

# Students for Development

## Highlights of the Alumni Survey

From 2005 to 2014, 1,515 Canadian students took part in three to six month internships abroad through the Students for Development (SFD) program managed by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC). In 2013, AUCC invited alumni to reflect on how the program influenced their careers, as well as their outlook and worldview. Here's what they told us.

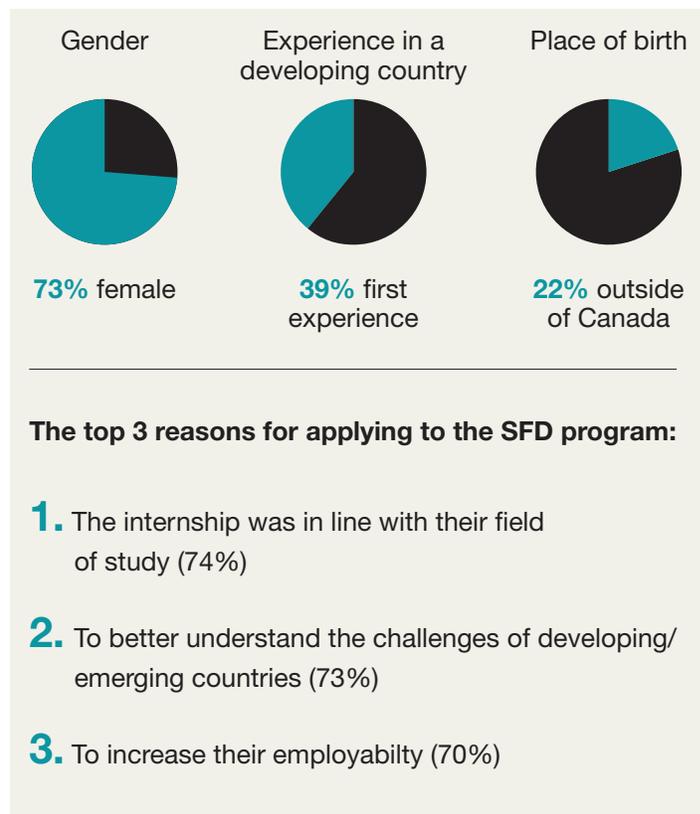
### Who were the interns?

All told, 301 alumni completed the survey (278 English and 23 French). Nearly three-quarters of respondents were female, which was no surprise given the program's gender ratio.

By far, most respondents had completed internships as undergraduate students (61%). About 15% had been enrolled in development studies programs at the time of their internship. Internships at non-governmental organizations (NGOs) proved most popular (59%), with the remainder spending their time at universities and research institutes (28%) and with other hosts.

Interestingly, most respondents (61%) had already spent time in a developing or emerging country before taking the SFD internship. In fact, 22% were born outside of Canada.

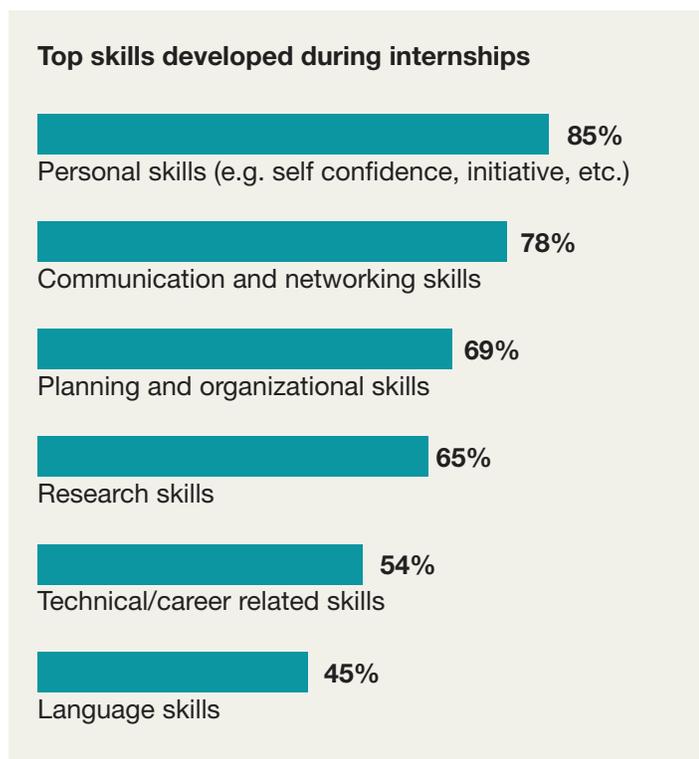
**“It has impacted every aspect of my life including my education, social interactions and future goals.”**



# What did they get out of it?

## Skills

Nearly everyone (98%) agreed the internship experience helped them further develop their skills in at least one area such as: personal development, communication and networking, planning and organization, and research. They continue to build on these learned skills.



