

Voices from Participants

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【2014-2015】 Voices from Participants



Affiliation (As of March 2015)

■ Hiroto Kondo / Environmental Bureau Tokyo Metropolitan Government

The contents of IDPTP are diverse. In addition to lectures from various angles such as law, industry and agriculture, it includes training on presentations and discussion among the participants about current topics such as conflicts between multi-national corporations and local communities in developing countries. An international negotiation simulation game is also included. Therefore, the participants can learn about the field of international development from a variety of viewpoints through this program. What I felt was a distinctive feature of IDPTP is that it helps participants to acquire a habit of considering things from diversified standpoints. This is due to the diversity of the programs, lecturers and participants. Their backgrounds such as professional fields and nationalities varied greatly. It was definitely worth participating in IDPTP. I really appreciate the enthusiastic lecturers, motivated classmates and the staff. Thank you.

■ Toshihisa Nakamura / Advocacy Team World Vision Japan

IDPTP was a great experience for us. It was extremely helpful to have lectures from well-known teachers from all over the world to build a foundation for our future careers in international development. Moreover, it was a priceless experience to study together with classmates who have various backgrounds, cultures, focus areas, and ideas. I recommend this valuable program to all those who wish to work in the international development field.

■ Geetanjali Upadhyaya /Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) Division
University Grants Commission (-2012)

I would like to share an anecdote. During the early days of the International Development Professional Training Program (IDPTP), I had an opportunity to meet Prof. Sonobe, and he mentioned one student who had participated in the program three times. At that time, I couldn't understand why on earth one would take the same program thrice! Well now, who can understand this better than me! It's worth it!!!

When I look back over the last 8 months, IDPTP ranks as an outstanding experience. I thoroughly enjoyed the course, and I have learned quite a number of things. First, media training provided an excellent platform to brush up my communication and presentation skill. Frankly speaking, I myself could sense an improvement in my performance at the end of 4 days of intensive training. Second, participating in the Policy Aid Simulation workshop, though it was the first of its kind for me, definitely aided my understanding of the diverse dimensions of the negotiation process – how interest groups act and interact; how agenda are formed, reformed and even twisted; how difficult is to reach consensus, and much more. Third, the myriad topics (KAIZEN, agriculture, international law, development issues, just to name a few) brought up by different professors were all equally engaging and relevant for concerned global citizens like myself. Last but not the least, meeting participants from different walks of life, and learning from them was great. The friendship I earned is my privilege and honor!

(Other Messages)

- Thank you so much for arranging all the courses of IDPDP. This opportunity was very fruitful and productive for me, and I believe it was for all the students as well. We learned professional understanding of development issues and high-level discussion skills. Not only these academic skills, but also IDPTP gave us very precious time so that we students could get to know each other and share our experiences based on each field. Again, thank you indeed.
- Thank you for everything. I appreciate it!
- The program is an excellent one that I will recommend to others, and I am also willing to repeat the course if I have the opportunity. My thanks to all the lecturers.
- I guess I would recommend adjusting the program and try to fix it as follows: two Saturdays in a month with one Saturday for rest in between, and try to avoid one month gap in between. Thank you for all your support and assistance!
- I hope the duration of the program is different (earlier) so that we do not miss classes

during the internship.

- I thoroughly enjoyed the program.
- Overall, it was worth taking. I could deepen the understanding of international development from various aspects. Yet in terms of professional career, I do not think this course will be helpful. Also, lectures seem to be a little too academic.
- I am very satisfied with the IDPTP program because I learned a lot about development economics. I gradually felt that various knowledge I had learned were getting connected to each other. I felt excited. Moreover, I am glad to meet and talk with various students who have various backgrounds.
- I have some comments about IDPTP. 1) The span among lectures was not uniform, sometimes too short, and sometimes too long. Most of the students are working, so it was very tough to prepare the next lecture. 2) I am very satisfied with the lectures because the contents fitted my academic background, development economics, but the contents may be too narrow for other participants. In the class, there are various students who have various backgrounds: some are interested in the environment, and others are interested in business.
- Thus, in addition to the lectures we took, it would be good to have lecture about business environmental issues. 3) The schedule of the lecture was too busy. I hope you set enough time because during lunch time, we can discuss the many issues raised in the lectures. I really appreciate all of the lecturers and staff of IDPTP. I had a wonderful experience through this program.

【2013-2014】Voices from Participants



■ Miki Oikawa / Program Communication Specialist, Great East Japan Earthquake Recovery Program, Save the Children Japan

Miki Oikawa, IDPTP (International Development Professional Training Program) provided me such a productive opportunity to make a deeper analysis on both my strengths and weaknesses as an international professional. Through media training and the negotiation workshop, participants had to utilize their personal skills in order

to achieve the best output with the team members, and at the same time to face the reality of experiencing how our weaknesses can lead to less optimal results. Also, we had to role play in the opposing position from our actual working area, which opened our eyes to deeply understand how the opponents consider their position at the negotiation table. The lectures given by Dr. John Page were incredibly valuable to our comprehensive knowledge of the latest trends and issues of the international development field.

■ Ami Okamoto / Education Policy Program, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS)

Place of Internship : JICA Zambia Office

One of the most important lessons I have learnt from this IDPTP course was the importance of communication skill. At school, we were so used to communicating with our peers and teachers casually. We do not need to prepare beforehand and could speak for the class presentations or discussions from our minds. However, from this IDPTP media course and internship, I came to understand that the way you talk and your message affects the communication with other people and changes the results.

■ Shizuka Onishi

Environmental Governance program, United Nations University / Japan International Cooperation Agency

Place of Internship : German Development Institute (DIE)

IDPTP has been a thrilling program through which I could enhance my knowledge on development economics as a mid-career professional and a postgraduate student. I can recommend the program to anybody who wishes to brush up his/her knowledge on economics and development, with or without previous academic background in this discipline. I found the LEC lectures by the former World Bank chief economist to be particularly well structured and suitable to all levels, as it offered views into a broad range of issues, from the basics of economic growth, structural change and poverty reduction, to key research outcomes by prominent scholars and think-tanks, to the evolving discourse on the post-2015 development agenda. Role-playing discussions were useful in refining our ability to think in the shoes of different stakeholders in the reality of international development. An additional charm of this program is the diversity of participants who come from different nations and professional/academic backgrounds.

Excellent lecturers, supportive administrative team and these fellow participants have made my weekend visits to the GRIPS campus a truly enjoyable and rewarding experience.

■ Yoko Sakai

National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS)

Place of Internship : Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS)

Thanks to IDPTP, I could do my internship in the Philippines and had a lot of experience as a member of international research institute. Through the internship, I have learned that the importance of the connections between researchers and administrators. We sometimes miss critical issues in developing countries because of the lack of information. Therefore, visiting countries to look at the real situations and listening to real opinions are also important especially for the empirical researchers. Prof. Page who was the main lecturer of this IDPTP has his own perspective from his experiences and gave us very informative lectures. He told us the importance of balanced perspectives. The developing countries have their own specific issues other than developed countries. Sometimes practitioners from developed countries miss the demands. We should understand what's going on and nature of issues. Then we can approach questions from more balanced perspectives. I have learned qualities and skills of a good empirical researchers and practitioner in international standard from this course. I keep working hard to become a researcher and take a leadership to solving global issues.

■ Tomomi Tanaka

Two-year Master's Program of Public Policy (MP2), National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS)

Place of Internship : JICA Sudan Office

IDPTP is worthy to invest. Its comprehensive program enabled me to develop inclusive skills on international development. One of my favorite courses was MED course in which we worked on current hot topics as a particular interest group to present in a hypothetical press conference. Making speech in front of cameras and audience, I greatly learned from fantastic trainers, professional negotiators and journalists, and motivated IDPTP classmates. Another impressive course was NEG course that assumed a hypothetical crisis situation in which we negotiated as a represent of countries or

interest groups. Its intensive six-hour negotiation taught me how difficult to achieve a consensus in a highly diplomatic situation. In the LEC course, the lecturer from the World Bank stimulated my academic studies in development economics by giving practical perspective from the field of development. Discussion sessions during the LEC course were also interesting and productive. Indeed, IDPTP program provided top-level training, lectures, and personal connection to me.

■ Karina Vink

Disaster Management Program, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies
(GRIPS)

Do you want to learn more about international aid and economic policies in developing countries? Do you want to experience professional guidance and a high tech environment to improve your presentation techniques while under pressure? Then the IDPTP is the program for you!

Over the course of 9 months, we learned to crawl into the skin of international policy makers and consider the implications and linkages between different developmental fields. We had the unique opportunity of debating in the actual NHK studios and bawl as we reviewed our own performances. In my opinion, this direct contact is the best guarantee for improvement.

During the introduction of the program, Prof. Sonobe was kind enough to warn us with the words 'some participant may weep'. We did, but it was because of shared laughs. In the end we learned it may not be easy to run a country or help other countries develop, but we can achieve success through greater cooperation and understanding.

■ Charles-Alexis Marie Pierre Bogdan COUVREUR

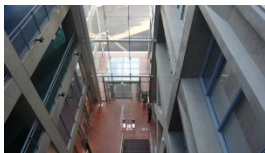
Graduate School of Economics (Contemporary Economics), University of Tokyo

The IDPTP course has been an absolutely fantastic experience. The diversity of courses and their depth most definitely provide all participants with an overview of International Development which is crucial to understand the challenges which so many parts of our planet face. The media training course, a highlight in terms of intensity, novelty and group cohesion, complements the theoretical knowledge acquired with the provision of skills indispensable to convey one's message in a world where intentions are seemingly not sufficient to be persuasive. All courses are taught by renowned experts in their fields, which are in addition very accessible to exchange

ideas.

On a more personal note, participating in the IDPTP course was the first step on a path which I wish to be devoted to International Development, and undoubtedly the most inspiring which could possibly have been taken! I warmly thank everyone involved in the program at any level, and am confident that the human bonds created during these eight months shall be long-lasting ones.

【2012-2013】 Voices from Participants



■ Kaye Quiban

Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Graduate Program on Human Security,
University of Tokyo

For anyone looking into starting a career or acquiring new knowledge in international development, the IDPTP gives a well-rounded perspective of the current and most relevant issues to the field by featuring expert insights from the business, ODA and law sectors as well as intensive media and negotiations trainings. Moreover, this year, we had the great pleasure of sitting in on the lecture series conducted by development expert John Page who imparted insider knowledge on the business of aid and international organizations such as the World Bank. I can fairly say that participating in the IDPTP has given me a rare opportunity to complement my academic studies in human development through a better understanding of the workings of game-changing organizations involved in development and humanitarian affairs as well as simulating critical political situations that confront government bureaucrats, non-government institutions and other major stakeholders. Through the media and negotiations training, I realized how effectively using the media can positively influence international society actors' decisions which can have a huge impact on the daily lives of people. Through the lectures of distinguished figures in Japan, I learned more about the Japanese model of development assistance and the role of Japanese public and private sectors in

shaping the development landscape domestically. The Saturdays I spent at GRIPS were time spent well in the pursuit of intellectual and professional growth, and I look forward to meeting my IDPTP classmates in the near future in the global stage, as movers and changers in the international development field.

■ Anparasan Mahalingam

Sustainability Science, United Nations University

One of the greatest and unexpected joys during my stay in Tokyo for my graduate work at the United Nations University Headquarters was attending IDPTP. To say the least it was exceptionally wonderful. IDPTP's structure, success and coherent curriculum convinces me more about the ability of education in transforming the societies which I have seen by myself and by many other students who have participated. Dr. John Page's academic views molded by World Bank's public service to Dr. Junichi Ujiie's industrial views crafted with Chicago-style academic serenity - you name it IDPTP never ceased to amaze me. GRIPS with its excellence in producing the world class leaders in the region and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan with its natural instinct to get the best out of Japan developed this IDPTP well and very successfully. As someone said during the classes 'if the answer had been wrong, while you try for the better you can also pursue to asking a better question'. With my experience at IDPTP I look forward to ask better questions in the long walk of development thanks to IDPTP. Congratulations Team IDPTP!!

