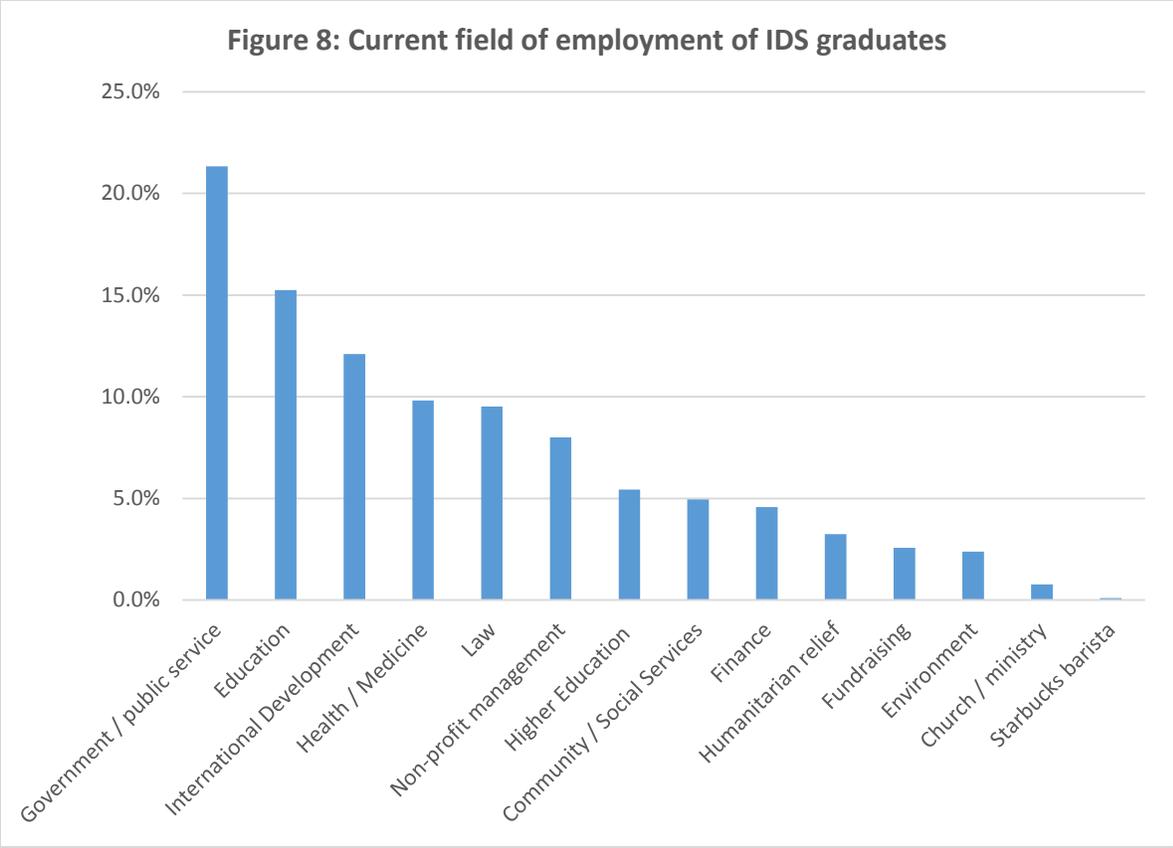


What Sectors and Jobs do IDS Graduates Work in?

Figure 7 displays the sectors in which respondents are primarily employed, showing a remarkably near even split between employment in the private sector (30%), government/public sector (29%), and non-governmental/civil society (28%), with 10% employed in academia/research and 3% self-employed.



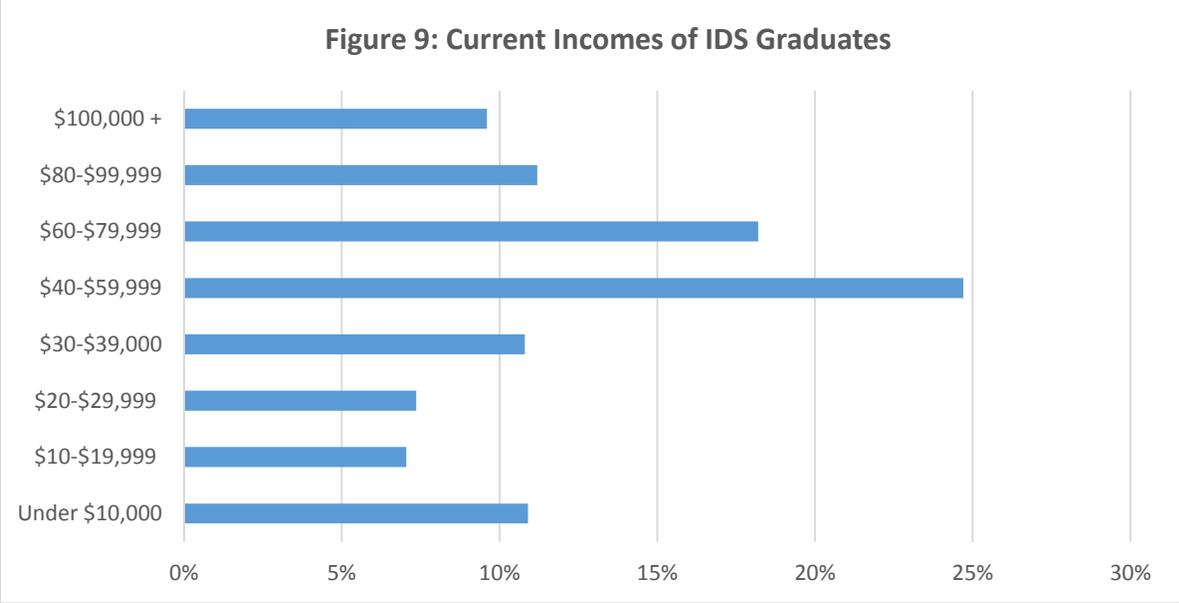
In response to the survey question “What is your current field of employment?” (Question 1.13) IDS graduates gave hundreds of different answers, the most common of which are reported in Figure 8 (below). Significantly, almost all the responses indicated that IDS graduates had found professional employment. Very few responses (1.3%) referred to the retail sector and of the 1644 IDS graduates who answered this question, just one was working as a barista!



Our question “What is your current job title?” also generated hundreds of different responses. While many graduates did not answer the question, the most common were: Consultant (13), Program Coordinator (15), Policy Analyst (13), Program Officer (13), Project Manager (13), Associate (12), Executive Director (10), Manager (10), Program Assistant (10).

How Much Money do IDS Graduates Earn?

The IDS graduates who responded to the survey earn good incomes, particularly given that over 80% of respondents were between the ages of 21 and 35 and a significant proportion were either full-time students (9.1%) or had graduated less than 12 months before the survey (6.1%). The largest share of respondents reported incomes in the \$40,000 to \$60,000 range (25%) followed by \$60,000 to \$80,000 range (18%), and \$80,000 to \$100,000 (11.2%) (Figure 9). It is important to note that this data on incomes is spread across a wide range of careers and numbers of years of employment. Although we did not correlate the years of employment experience with incomes, the Statistics Canada data highlighted in Section 1 clearly indicates that social science graduates can expect their incomes to increase consistently over time.



Are IDS Graduates Satisfied with their Careers and Incomes?

Perhaps even more important than income, IDS graduates responded overwhelmingly that they were either satisfied or highly satisfied with their careers (80.9%) (See Figure 10). Interestingly, the level of career satisfaction had relatively weak relationship to the number of years of work experience and to income.

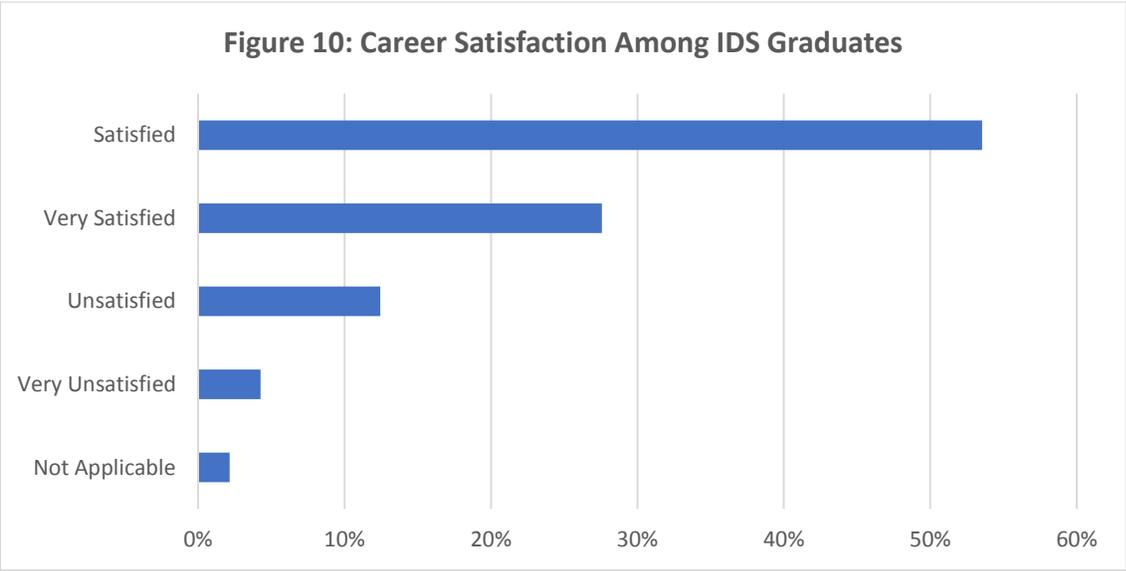
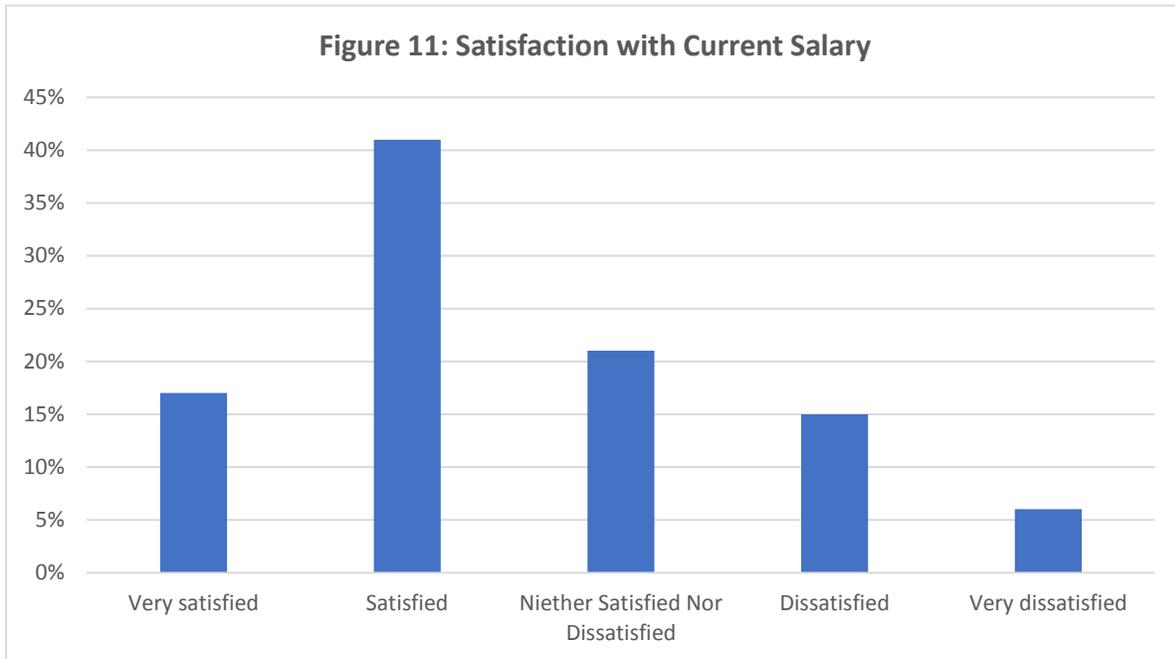
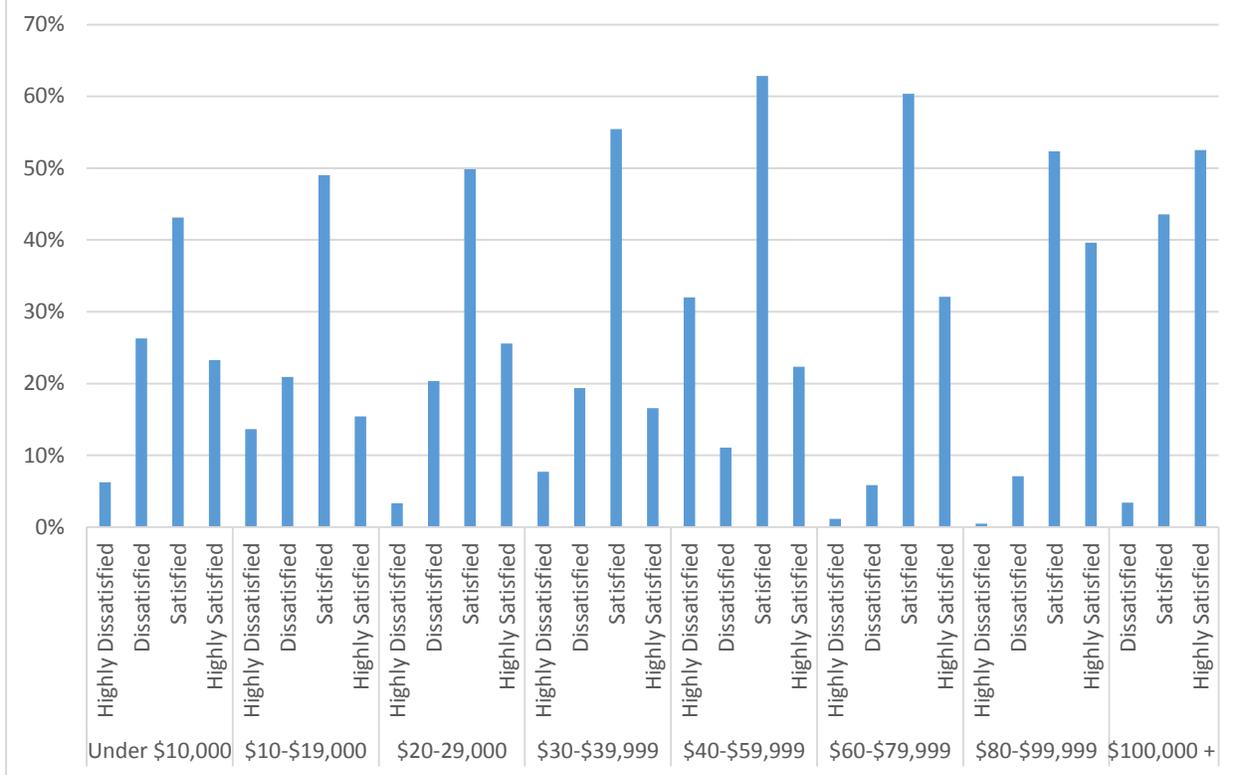