**“I gained maturity and self-reliance, and learned to problem-solve, push my own comfort zone and open my mind to new ideas and challenges.”**

## Knowledge

The vast majority came away from their internship with a more solid understanding of global issues. For at least 80% of alumni, the SFD program helped them appreciate the complexities of international development, particularly the importance of community participation (97%), gender equality and human rights (both at 94%) and governance (93%).

Thanks to their SFD experience, almost all alumni (98%) are committed to furthering their understanding of the challenges confronting developing and emerging countries. Meanwhile, 94% enjoy a better understanding of perspectives held by development practitioners and/or leaders in their host country as a result of the internship.

## Awareness

Virtually all alumni (99%) said the internship abroad helped them become more culturally aware. An overwhelming majority (96%) agreed the cross-cultural experience opened their eyes, allowing them to become more tolerant towards other cultures.

Almost all alumni (96%) agreed the SFD experience has increased their ability and confidence to function in an increasingly interdependent world. As a result of their internship, 85% are more committed to keeping up with world events. And 86% agreed the experience changed their world view.

The internships had a lasting impact on a personal level. Most (93%) have maintained friendships developed in the host country since their return to Canada. What's more, about three-quarters (72%) believed their experience helped them establish professional connections, which they have maintained.

## Employability

The survey results showed the internship to be a career booster for those in the labour force. Indeed, 81% of those working agreed their SFD experience helped them secure employment. Two-thirds also credited the internship for helping them find a job in their field. And 63% said the internship contributed to their success in obtaining an international career while 52% said it helped them find a job in international development.

Note that 49% of survey respondents were employed (41% full-time, 8% part-time), 44% were still in university or at a college and 7% were other.

**“My international experience enabled me to get my current job managing a start-up energy business with the goal of bringing sustainable energy sources to developing regions.”**

## How did they contribute abroad?

Most alumni (87%) believe their skills and knowledge were well-matched with the needs of their host organization. Even more (92%) felt they had made a positive contribution to their hosts, and 89% believe those contributions will endure. In addition, most (87%) believe they helped build sustainable links between their university and organizations abroad. In a separate survey, 99% of hosts agreed that interns contributed positively to their organizations.

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**81% of alumni said the SFD experience helped them secure employment.**

**Furthermore, the SFD experience helped:**

**66%** find a job in their field

**63%** obtain an international career

**52%** find a job in international development

**“My greatest accomplishment was helping to start a women’s peace building program that has grown and expanded since 2007 and is still running strong.”**

## How did they contribute at home?

Most alumni (84%) believe that the public engagement activities they undertook on their return home promoted greater understanding and awareness of international development. Moreover, 77% said they were continuing to share their SFD experience with other students.

A number said they continue to support international development efforts by volunteering with development organizations based in Canada, and by raising funds for such groups.

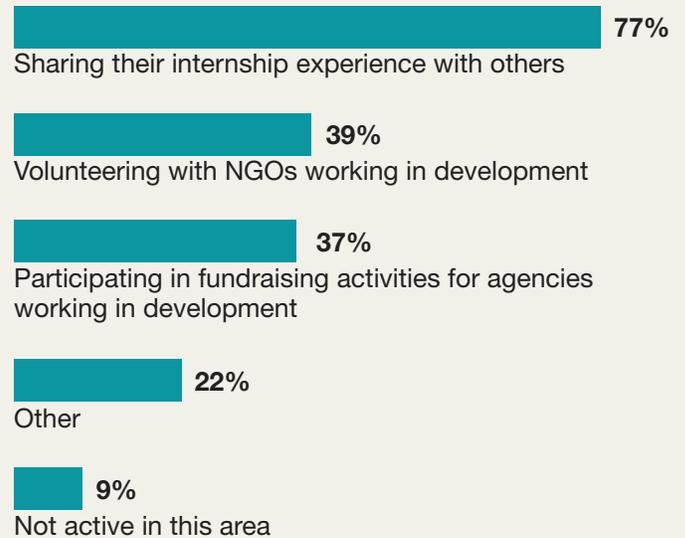
“I began to understand what it means to be an active and engaged citizen of the world.”

## What it all means

Overall, the alumni valued the SFD internship program. Out of a score of 10, 89% rated the program between 7 and 10. The average score was 8.2. In sum, SFD alumni believe the program had a favourable impact on their career, outlook and worldview.

“It fundamentally changed who I am.”

### Alumni continue to promote awareness and support for development by:



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### About the survey

AUCC contracted Inshtrix Research Inc. to conduct an online survey of SFD alumni. The sample consisted of 1,105 alumni names and e-mail addresses from the 2005-2012 program. 301 alumni completed the survey for a response rate of 27%. Data collection took place between March 20th and May 6th, 2013.

The SFD program was undertaken with financial support from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada.