



Beatrice Mosello

University degree: PhD in International Studies
Job: Research Officer

Overseas Development Institute (ODI)

How did you start your career?

I was enrolled in a PhD programme at the Institute – for the first 3 years I was based at the Institute in Geneva working as a Research Assistant on an EU-funded research project. I then left for Central Asia where I did my fieldwork and spent the last 9 months of my PhD at the London School of Economics thanks to a scholarship from the Swiss National Science Foundation. My research focused on climate change adaptation in the water sector – both topics that are at the top of the ODI’s agenda. I thus became more and more interested in ODI’s research and applied for a Project Officer position as soon as my PhD was (more or less) completed. I started working in the ODI’s Climate Change and Environment team and then moved to a more research-oriented position in the Water Policy Team, where I am currently employed, in October 2013.

Why did you choose to study at the Institute?

The Graduate Institute attracted me because of its reputation as an academic institution preparing its students for a career in the international organisations. Its location in Geneva (when I started all the classrooms were still in beautiful Villa Barton by the lake) was also a plus, as it allowed access to UN organisations and NGOs for internships and other experiences such as the Geneva Model United Nations (GIMUN), conferences, and other cultural events. The bilingual nature of the Institute influenced my decision as well: my English and French were a little bit shaky when I moved to Geneva, and studying at the Institute has been a great opportunity to bring both languages to a proficiency level.

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Why did you choose a career at ODI?

The Overseas Development Institute is one of the most well-known and well-reputed international think tanks in the UK – as well as in Europe and worldwide. It brings together excellent researchers working on the most relevant international development issues. Among these, climate-resilient development and water governance figure prominently – and since my expertise precisely lies in these

fields, ODI was a very attractive destination for my professional career once my PhD was completed.

In your opinion, what are the qualities necessary for a successful career at ODI?

From a professional point of view, ODI requires you to be an innovative thinker, a smart professional that is able to question the assumptions of international development by producing high-quality research and knowledge products. You need to be rigorous in your research, flexible to take in and respond to new developments and realities, and good at communicating your work to a differentiated audience.

Did the Institute prepare you well?

Yes, absolutely. The multicultural environment of the Institute gave me that openness that was required to adapt to an equally multicultural organisation such as ODI – and nourished my willingness to travel and see and understand more of the world, which is also a very important requirement to be an ODI employee. My MSc and PhD taught me to conduct rigorous academic research, and to think creatively and innovatively about the world's problems. My language skills, also a legacy of the Institute, proved essential to conduct research in different regions of the world, being able to easily adapt to French-speaking and English-speaking contexts and to communicate with people from different social, cultural and geographical contexts.

What advantage did the Institute give you from an intellectual point of view?

I was very well-trained on theories and methods from the political science and international relations disciplines, in which I specialised. Beyond that, the Graduate Institute offers a wide range of courses, some of them spanning across multiple fields, from law to economics; and this is crucial if one wants to have a more holistic view of a problem (which, in turn, is essential to find solutions to it).

How did you benefit from your position at ODI?

I am enjoying working at ODI immensely: I am doing applied research on the topics I am interested in (climate change, resilience, water governance), which implies fieldwork. In turn, this results in a lot of travelling to incredible places and collaborating with amazing people – other researchers, humanitarian and development practitioners, farmers' and water users' associations, women's organisations, micro-credit institutions, government representatives, and so on. I have a permanent contract (not a bad achievement in itself these days) and work in an environment full of brilliant and friendly people that I am happy to be able to call 'colleagues'.