Figure 11 displays respondents' level of satisfaction with their current salaries. The majority of respondents identified as either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied (52.3%), while 18.3% identified as either 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied'.



Current salary alone, however, does not characterize the concerns of students or individuals considering post-secondary education. Nor does current salary reflect the future potential of career paths. Figure 12 displays the level of satisfaction with career trajectory for each category of current annual salary. This figure shows that in each salary range, the largest portion of respondents is satisfied with their current income. It also shows that even those graduates with salaries at the low end of the scale report relatively high degrees of satisfaction with their career trajectories, suggesting confidence in the future of their employment and income.

Figure 12: Satisfaction with career trajectory measured by income levels

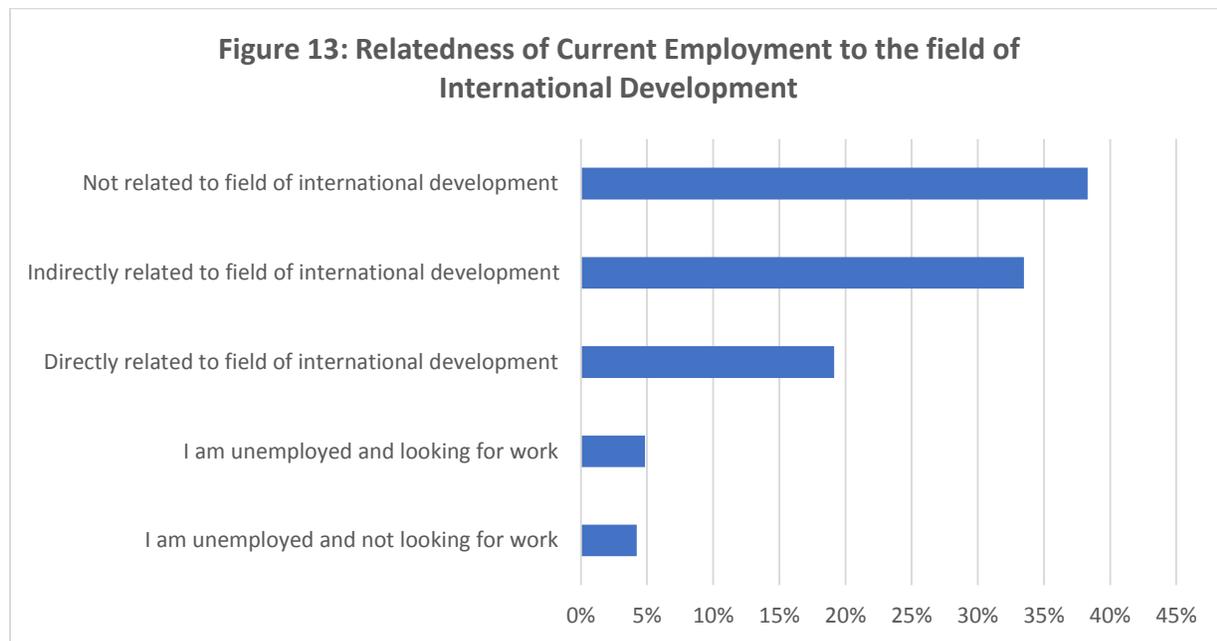


Are the Jobs of IDS Graduates related to their Education in IDS?

A large proportion of the respondents (83.8%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they chose to study IDS because they wanted to work in the field of International Development. A slightly smaller, but still large proportion of respondents (64.1%) indicated that they still wanted to work in International Development after the completion of their degree. Given the relatively small number of traditional jobs in the International Development sector in relation to the large and growing numbers of IDS graduates, these hopes of working in the field of international development might appear destined for disappointment. The data in Figure 13 indicate that only 19.1% of IDS graduates perceive a direct connection between their job and the field of international development, with 33.4% reporting an indirect connection and 38.1% reporting no connection at all. However, the data on satisfaction with career trajectories (Figure 11) indicate that most IDS graduates are satisfied with their careers – and that satisfaction appears to apply regardless of whether they perceive a connection between their career and their IDS degree.

The conclusion we draw from this finding is that IDS programs provide broadly transferrable skills that help IDS graduates to find employment in a wide range of careers. The high rates of career satisfaction (Figure 10) among IDS graduates

indicates that they can find meaningful, rewarding and well-paying jobs in a wide range of sectors, including but clearly not limited to the ‘international development sector.’



For students planning to study IDS or who are in IDS programs and for the faculty and staff who advise them, these findings point to two important conclusions. First, relatively small proportions of IDS graduates are likely to find work that is directly related to international development. Much larger proportions of IDS grads are likely to work in careers that are only indirectly related, or not related at all. But, the majority of IDS graduates who don't work in fields related to international development are still satisfied with their careers, earn good incomes and were able to acquire the transferable skills they needed to find satisfying work.

Where do IDS Graduates Work?

For many students, a career in international development holds the promise of international travel and employment. Findings from this study, however, indicate that 79.3% of IDS graduates who were employed at the time of the survey were working in Canada. The remaining 20.7% of employed graduates were working in the United States (29.8%), Sub-Saharan Africa (17.4%), Europe (13.6%), South + Central America and Mexico (8.8%), Middle East (7.4%), United Kingdom (7.0%), South East Asia (7.0%), South Asia (5.3%), Australia + New Zealand (2.6%), North Africa (0.9%).

Of the IDS Graduates employed in Canada, the top cities of employment were Toronto / GTA (39.4%), Ottawa (21.9%), Halifax (5.8%), Montreal (5.1%), Vancouver (4.3%),

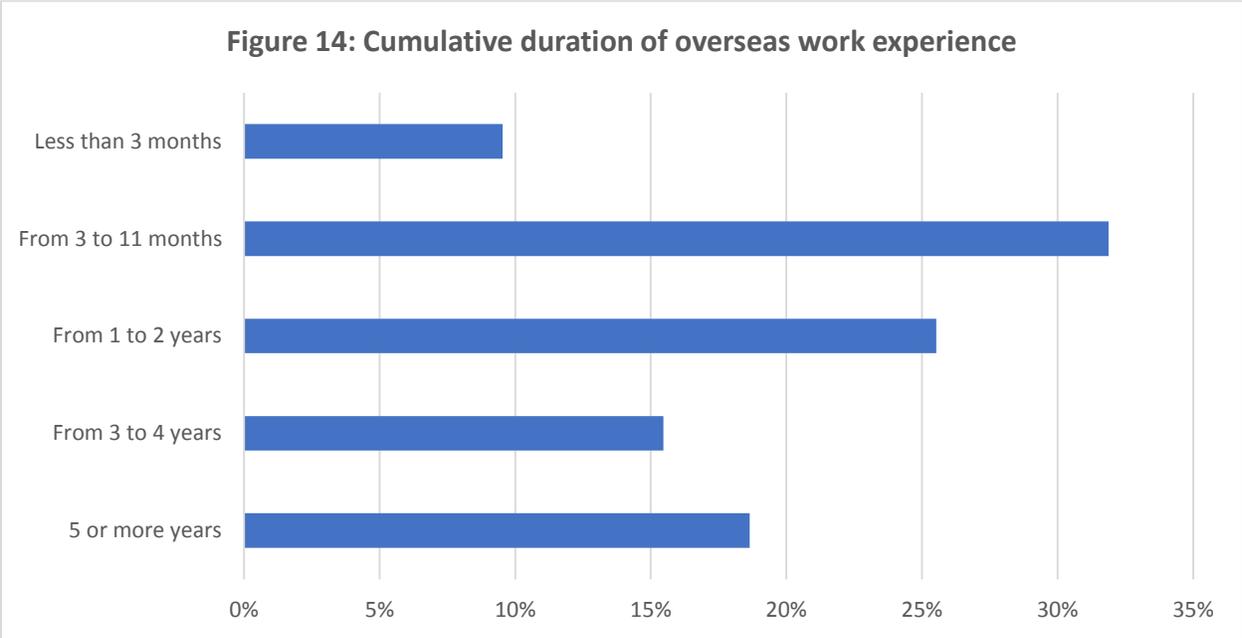
Calgary (2.8%), Guelph (2.5%), and Edmonton (1.6%) with the remaining 16.6% scattered in other cities and towns across the country.

Significantly, a large proportion of respondents (51%) did not have to move to find their current employment (Question 2.5): IDS graduates were able to find work across the country often without moving and in a location of their choosing.

Overseas work in IDS career paths

While 20.7% of respondents were employed outside of Canada at the time of the survey, just over half of respondents (50.2%) had worked abroad at some point since completing their education, the largest proportion in paid positions (54.8%), with 34.1% receiving an honorarium or living stipend, and 11.1% working on a completely volunteer basis.

Figure 14 displays the cumulative length of time respondents spent working abroad, the most common duration being 3-11 months. The study found no significant relationship between satisfaction with career trajectory and working abroad for IDS graduates. That is, overseas work experience does not appear to have a significant impact on the satisfaction of IDS graduates with their careers.



3. The Role of Education in IDS Career Paths

The data from this survey indicate that further education beyond an undergraduate degree is increasingly necessary to find employment, whether related or not to international development. A significant majority of IDS graduates have completed a graduate or professional degree and over 75% indicated that an advanced degree beyond the Bachelor's level was somewhat or very important for finding a job in their current field.

How much education do IDS graduates have?

A majority of the respondents to the survey (57%) had education beyond a Bachelor's degree: 43% of respondents had just a Bachelor's degree, while 46.8% also had a Master's degree, 3.8% had a professional degree (primarily in Law), and 6.3% had a PhD.

How Important are Advanced Degrees for Finding a Job?

IDS graduates, including those with and without advanced degrees, indicated very clearly that they perceived additional education beyond the undergraduate level to be necessary for finding a job in their current field.

Almost 85% of respondents noted that additional academic training beyond a Bachelor's degree was very important (52.4%) or somewhat important (32.3%) for finding a job. Only 15.3% indicated that they did not think education beyond the Bachelor's level was important for finding a job in their current field.

IDS graduates placed less importance on technical and professional training: 23.5% thought it was very important for finding a job in their field, 45.6% thought it was somewhat important and 30.8% thought it was not important at all.

These trends among IDS graduates are illustrative of the high proportion of Canadian students in social sciences (67%) that pursue additional education beyond their Bachelor's degree (Statistics Canada 2015).

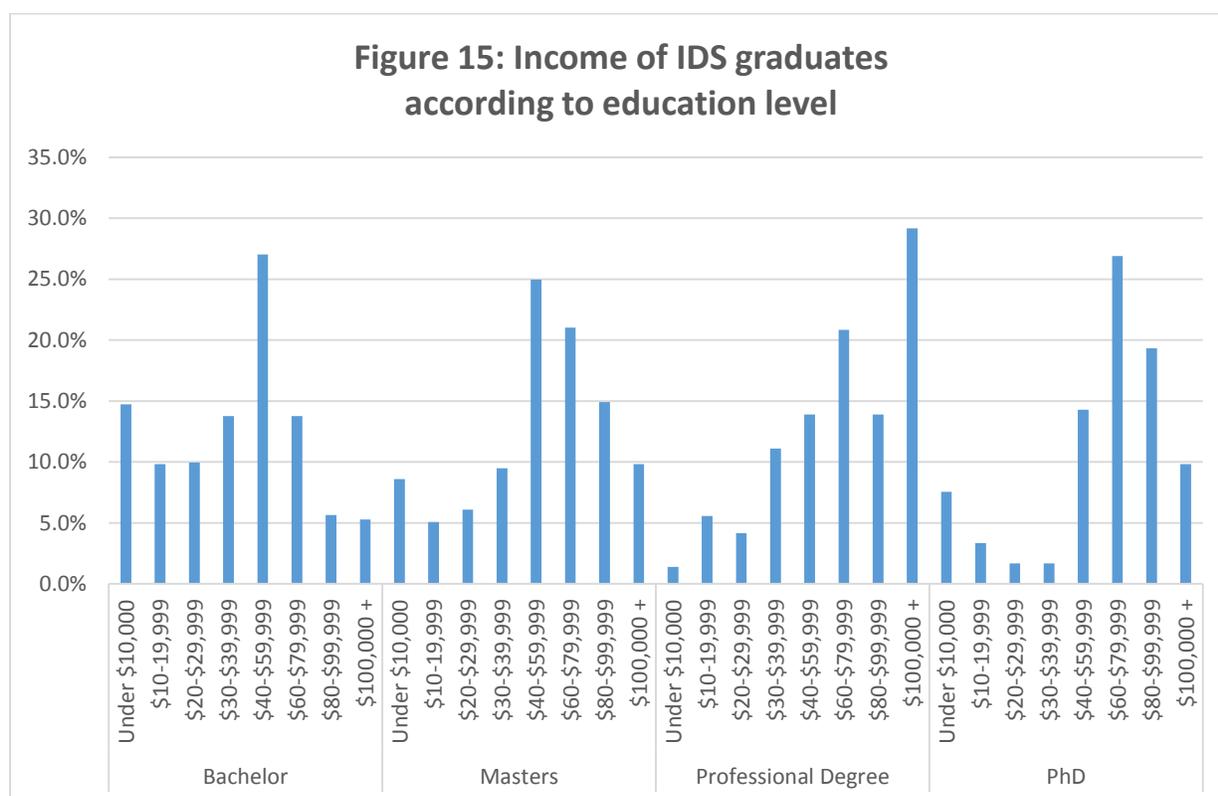
Does having an advanced degree improve the chances of getting a job and enjoying it?

This study found a positive and significant ($p <= 0.05$) relationship between education level and satisfaction with career trajectory, indicating that those with higher education are more likely to get jobs with which they are satisfied. This finding is consistent with the 2012 and 2015 CUSC student surveys, which revealed that higher levels of education are correlated with a higher likelihood of attaining "the job they had hoped for" within three years of graduation (Prairie Research Associates 2012; 2015).

Do IDS graduates with advanced degrees make more money?

Figure 15 illustrates income level as it connects to education level. Several results are noteworthy:

- \$40-60,000 is the most common income range for graduates of Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees.
- \$60-70,000 is most common income range for professional and doctoral degree holders.
- The proportion of respondents making over \$60,000 increases from 24.69% at the Bachelor level, to 63.89% at the Professional level, 70.74% at the Masters level, and 71.43% at the doctoral level.

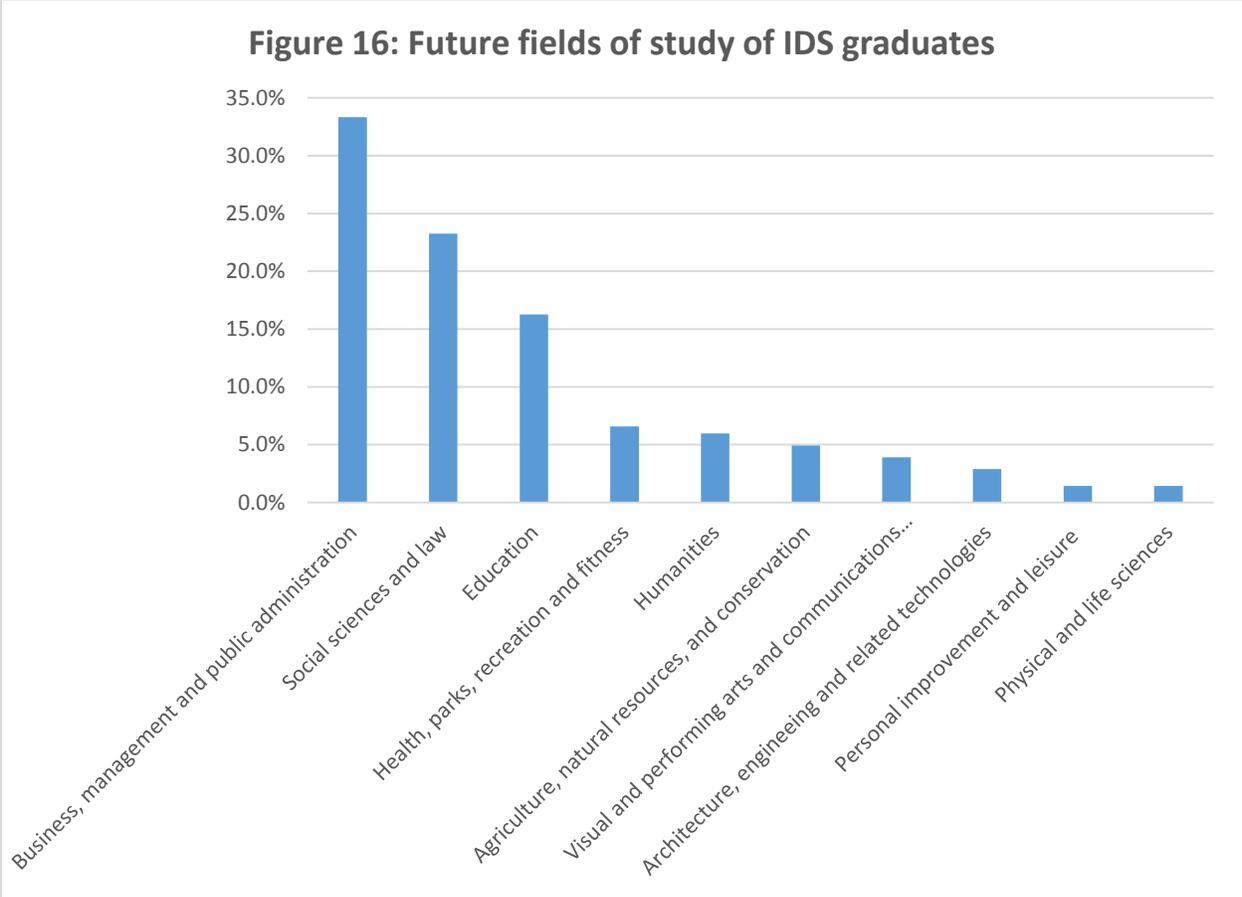


Plans for future education

While 57% of IDS graduates had already completed education beyond the Bachelor’s level, almost half (47.8%) planned to pursue additional education beyond the degree or degrees they already held.

Of the respondents who indicated that they planned to pursue further education, 29.8% intended to continue to study IDS, while 70.2% responded that they would pursue other fields of study, reinforcing other findings from this study such as of the desire among IDS graduates for more practice-oriented training following their undergraduate degree.

Notably, the predominant field of study for those who planned further education was Business, management and public administration (Figure 16) – suggesting a strong interest among IDS graduates in acquiring practical management skills to put the ‘soft’ transferable skills from their IDS degrees into use.

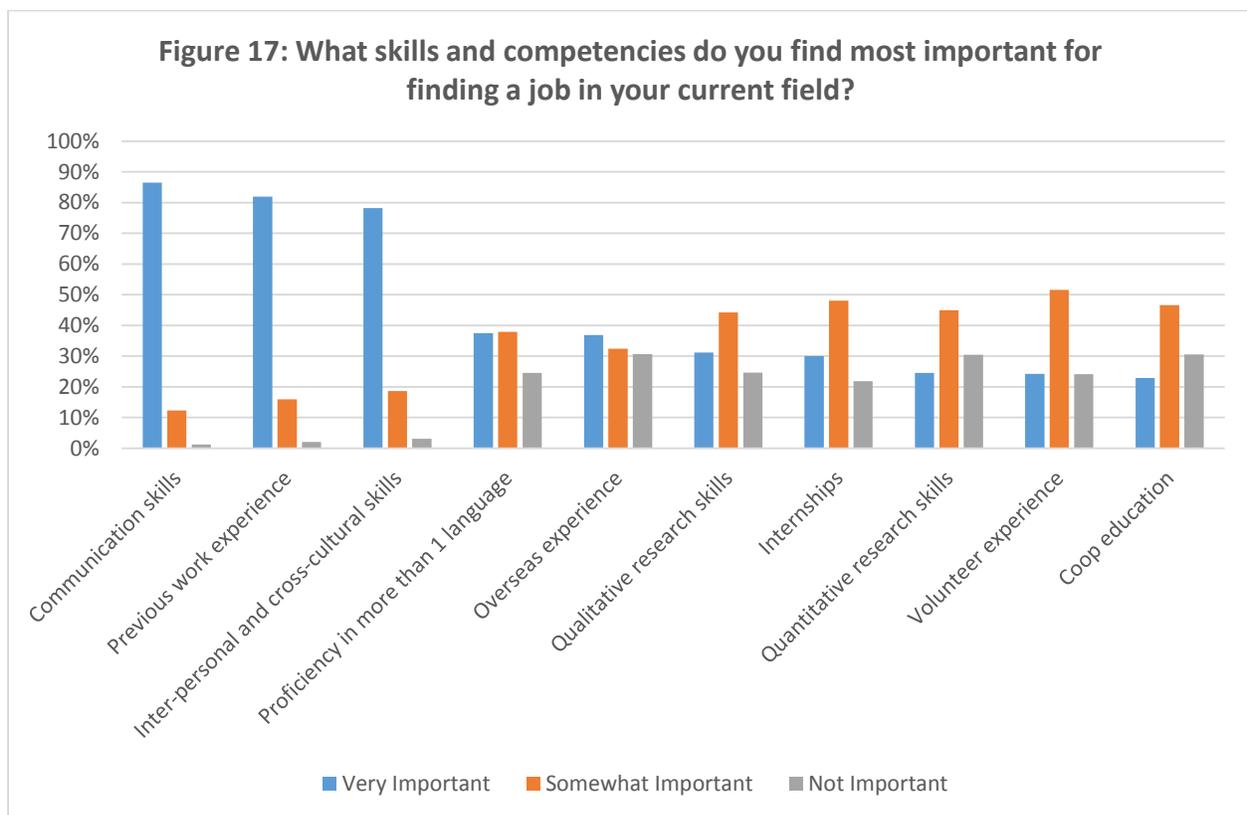


4. Skills and Competencies for Employment

In the survey we asked IDS graduates to choose from a list the skills and competencies they believed were most important for finding a job in their current field. Three answers stood out as widely recognized by a majority as “very important” (See Figure 17):

- previous work experience
- communications skills
- interpersonal / cross-cultural skills

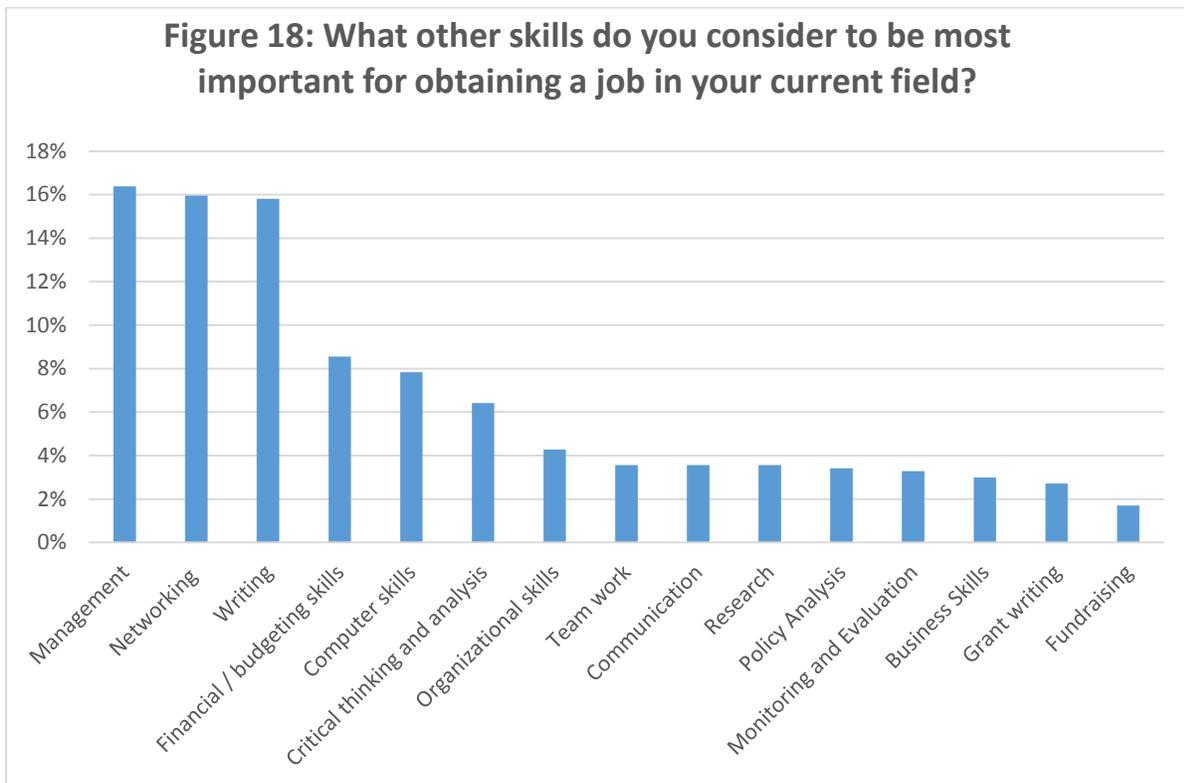
These findings are largely consistent with previous research, which identified such ‘soft’ skills as being prioritized by employers in international development (Simbandumwe 2006). Interestingly, there was less consensus on the relative importance of other skills and competencies, including volunteer experience, co-operative education experience, internships, language proficiency, overseas experience, and research skills (these measures will be discussed in the next section). However, it is worth noting that respondents placed greater emphasis on language skills than on research skills or overseas experience. One of the limitations of this measure is that only a small number of the participants in the study had completed co-operative education or other practicum work placements as part of their studies. Thus, the overall figures tell us little about the perceived value of these additional forms of ‘work experience’.



We also asked IDS graduates what other skills they considered most important for obtaining a job in their current field of work, in addition to those highlighted in Figure 17 (above). Three sets of skills were predominant among the responses (see Figure 18 below):

- Management skills
- Networking skills
- Writing skills

While many respondents indicated that they developed management skills through work experience, and writing skills at university, strategies to develop networking skills were the most nebulous. Many respondents indicated that success in finding a job depends heavily on “who you know” and “fostering good relationships with other people in the sector.” For some, volunteer and internship placements played important roles in the opportunity to build professional networks, but a larger number emphasized the importance of good inter-personal skills.

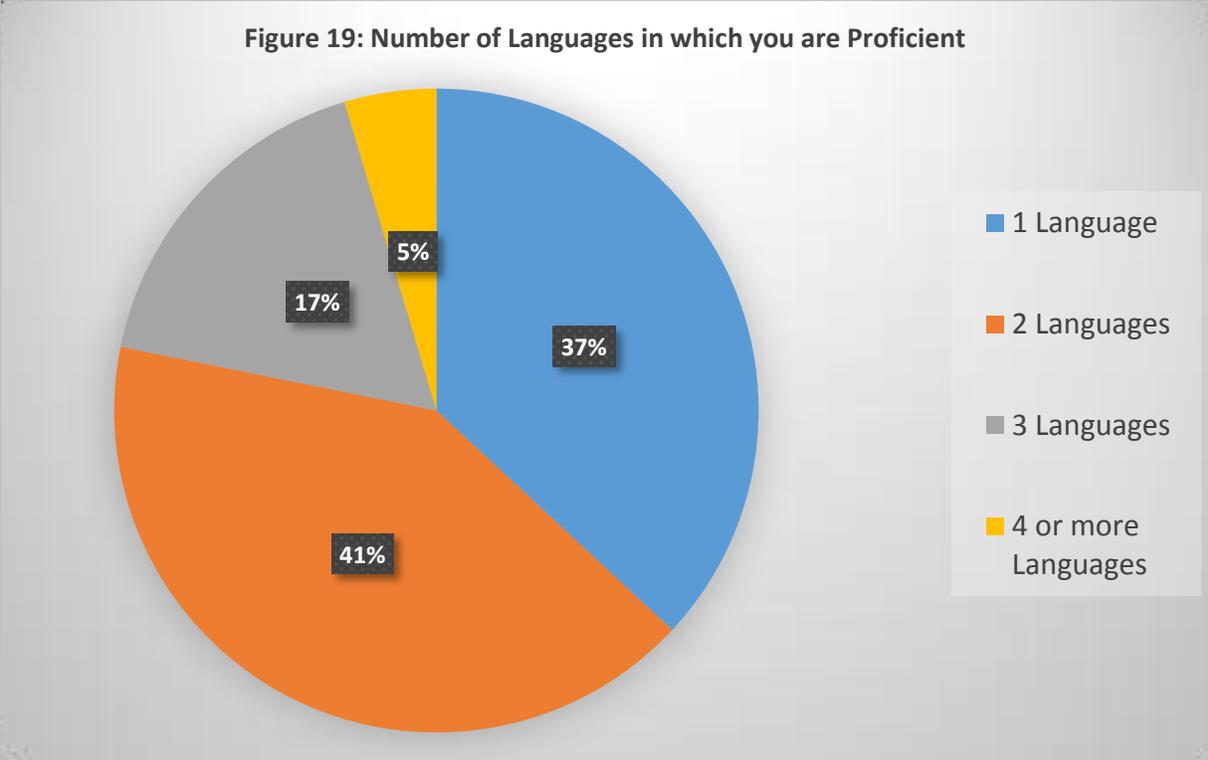


Language Competencies

Do IDS graduates need to be proficient in more than one language to attain employment?

Given the global nature of international development work and the importance of French/English bilingualism for employment with the federal government in Canada, we asked IDS graduates a number of specific questions about language proficiency and their perspectives on its relative importance in finding employment.

A majority of respondents reported proficiency in two or more languages, with 41% reporting that they were proficient in two, 17% in three, and 5% proficient in four or more languages (Figure 19).



Remarkably, over two-thirds of respondents (67.44%) felt that competency in a second language was somewhat or very important to attaining a job in their field (Question 2.12.7).

A majority of respondents also agreed (34.2%) or strongly agreed (25.8%) that current jobs require second language proficiency (Question 2.17.4). Nevertheless, less than a fifth of respondents agreed (13.8%) or strongly agreed (5.6%) that a third language is a requirement for employment (Question 2.17.5).