■ Francis Mwesigye

Policy Analysis program, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS)

We tend to underrate the role of policy makers until we, ourselves, are involved in policy making. This is what I exactly thought after IDPTP, a program that sharpened my understanding of how the policy world operates.

Completely different from class work, IDPTP puts participants in the shoes of the world policy makers advising organizations such as NGOs, World Bank and countries. It then equips you with skills suitable for the task. The skills range from negotiations on behalf of your organization, policy advice taking into account of various stakeholders, and information dissemination to the public. For the first time I came to appreciate the power of information packaging, that if not carefully crafted, the message can be misinterpreted and result in serious repercussions.

Thanks to Media training and role play negotiations that I feel a great improvement in my communication skills.

The lecture series by the most experienced policy practitioners which were well blended with policy exercises were intellectually enriching and mind stimulating. I felt, a hitherto hypothetical, development policy get real as we interacted with our IDPTP lecture facilitator on policy exercises. Thanks to IDPTP program.

The international community of the participants with diverse backgrounds in terms of work, education and expertise made the environment conducive. The constructive discussions I have had with many of my colleagues will surely have a lasting impact on my career.

Lastly, the kind and hardworking team of GRIPS program coordinators who assisted us throughout the training taught me a great lesson of serving with diligence and passion. I will always cherish them.

I take it a unique privilege to have participated in this program and I thank all participants, coordinators and facilitators for making it such a big success.

■ Ryoko Susukida

Policy Analysis Program, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS)

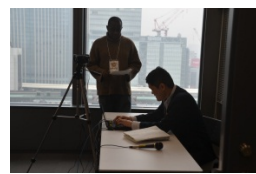
The participation in IDPTP was a great opportunity for me to realize the importance of communication skills. Good communication skills are fundamental skills for me as a prospective researcher, who is expected to translate the research outputs into an understandable manner to the policy makers so that they can apply the research implications to the real policies. IDPTP is a well-designed program that offers unmatched opportunities to develop professional communication skills through the media workshops and the role-play simulation game, combined with a series of the stimulating dialogue with the front-line professionals in the field of international corporations.

Especially in the media workshops I keenly felt the difficulty of getting across my intended messages in a convincing manner without causing confusion through media. Media quickly disseminates one's words whether for intended or unintended. The experience of mock press conference and debate session has led me put further efforts to present my research in a plain and understandable manner.

I believe that IDPTP is a useful program to develop communication skills not only for me as a to-be researcher but also for whoever intends to play an international role in various fields of international cooperation. I am truly grateful for this great

opportunity to improve my communication skills through its well-designed training program.

【2011-2012】 Voices from Participants



■ Ai Ozawa

Assistant Professor, Graduate School of Law, Keio University

"Look into her eyes! You are both human," said the American advisor at the NHK training Studio to me when I suddenly froze in front of the spotlight of the TV camera. The participants were role playing based on a situation involving an international press conference on Japan's TPP negotiations, and my role was that of a journalist discussing the issue with a business representative on a TV show. It certainly helped me to overcome my momentary panic attack, but more importantly, that striking piece of advice seems to me to represent the essence of any form of international negotiation or communication: both parties are human beyond our different opinions, positions, and roles in today's society. I really enjoyed the stimulating weekends interacting with the international participants, lecturers and advisors not only at the excellent location of GRIPS' Roppongi campus, but also at the sophisticated facilities provided both at the NHK Communications Training Institute and the Canon Institute for Global Studies.

■ Akira Shibamura

National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS) Policy Analysis Program

IDPTP gave me a great opportunity of enhancing knowledge and skills deeply related to international development expertise that could not be acquired through typical postgraduate studies. As students, we tend to focus on a single issue and provide a deep analysis. As practitioners of international development, however, we will face complex issues every day, which are multidisciplinary and often beyond one's knowledge and skills.