As we also point out further below, a large number of respondents (577) also identified a lack of language skills as one of the top five barriers to finding a job in their chosen field (see Figure 20).

Significantly, despite the high importance that IDS graduates attribute to language proficiency in finding a job, the clear majority of respondents (62.7%) did not acquire any language skills as part of their university education. While many IDS graduates may have acquired language skills outside of university, there does appear to be a significant gap between the high importance that graduates place on language skills and the large proportion who did not acquire language skills in university.

Barriers to employment

Figure 20 displays the top ten most frequent responses regarding the main barriers faced by international development graduates in getting work in the field of their choice. Respondents clearly highlighted two main perceived barriers: 1) too few job opportunities, and 2) too much work experience required. They also highlight low salaries and expectations of unpaid work as barriers to employment in their chosen fields.

Significantly, respondents placed much less emphasis on lack of skills and appropriate education as barriers to employment, which combined represented only 13% of responses. Although somewhat less conclusive on this issue, Figure 21 shows that while 38% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “Current jobs require specific technical skills that I do not possess,” 29% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 33% were ambivalent, neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Taken together, this data thus suggests that significant numbers of IDS graduates feel relatively confident about their educational qualifications and their professional skills, but still find it very difficult to break into a job market that they see as characterized by a limited number of positions that require significant experience but offer low pay and often expect unpaid employment (internships and volunteer work). As we noted above, the number one skill that respondents highlighted for breaking into the job market was ‘networking.’

A large number of respondents (577) also identified a lack of language skills as a barrier to employment in their chosen field, again highlighting the importance for IDS students and graduates to acquire language skills and the large proportion who do not do so as part of their university studies (see Section 3 above).

Figure 20: Main barriers to working in your field

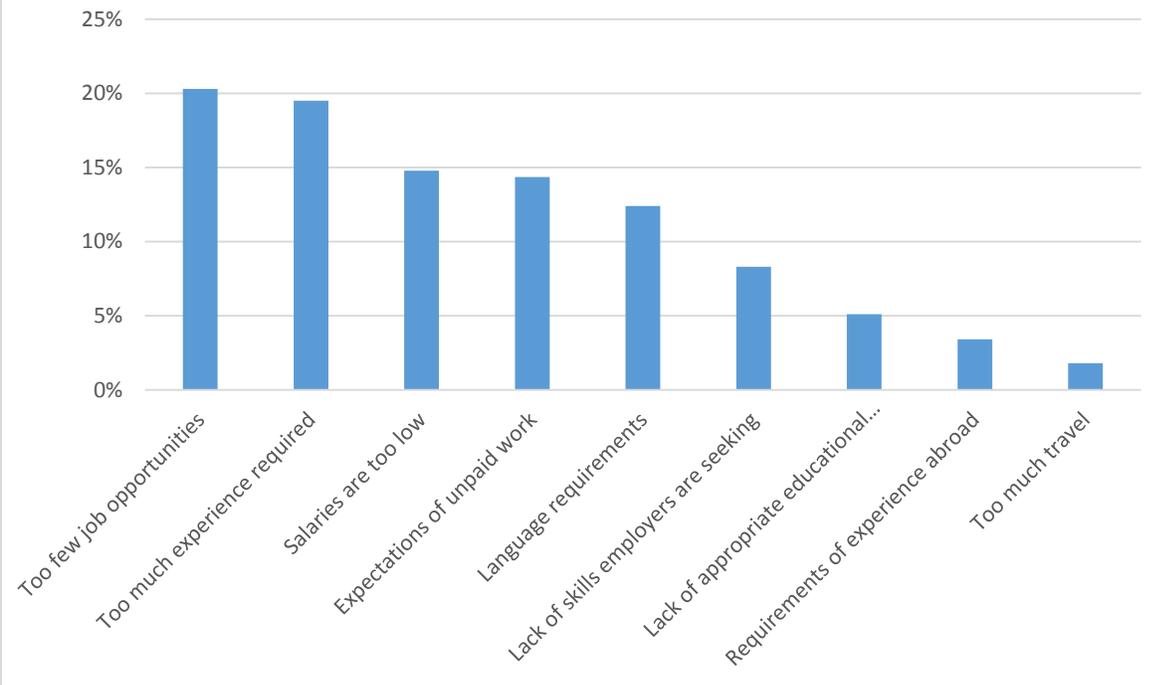
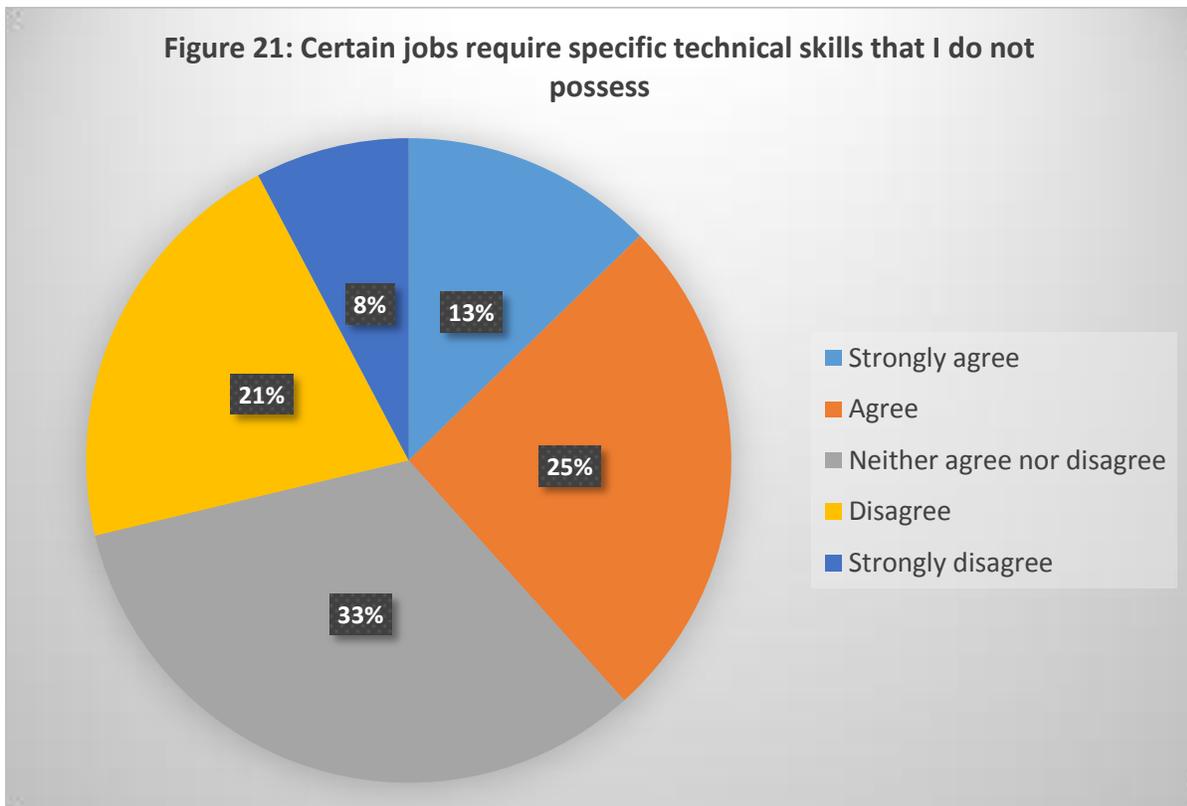


Figure 21: Certain jobs require specific technical skills that I do not possess

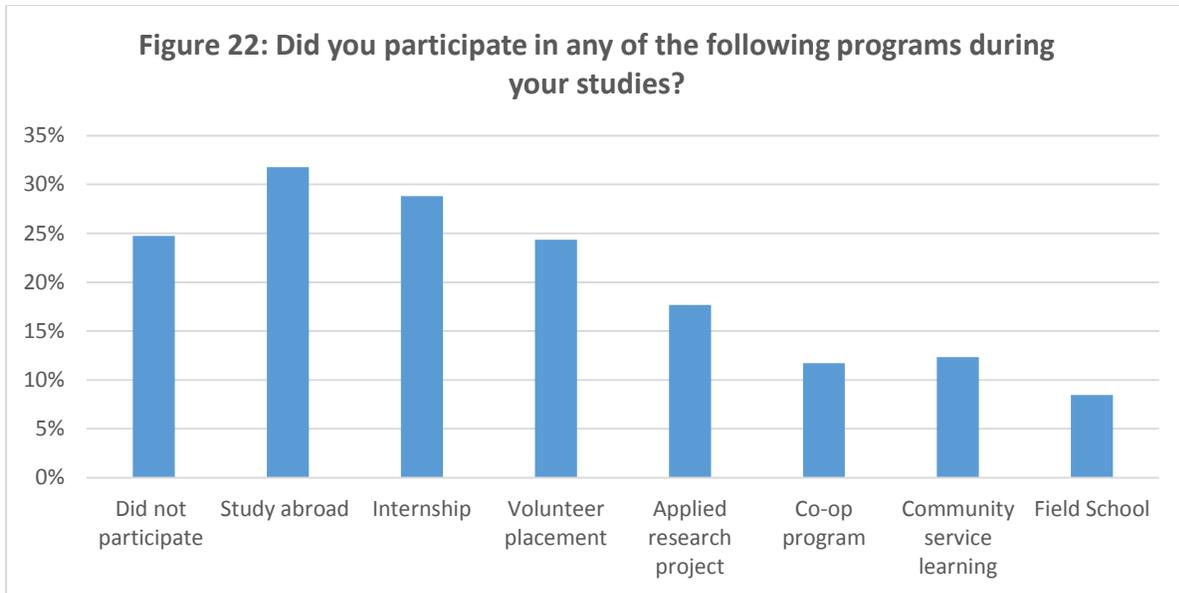


5. The Role of Practicum Placements, Co-ops, Internships and Overseas Experience in IDS Career Paths

As IDS students debate whether to pursue in-course practicum and co-op options and IDS program administrators grapple with decisions about how to allocate scarce resources to study abroad and experiential learning programs, it is useful to reflect on the relative importance that IDS graduates place on these different forms of work-related and experiential learning as part of their career paths. The nation-wide data from Statistics Canada reported in Section 1 indicated that co-op programs have a positive impact on the employment outcomes of students across all fields of study, but that students who do not participate in co-op programs are not at a serious disadvantage. The reflections of IDS graduates on different forms of work-related and experiential learning reinforce the Statistics Canada data.

Did IDS graduates participate in work-related and experiential learning programs as part of their degree?

Figure 22 reports on the participation rates of IDS graduates in work-related, study abroad and experiential learning programs (Question 1.7). It indicates that three quarters of IDS graduates took part in practice-oriented forms of learning as part of their education. The data presented in Figures 22 is significant when analysed in the context of national data, which indicates that less than 3% of university students take part in an overseas learning experience as part of their university education (CBIE 2016) and that only 12% participate in co-op programs, which are highly concentrated in STEM fields (Ferguson and Wang 2014: Table A18). Despite the tensions in the data reported here, it still appears that IDS students participate in work-related and experiential learning and study-abroad opportunities in relatively large numbers when compared with students in other fields of study.



Does work-related and experiential learning help to find a job?

Despite relatively high participation rates, the perspectives of IDS graduates on the relative value of work-related and experiential learning programs for finding jobs in their chosen fields of study were ambiguous. Less than half of the respondents agreed (19.2%) or strongly agreed (21.0%) that these practical programs were helpful for obtaining a job (Question 2.1.6). However, this data should also be interpreted with caution as it represents the perceptions of IDS graduates of the relative importance of learning experiences that they did not necessarily participate in; for example, some graduates who did not take part in co-op programs ranked them as very important for finding a job. With fewer than 12% of all participants in this study completing co-op placements, it is important to not draw conclusions about employment outcomes and this form of practical work experience. Furthermore, as the open-ended responses (Section 8) highlight: a number of study participants argued that co-op and other internship or practicum placements should be made available to students in IDS programs – or even as mandatory offerings in IDS programs. Clearly, IDS graduates were able to find jobs even if they did not take part in practicum placements, internships, co-op, etc. However, as the open-ended question responses note, the study participants also considered such options as strategies to improve employment outcomes; to ensure employment is more in line with a chosen field of study; and to facilitate the career paths of IDS students who require work experience prior to applying for jobs.

Furthermore, as we highlighted above in Section 4, IDS graduates also placed very heavy emphasis on the importance of building a professional network as a crucial factor in finding a job – and in their comments, very large numbers underlined the value of internships, co-op placements and volunteer experience in building those networks.

6. The Perspectives of IDS Graduates on International Development Education

We asked IDS graduates two questions about their perspectives on their university education, looking back from their current positions in the labour force. The responses were somewhat ambiguous but still offer useful insights for both current IDS students and IDS administrators. Figure 23 reports on IDS graduate’s perspectives on the balance of courses in their programs, indicating that 53% agreed or strongly agreed that their degree offered a sufficient balance of theory, policy-oriented and quantitative research courses. Figure 24 indicates that 42% of IDS graduates agreed or strongly agreed that their degree prepared them for entry-level work in international development or a related field, while 31% disagreed or strongly disagreed that their degree provided sufficient preparation.

For students, the responses highlight that an undergraduate degree in IDS, on its own, is unlikely to be sufficient preparation for entry-level work in the field of international development, where there are relatively small numbers of jobs that expect work experience and a large proportion of applicants have completed advanced degrees beyond the Bachelor’s level. For IDS administrators, the data suggests that although graduates are relatively satisfied with the balance of theory, policy-oriented and quantitative-oriented courses in their programs, considerably more could still be done to help them prepare for competition in a highly demanding job market.

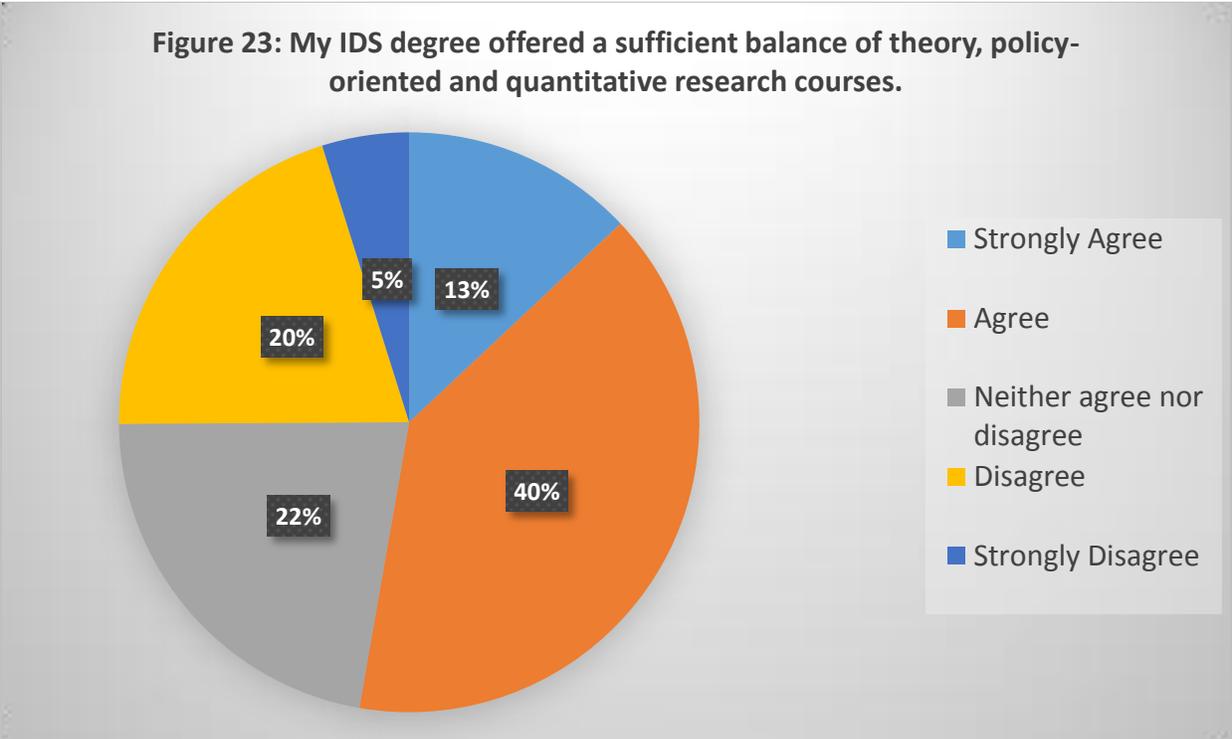
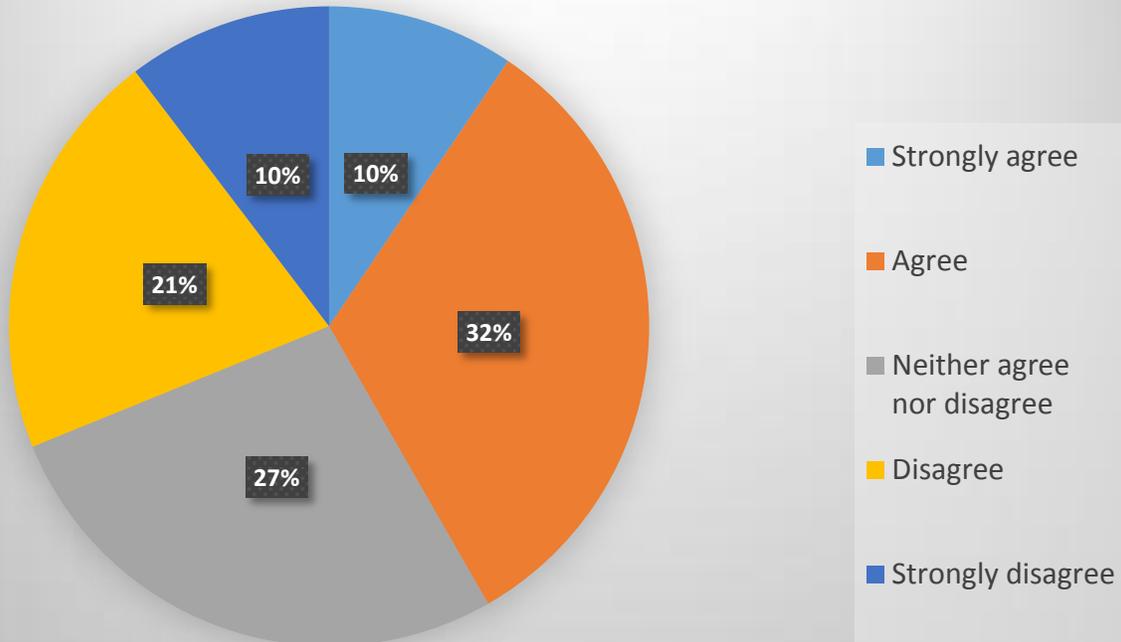
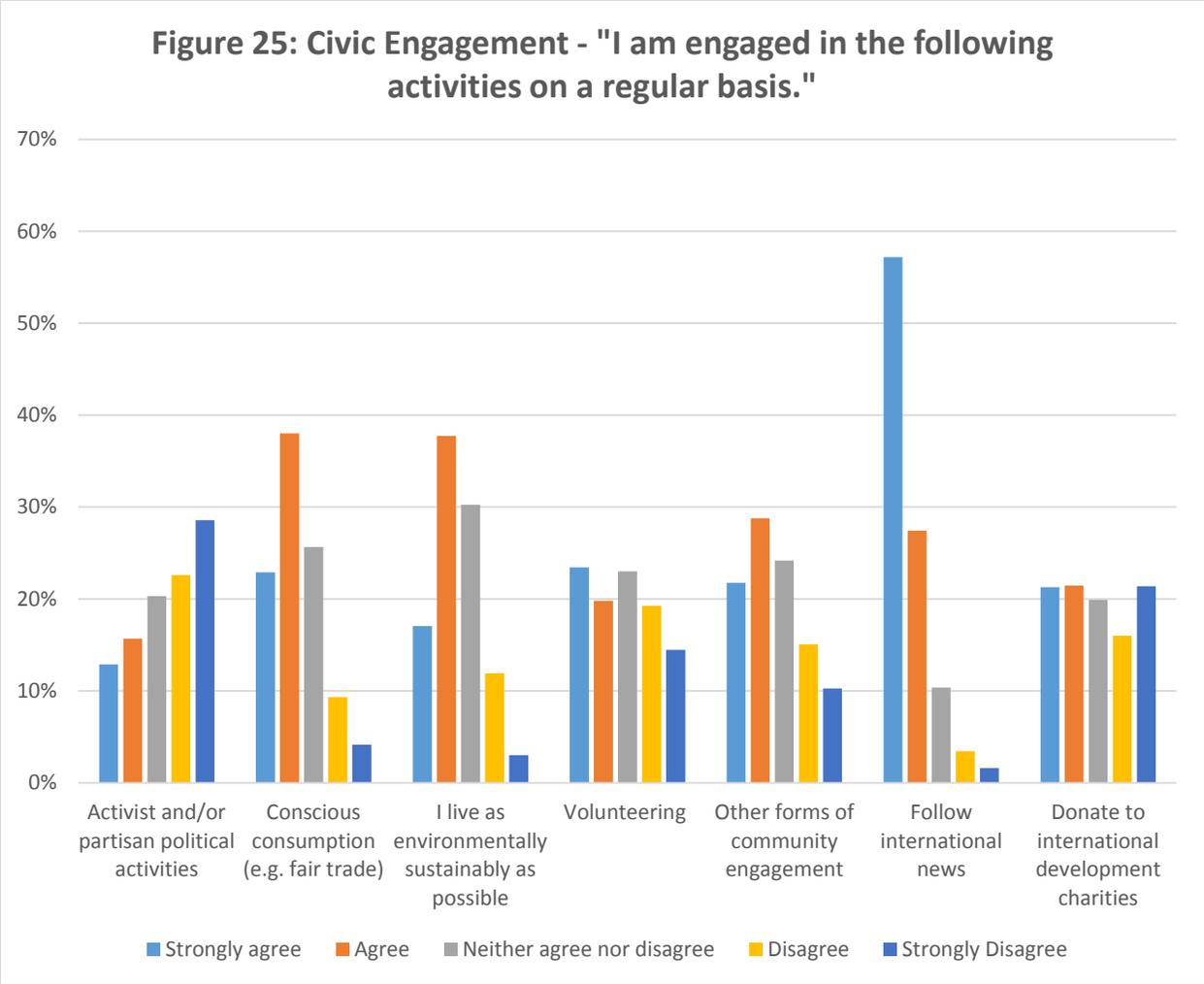


Figure 24: My IDS training prepared me for entry level work in international development (or a related field)



7. Lifestyles and Values of IDS Graduates

In addition to examining the career paths and employment outcomes for International Development Studies graduates, this study also inquired into lifestyle factors and values related to global citizenship, including whether respondents identify as activists, are engaged in partisan political activities, are conscious consumers, live in an environmentally sustainable manner, volunteer their time, engage with their communities, keep up to date with international news and donate to development charities (Figure 25). These factors align with the concerns of IDS as a field to not simply prepare students for professional careers but also foster their capacities for active citizenship in Canada and globally. The responses of IDS graduates indicate that as a group they are highly engaged citizens who act in ways that reflect serious concerns about the world around them despite all the other pressures on their time.