IDPTP is well designed so as to update the knowledge on wide range of international development issues through lectures by experts as well as discussions with other participants from different expertise. The lectures reminded me how important grasping the big pictures of problems was and how different experts made their best to address these problems. And the discussions made me realize how different people spoke different languages in talking about a single problem, and how beneficial we brought different expertise together to solve it.

Media training and a negotiation workshop are unique in IDPTP. Both of good public relations through media and effective negotiation with stakeholders are important elements in leading a development project successful. Risk-free simulation of press conferencing and multilateral negotiation are worth experiencing before facing difficulties in the real world.

I strongly recommend IDPTP that brings enormous benefits to your future career in international development.

■ Michael C. Huang

National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS) Policy Analysis Program

It has been a privilege to participate in a program that involves scholars from so many different nationalities and academic backgrounds. If there should be any phrase given to properly describe the impression of IDPTP, “The global brainstorming” would be the most suitable one. The intensive program provides very timely and comprehensive lectures, which enable all the participants to better understand the aims of international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and Red Cross for a face-to-face discussion with the person in charge. In addition, the lectures of Japanese entrepreneurship development deliver very insightful ideas of core competitiveness.

Through more than a decade of education, we are fundamentally trained and take the right for granted to criticize the policies implemented by politicians. Somehow the day we are being screened sarcastically by the press and public opinion has arrived. The media training in NHK is undoubtedly the most exciting course to acquire skills confronting countless instantaneous debates and meanwhile maintain calm smiles when conferring the ideas consistently and logically. In our daily life, the decision we make could be just harmless and insignificant to the world; however, in the “Role Play Workshop”, our decision represents a state’s policy, and every small action we take could, optimistically, result in a rise of prosperity, or cause the sovereign collapse whereby millions of people would have to suffer. During the negotiation, much

lobbying was conducted by the diplomats while the press was working in the background. The workshop was operated under a tense atmosphere, which implied that in the national merit negotiation, choices are hard, resources are scarce and no promises are truly guaranteed. It is, however, astonishing to observe that the situation could be turned over despite the strength of a state but the operation of the press, cooperation, and diplomatic flexibility.

During the two months' program, we have experienced one of the most inspiring knowledge patterns in our life. The various participants have enriched the quality of the discussions and virtually stimulated new ideas that are hardly generated in a single and conventional way of lecture. I must admit and cannot praise IDPTP too much for it has created a perfect platform where dialogues among global elite-to-be could be achieved to make further contemplation of international cooperation. It is believable and very possible that one day in a summit press conference, tomorrow's ministers, who are probably today's IDPTP alumni, will join hands together, and harmoniously, and confidently announce a proposal on world poverty reduction, inclusive growth and sustainable development.

■ Amos James Ibrahim

Waseda University, Graduate School of Economics, International Economics
(Tanzania Revenue Authority)

"It is amazing how a training of three months can change your way of thinking and reveal your weakness that you had never known". This happened when I was attending the International Development Professional Training Program (IDPTP) lectured by trustworthy, educated and experienced trainers. The training exposed me to various field that I never thought they are key to Economic development such as the role of media and negotiation conducted by NHK and Canon Institute for Global Studies respectively. The media training involved lectures and practice. I came to realize that it is easier to understand a lecture in class than practicing it, however practice makes perfect. "Yesterday you answered a question very harsh, we need to have a sense of humor" this was a comment from one of Advisor who used to be the Chief Editor at NHK. The comment was reflecting my response to one question raised by journalist when we had Media Conference mock and I was at podium as government official communicating policies to citizen.

At Canon Institute for Global Studies I was exposed to games in developments. The workshop has acted as catalyst for me to learn more about game theory especially in

Economic development, the way it was organized clearly revealed the importance of negotiation in economic development.

Moreover, the lectures by scholars who are working with International organization and those who worked to the same organization were very informative. The lectures give insight on global politics and economic development with real world examples. Participates had an opportunity to ask question(s) for further clarification to any issue of concern if any. It was real a great time to meet people who have strong background in International arena.

Therefore, by the end of training had gained a new approach to my research questions. It was real fruitful.

Last, I would like to thank Prof. Sonobe and his team for being able to coordinate such a productive training. Arigato gozaimashita.