8. Statistics Still Don't Tell the Whole Story: Perspectives from IDS Graduates about their Career Paths

The statistical data we presented in earlier sections provides some indication of the challenges that IDS graduates face in a highly competitive job market and their relative successes in confronting those challenges. However, the statistics alone do not give a clear picture of how graduates have actually navigated the pathways from university to employment in a professional career.

To better understand the perspectives of IDS graduates, we invited them to add their own comments about their career paths following graduation. We received 520 open-

ended qualitative responses that were relevant to the career paths discussion, many of which provide significant insights. We then coded the responses and identified five primary themes that emerge from the comments, listed here in order of frequency:

1. IDS graduates face difficulties “breaking into the field”
2. IDS graduates want IDS programs to provide more practical training for the workforce.
3. IDS shapes graduates’ worldviews but not necessarily their career tracks.
4. A supplementary degree, specialization or technical training is required to get a job in international development.
5. IDS graduates struggle with the ethical implications of international development work long after graduation.

In this section we elaborate on the above themes and bring in examples by way of direct quotes from participants that highlight the meaning and significance of their reflections in relation to the career paths of IDS graduates.

1. IDS graduates face difficulties “breaking into the field.” (n=175)

Over a third of respondents (33.6%) commented on the difficulties they have faced breaking into the international development sector in Canada after graduating from an IDS program. Reported barriers to obtaining work include the limited number – and highly competitive nature - of jobs in Canada, often restricted to major cities like Ottawa, Toronto or Montreal. Respondents perceive that these jobs typically go to applicants with previous work experience and existing personal connections at an organization, or to those who have the economic means to accept unpaid internships or volunteer work before obtaining a paid position. Respondents also remark on the precarious nature of entry-level jobs in international development, which are increasingly short-term, low paying contracts that require candidates uproot themselves to live abroad for a period of six months to one or two years. Many individuals report changing fields because of these career barriers. The following survey responses capture this finding:

“I honestly feel a bit stuck. The internship I completed as part of my ID degree only gave me 6 months of international experience, yet most jobs want 2-5 years or more before they'll consider you. I've seen many friends with wealthy parents who pay their way take unpaid jobs to try to get that experience, but financially, that's something I just can't do... It just seems like there's not a way to get that international experience if you're not

already privileged enough to be able to finance it on your own...”
(Respondent 26).

“I am confident I could have found a job more related to international development had I been willing to move to a bigger center like Ottawa or Toronto. I was committed to staying in Halifax for family reasons, and there are very, very few IDS-related jobs here, and lots of competition for them” (Respondent 110).

The experiences of respondents who report a successful career path in international development corroborate the idea that economic and social privilege impact on employment.

“I am very fortunate to be working where I am and in the field I wanted to work in. I feel like I am one of the very few who was able to do this. I was connected to the CEO of my company as my mother used to work for him in a different field 30 years ago. I am not sure what I would be doing or if I would be working in this field and on this career trajectory if I did not make that connection and was not given that chance by my employer”
(Respondent 499).

“I was lucky and privileged to graduate without debt and thus take low paying or stipend based employment/internships in order to gain international experience and experience in general” (Respondent 669).

2. IDS graduates want IDS programs to provide more practical training for the workforce (n=87)

A number of respondents (16.7%) commented that IDS programs in Canada do not adequately prepare students for the workforce, and that more practical “real world training” is necessary. In particular, they emphasized the need for increased co-op or internship opportunities, research skills and language training. To address this problem and better align IDS programs with job market expectations, respondents proposed ideas including mandatory second language requirements, research methods courses and co-op/internship placements. Others commented on the need for practical skills development in areas like project management, evaluation, budgeting, and writing project or funding proposals. The following respondents highlighted these demands.

“Since I chose to relocate to a developing country for employment opportunity, I found quite a lot of options existed within my chosen field. I did, however, have to acquire skills along the way, such as report writing/proposals for funding, as well as learning to conduct training for organizations working at the grassroots level. If some of this had been covered during my degree course in some way it would have greatly

helped in building upon, rather than acquiring through experience” (Respondent 48).

“Providing work experience (as a volunteer or intern) while still in the IDS program is extremely valuable for potential graduates. These opportunities provide the students with practical experience and understanding of the sector, as well as build a network” (Respondent 162).

“A co-op or internship placement should be a mandatory part of every international development program. There should also be a stronger focus on research methods. Students should also learn more practical workplace skills that they can put on their resume rather than just theory” (Respondent 1564).

The perspectives of respondents who are now in positions to hire IDS graduates further emphasize the need for programs to provide more practical skills training.

“There is a definite need to understand results-based management and project management. These were not areas covered in IDS when I took my degree. We have posted jobs recently and there are a lack of resumes arriving with sufficient bilingual skills in Spanish/English and lack of experience in project management. Skills in social media, publisher and web sites are also relevant ...” (Respondent 508).

3. IDS shapes graduates’ worldviews but not necessarily their career track (n=70)

Just over thirteen percent (13.4%) of those who responded to the open question about their career paths commented that IDS had a significant influence on their “worldview” - their values, passions, interests and critical thinking - but did not necessarily become their career. The majority of these respondents expressed a deep sense of appreciation for their experience in IDS, regardless of the fact they do not currently work in international development.

“I had inklings in my second year that IDS was not the field I wanted to pursue professionally, and this was confirmed by first semester of my 4th year. However, I don't regret studying IDS at all. It had a huge influence on me, my outlook on the world and my way of thinking. While the subjects I learned may not have been relevant to my current field, they have helped shape my personal interests and passions, and the "soft skills" I learned from them, such as critical thinking, have been invaluable” (Respondent 656).

“While I don't use my IDS degree directly, I really value the skills that I gained through the program. In particular, the critical thinking skills and

the ability to be more open minded to other ways of approaching problems and different value systems” (Respondent 1141).

“While I do not know if I will ever return to the development sector, I am certain that my choice of study was appropriate - we study to learn, not just provide ourselves with a vocational path. The learning I did in IDS has continued to provide a framework for learning and engagement on social issues and I remain committed to community engagement” (Respondent 1206).

These responses confirm the value of educating students in terms of worldviews rather than just specific career outcomes.

4. Supplementary degree, specialization or technical training is required in order to get a job in international development. (n=54)

Closely related to the first theme of career barriers and the second theme of practical skills development, a number of respondents (10.3%) remarked that, in their experience, an additional degree, specialization or technical training program was required in order to get a job in international development. These responses are not surprising given that 57% of the respondents held a degree beyond the Bachelor’s level. The responses highlighted the perceived need for post-graduate education:

“I found that my education, although necessary, was not sufficient to obtain my desired jobs. Employers wanted more technical training/experience (web design, database management, InDesign skills, work experience)... I still feel that I need a more specific degree or diploma to increase my marketability as an employee” (Respondent 798).

“My experience after graduating was that most of the international organizations I was interested in were looking for people with specific skills (engineers, doctors, IT specialists, scientists) and not IDS generalists” (Respondent 541).

“I’m currently working on improving my technical qualifications, which I feel is the one aspect of work in ID that needs to be better communicated to prospective students. Without a specific skill, whether it be a second language or technical ability, you are competing for entry level work with thousands of other applicants with the same qualifications as you. Since focusing on a technical skill after my IDS studies, I’ve started receiving interest from ID agencies for “real” jobs in the field” (Respondent 825).

5. IDS graduates struggle with the ethical implications of international development work. (n=38)

A final issue to emerge from IDS graduates' comments is that they struggle with the ethical implications of engaging in international development work long after graduation. Respondents described feeling confused, skeptical, frustrated and disillusioned by the critical nature of their studies. As a result, some chose to leave the field altogether. While less than ten percent of respondents (7.3%) remarked that this was their personal experience, their comments represented some of the most candid statements to come out of the survey data. See the following quotes, for example:

"I would argue the program teaches [students] how to be critical, but never how to solve or address anything. It constantly prescribes massive systematic change, but nothing concrete. This frustrated me so I pursued a Masters of public policy in the hopes of actually learning how to solve policy problems, which it did" (Respondent 394).

"When people ask me why I am not currently working in international development... I tell them that studying international development made me never want to engage in development work. I say this because I learned about the long colonial legacy of development work that continues to persist today, about the 'white industrial savior complex', about the downside to international aid dollars, about the messiness of doing development work, of the exhaustion of travelling internationally or to far distances (like the Canadian North) for your work. After learning about these things and in many cases being guilty of them myself, I decided development work abroad is something that I do not want to engage in for my own personal ethical reasons, as well as my own health" (Respondent 795).

Conclusion

The data presented in this report point towards two sets of conclusions for IDS students and recent graduates who working to establish professional careers, and for IDS professors and administrators who are making decisions about the design of IDS programs.

For current IDS students and recent graduates six central conclusions emerge from the data that relate to both education and training and to job search strategies.

Education:

- Increasingly, an undergraduate degree on its own is not likely to be sufficient preparation for a competitive job market. 57% of survey respondents already had education beyond the Bachelor's level and almost half (47.8%) of respondents planned to pursue additional degrees or professional training.
- Feedback from IDS graduates suggests that current IDS students should take advantage of all of the educational opportunities they can while in university, whether they are degree requirements or not. Competency in a second language stands out as a valued skill and significant numbers of those who lack a second language feel that it is a barrier to employment. Other skills that IDS graduates highlighted included communication skills (writing, oral presentations), interpersonal skills (e.g. teamwork), cross-cultural skills, computer skills (especially Microsoft Office), budgeting / financial management skills, and project management. Some of these skills can be learned through course-work, but others are more likely to come from volunteer experience and extra-curricular leadership.
- Beyond education, skills and job experience, the single most important factor that IDS graduates identified for finding a job in their field was the capacity to build professional networks. This is something that IDS students can begin while in university, in particular by volunteering with international development and related organizations and by recognizing that professional connections will play a crucial role in their future career paths.

Finding a job:

- The evidence is very clear that IDS graduates find well-paying professional jobs and report a high level of satisfaction with their career trajectories in a wide range of fields.

- However, a relatively small-proportion of IDS grads (19.1%) reported that their current employment is directly related to the field of international development. Another 33.4% of IDS grads reported indirect connections between their current job and the field of international development, but almost 40% reported no connection at all. In this context, most IDS graduates are likely to end up working in fields that are not directly related to IDS – but they are also very likely to earn good incomes and find high levels of satisfaction in their careers. So, IDS students and recent graduates need to have a realistic understanding of the prospects for a career in the ‘development sector.’

- IDS grads are also clear that the number one skill (beyond education and professional skills) required to find a job is networking. They highlighted over and over again that finding a job and building a career depends on establishing a strong network of professional relationships and connections. In the context of short-term contracts, it is those connections that provide the pathway from one job to the next. IDS grads also emphasized that the capacity to build networks is a skill; while some had the benefit of pre-existing connections from family and school, others worked hard to create their own networks and were just as successful. One important strategy for building such networks is finding additional opportunities for practicum work or co-op placements within the development sector.

For IDS administrators and professors three particular conclusions emerge from the data related to the design of IDS curricula, the marketing of IDS programs, and networking support for IDS graduates.

- *IDS curricula:* IDS graduates reported reasonably high levels of satisfaction with the balance between theory, policy-oriented and quantitative courses in their IDS degrees. They also highlighted the value of ‘soft’ transferrable skills for finding jobs in their current fields – in particular, writing, communication skills, interpersonal skills and cross-cultural communication skills. However, they also highlighted other skills and competencies which large numbers did not acquire as part of their IDS degrees – in particular, second language skills, project management, financial management and budgeting, as well as skills that are often not prioritized, such as computer skills (e.g. Microsoft Excel).

- *Marketing IDS:* As for students, the good news is that IDS graduates find satisfying, well-paying, professional jobs. Of the 1,644 grads who reported their current position, just one was working as a barista. IDS programs can use the data from this report, along with the Statistics Canada data that we highlight in Section 1, to allay the fears of students (and their parents) that IDS grads will not find good jobs. However, the data also suggests that changes may be needed in the ways in which IDS programs explain career prospects to current and future students. The data is clear that the vast majority of IDS graduates entered and graduated from IDS programs with strong hopes of finding professional employment in the field of international development. The fact that just 19.1% of

IDS grads report that their current employment is directly related to the field of international development, with another 33.4% reporting indirect connections, suggests that IDS programs may need to be more honest with students about the prospects for working in the development sector and need to consider other career paths as well. Not doing so appears to foster frustration and resentment among IDS graduates and a sentiment that IDS programs have failed to provide the preparation required to work in 'development.'

- *Networking:* Given the high importance that IDS graduates placed on the need to develop professional networks, IDS programs could perhaps do more to support them. Some programs have active Facebook pages that connect the graduates of particular universities, but it appears that IDS programs could do more to both help students to develop strong networking skills and to help create opportunities for professional networking among IDS graduates in Canada.

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Survey on the Career Paths of graduates of International Development Studies and related programs in Canada

Thank-you for taking the time to complete this survey on the Career Paths of graduates of International Development Studies (IDS) and closely-related programs in Canada. Completing this survey implies that you are a Canadian citizens or landed immigrant and are at least 18 years of age. The survey should take about 20 -30 minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary, and researchers will keep responses confidential.* You will not have to provide any personal data in order to complete the survey.

Please note we employ a broad definition to describe *working in international development* to include a focus on human rights, dignity, international projects, charitable work, social justice, poverty alleviation and/or local or international community development, among other work for which your education in IDS may (or may not) have prepared you. Ultimately, how you define working in international development depends on your own definition and perspective.

* The research team for this project will keep your responses to the survey confidential. However, because the project employs e-based collection techniques, the confidentiality and privacy of data cannot be guaranteed during web-based transmission. The information will be collected on Google Forms which is subject to the US Patriot Act. Please note that although Google Forms makes available specific IP addresses of participants, this data will not be collected or utilized in the project.

Part I:

- 1.1 Age (numeric field)
- 1.2 Sex (Select one: Male, Female, Other)
- 1.3 Number of languages in which you are proficient (Select one: 1; 2; 3; more than 3)
- 1.4 What is your highest level of education obtained? (Select one: High school Diploma, College Diploma, Bachelor's degree (e.g. B.A, B.Sc., B. Ed); Master's degree (e.g. M.SC., M.A, M.B.A), Doctorate degree; Professional degree (e.g. LL.B, M.D, etc.); Other (specify)
- 1.5 Do you consider yourself as having a background in international development studies? Yes or No
- 1.6 Did you graduate from an International Development Studies program? Yes (1.6.1) or No (1.6.2)
 - 1.6.1 Level of education x | Institution x | Year of graduation (repeated as necessary to enable multiple selection for holders of multiple IDS degrees)
 - 1.6.2 Level of education x | Institution x | Program | Year of graduation (repeated as necessary to enable multiple selection for holders of multiple IDS degrees)
- 1.7 Did you participate in any of the following programs during your studies? (select all that apply: co-operative (co-op) program, internship, volunteer placement, community service learning, field school, applied research project, study abroad)
- 1.8 Did you complete a research methods course as part of your studies? Yes or No
- 1.9 Did you complete quantitative methods course as part of your studies?

- 1.10 Did you acquire another language as part of your studies? (Yes or No)
- 1.11 Are you currently employed? Yes or No (if no, skip to 1.18)
- 1.12 Which of the following best describes your current employment status: Full-time indeterminate; full-time contract basis; part-time indeterminate; part-time contract basis; self-employed ⁵
- 1.13 What is your current field of employment? (provided by respondent)
- 1.14 What is your current job title? (provided by respondent)
- 1.15 Are you currently employed in a field that you would consider (directly or indirectly) related to international development? Yes or No
- 1.16 Are you currently employed in Canada? Yes or No
- 1.17 If no, what is the primary region in which you work (Drop down: US, UK, Europe, South America, Central America and Mexico, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East, South Asia, South-East Asia, Australasia)
- 1.18 Select the sector in which you are currently employed: Government/public; private sector; non-governmental/civil society; academia/research; self-employed; other
- 1.19 How many years of work experience do you have? [drop down menu with numeric field 0-50]
- 1.20 How many years of work experience do you have working in international development or a related field? [drop down menu with numeric field 0-50]
- 1.21 What is your current annual income in \$CAD (Select one: Under \$10,000; \$10,000-\$19,999; \$20,000-\$29,999; \$30,000-\$39,000; \$40,000-\$59,000; \$60,000-\$79,000; \$80,000-\$99,999; \$100,000 and over)
- 1.22 My educational background in international development studies contributed significantly to my career path (strongly agree; agree; neither agree nor disagree; disagree; strongly disagree).
- 1.23 Level of satisfaction with your career trajectory - (select one) highly satisfied; satisfied; not satisfied; highly dissatisfied
- 1.24 Please indicate your responses to each of the following statements on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree):
- 1.25 I am engaged in activist and/or partisan political activities on a regular basis
- 1.26 I am a conscious consumer (e.g. buy fair trade products when possible)

⁵ * Full time means you work 30 or more hours per week. Indeterminate refers to employment based on an unspecified time period. Contract refers to employment for a set time period which may or may not have the possibility of renewal.

- 1.27 I live as environmentally sustainably as possible
- 1.28 I volunteer on a regular basis
- 1.29 I engage in my community in other ways on a regular basis
- 1.30 I regularly follow international news
- 1.31 I donate to international development charities

1.28 Would you be willing to be contacted by phone, skype or email to answer some additional follow-up questions? Yes/No: If so, please provide the contact information of your choice. [Box to provide contact information]

Part II

2.1. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I underwent IDS training because I wanted to work in international development.					
Following my IDS training, I wanted to work in international development.					
I have the same values today as I did as a student in international development.					
My IDS training or degree offered a sufficient balance of theory, policy-oriented and quantitative research courses.					
My IDS training prepared me for entry level work in international development (or a related field)					
Practicum placements (co-operative education, internships, etc.) were helpful for obtaining a job.					

2.2. Which practicum experiences were most helpful for obtaining a job? (Select 2: co-operative program, internship, community service learning, field schools, applied research project, study abroad; did not participate in practicum experience [skip to 2.4])

2.3 How did practicum placements impact your career development and subsequent employment outcomes? (box)

2.4 My current employment is: (Select one: Directly related to the field of international development; Indirectly related to the field of international development; Not related to the field of international development; I am unemployed and looking for work (skip to 2.11); I am unemployed and not looking for work (skip to 2.12))

2.5 Did you have to move to obtain your current job? Yes or No

2.6 In what city are you currently employed? (provided by respondent)

2.7 Do you expect to remain in your current job for more than 5 years? Yes or No | Comment Box: why?

2.7.1 If no: then directed to next question: Do you expect to remain in a similar line of work for more than 5 years? Comment box : Please describe the nature of your current work

2.8 How did you find your current job? (select up to 4: checked with family or friends; looked at job adds (internet); looked at job adds (newspapers, etc.); placed or answered job ads; contacted employers directly; contacted previous employer; consulted a public employment agency; consulted a private employment agency; networked, attended job fair; promotion; transition from co-op/internship to formal employee; other -specify)

2.9 Approximately how many job applications did you submit before obtaining this job: (Select one: 0, 1-3, 3-5, 5-10, 10 or more)

2.10 Are you satisfied with your current salary: very satisfied, satisfied, neither satisfied or dissatisfied, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied.

2.11 How many jobs have you applied for in the past six months? (Select one: 0, 1-3, 3-5, 5-10, 10 or more)

2.12: What skills or competencies do you consider most important for helping you to obtain a job in your current field:	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important at all
Previous work experience			

Co-operative education experience			
Internship experience			
Volunteer experience			
Advanced degree (Master's, PhD, Professional Degree)			
Technical degree or training (college diploma; professional training)			
Proficiency in more than one language			
Experience abroad			
Co-op experience			
Quantitative research skills			
Qualitative research skills			
Communication skills			
Interpersonal/cross-cultural skills			

2.13 Are there other skills not listed above that you consider most important for helping you obtain a job in your current field? (comment box)

2.14. Are you volunteering or doing unpaid work related to your field of interest? Yes or no.

2.15 Do you plan to return to College or University for additional studies? Yes (2.15.1) or No

2.15.1 Will you pursue further studies in international development? Yes or No (2.14.2)

2.15.2 Please select the field which best describes your future studies: (Select one) Personal improvement and leisure; Education; Visual and performing arts, and communications technologies; Humanities; Social and behavioural sciences and law; Business, management and public administration; Physical and life sciences and technologies; Mathematics, computer and information sciences; Architecture, engineering and related technologies; Agriculture, natural resources and conservation; Health, parks, recreation and fitness; Personal, protective and transportation services; Other instructional programs

2.16. Have you worked abroad since graduating? Yes (2.16.1) or no

2.16.1 If yes, click all that apply: paid; unpaid; provided a small stipend

2.16.2 If yes, please indicate the cumulative total amount of time that you have worked abroad:
Less than 3 months, 3-12 months, 1-2 years, 2-5 years, 5 years or more

2.17. To what extent do you agree with the following	Strongly	Agree	Neither Agree	Disagree	Strongly	Not
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statements	Agree		nor Disagree		disagree	applicable
There are fewer jobs in my field advertised now than in the past 10 years						
There are fewer jobs in my field advertised now than in the past 5 years						
Job application requirements are longer now than in the past						
Current jobs require a second language						
Current jobs require a third language						
Current job require 5 years of experience or more						
Current jobs require 10 years of experience or more						
Current jobs require international travel						
Current jobs require specific technical skills that I do not possess						

2.18. Please select what you see as the main barriers to finding work in your chosen field? (select 4 maximum: Too few job opportunities; Too much travel involved; Too much experience required; Requirements of bilingualism; Requirement of multilingualism; Salaries are too low; Expectations of unpaid work; Lack of appropriate educational background; Lack of skills employers are seeking; Requirements of experience abroad; Other –Specify)

3.0 Please add any additional comments or information about your career path since graduating from IDS.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.