



## Remote Graduate Internship Programme in International Development

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# Impact Assessment Report

**September, 2018**

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The team of data collectors, interviewers and data analysts must also be thanked for their efficiency and professionalism in conducting this study.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The findings of this study demonstrated a strong positive impact of the internship program on the graduates' employment in the field of international development. A graduate who attended this program has 2.7 times more chance to get an employment than the graduate who did not.

Other variables explaining the graduates' employment are sex, the field of studies and the number of years that a graduate spent seeking for an employment.

The findings also highlighted the relevance of technical skills such as mobile data collection, data analysis, developing templates, project evaluation and GPS mapping for development projects are more likely to find an employment than their counterparts with qualitative and administrative skills.

The gender was respected in placement with 54.4% of male and 45.6% of female. Furthermore, participants were geographically dispersed worldwide. Sub-Saharan Africa had 69% attendance, 12% from the Middle East and North Africa, 8% from Asia-Pacific, 7% from South America and 5% from North America.

The bulk proportion of interns had a Bachelor's degree (66%) while 29% had a Master's degree and 5% with ongoing Doctorate.

About 80.9% of interns acquired the technical knowledge related to the field of international development and 95.8% were supervised by qualified and experienced resource persons. So, the interns were very satisfied with the internship and 78.3% of them rated the program for more than 70 points per cent.

Furthermore, the supervisors declared the interns met the requirements of the institution as well as in practical knowledge (87.8%) and qualitative skills (90.4%), even though they recommended them to build their skills in ICT, technical knowledge and language, especially English.

After the internship, 62.0% of interns, found an employment. 16.0% in a permanent employment. Respectively 15.2% of interns got an employment before the end of the internship and 28.6% within one month.

In addition, since their working age, 78.4% of the interns have at least once worked either in a temporary or a permanent employment. In other words, 21.6% of interns never worked in their life.

Among the factors contributing to the job, the interns cited the technical skills (86.3%), the internship program (80.3%), commitment in seeking a job (54.7%), experience (44.2%) and qualitative skills (43.2%) to be helpful.

## INTRODUCTION

International development professionals work to reduce or eliminate poverty in developing countries. Practitioners in this vast field target issues ranging from global health to emerging market investment opportunities, at scales ranging from village-based enterprises to country-wide financial and government infrastructures.

Already, Africans account for about two-thirds of the world's extreme poor. If current trends persist, they will account for nine-tenths by 2030. Fourteen out of 18 countries in the world—where the number of extreme poor is rising are in Africa. This calls for the training and retraining of development practitioners.

International development is a very broad sector encompassing a huge range of organizations and job roles. Entry-level applicants need to be proactive, determined and flexible. You do not necessarily need to have a Master's degree in development to 'do development'. Most employers will look for at least six months and up to two years experience. This is so you can demonstrate practical knowledge of the sector.

Be aware that getting opportunities 'in the field' can be difficult for new graduates especially those without prior experience and internship positions in this sector are very limited and difficult to secure.

Dataville Research LLC's remote internship programme provides tailored training, guidance and real responsibility from the beginning, quickly preparing young graduates for entry-level positions in the international development sector.

At the end of this 3-month programme, participants should have a grasp of the rudiments of international development, data collection and management in development research and programme implementation.

The main target audience for this internship is international development prospects who will be directly implementing and evaluating programmes. Because of this, we generally stay away from very theoretical and academic content and opinion pieces that discuss problems without providing any practical solutions. A strong emphasis is placed on experiential learning, meaning that interns will be learning through the implementation of key phases of work in this internship.



## Programme/Tasks

- A First Look at Global Development
- How to Break into International Development
- Data Sources in International Development
- Sustainable Development Goals
- Research Methodology for Development
- Mobile Data Collection
- Exploring Opportunities in the Development Sector
- Template Development
- Baseline, Midterm and Endline Survey
- GPS Mapping for Development Projects
- Programme Implementation
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Developing RFPs
- ICT for Development
- Future of Development Aid
- Term Paper

### 1.1 Objectives

The main objectives of this study are to:

- Evaluate the intern satisfaction in regard to the programme;
- Assess the acquired and needed practical and qualitative skills;
- Collect the intern propositions to improve the programme;
- Collect the appreciation of the supervisors on the intern performances;
- Determine the factors that contribute to the graduates' employment;
- Determine the impact of the internship programme on the graduates' employment

### 1.2 Survey Methodology

To carry out a comprehensive and reliable survey, the databases of the interns were used to select the sample. The key respondents were the interns, resource persons and supervisors of Cohort 1-3 (August 2017 to June 2018). The interns were selected randomly from the databases with the respondents geographically dispersed worldwide.

The survey questionnaires included:

- Questionnaire related to interns;
- Questionnaire to gather the supervisor opinion on the intern performances.

### 1.3 Sampling Framework

During the 2017/2018 period, there were 780 graduate remote interns. The number of interns to be selected was calculated based on Yamane's formula (Yamane, 1967).

Where  $N$  = Population size;

$$N = \text{sample size } n / N(1 + N(e)^2)$$

$e$  = level of precision. A precision of 5% was assumed for this survey.

To ensure all sample estimates reflect the population parameters, weights for the different strata against the respective sample sizes were calculated. The weights were computed using  $w = p/P$ , which was used to weight the sample results;

Where  $p$  = the strata size

$P$  = the population size.

*Table 1: Sampling Framework*

STRATA	STRATA SIZE	RESULTS OF SAMPLING	REAL SAMPLE SIZE
INTERNS	780	120	360
RESOURCE PERSONS	45	20	30

### 1.4 Data Collection

Given the respondents were located worldwide and to ensure the need that as many as possible participants were included in the study, online survey and Skype interview were deemed to be the most appropriate and cost effective methods.

In addition, the intern supervisors were engaged on video conferencing to collect their opinion on intern performances.

### 1.5 Report Structure

After the data entry cleaning processes, the data were analyzed. The report is composed by the findings in four modules and the assessment of the impact of internship program.

The first two modules present the profiles of the interns. It provides the insights into their characteristics such as sex, age, region, educational qualification and funding arrangement.

The third module describes the internship program. It evaluates the technical knowledge and skills acquired; the appreciation of the supervisors on interns' performances and the suggestions to improve the program.

The last chapter of this report covers the assessment of the impact of internship program. It has the purpose of determining the impact of the program on the graduates' employability. It also determines the variables contributing to the graduates' employment prospects.

## 2.0 FINDINGS

### 2.1 INTERN PROFILE

*Table 2: Interns by age and sex (%)*

AGE	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
<b>23-27</b>	13.2	22.0	35.2
<b>28-32</b>	26.4	24.0	50.4
<b>33-37</b>	6.2	8.2	14.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>45.8</b>	<b>54.2</b>	<b>100.0</b>

85.6% of interns are between 23 and 32 years old. Female and male represent respectively 45.6% and 54.4%. (See table 2 and figure 1).

*Figure 1: Interns by sex (%)*

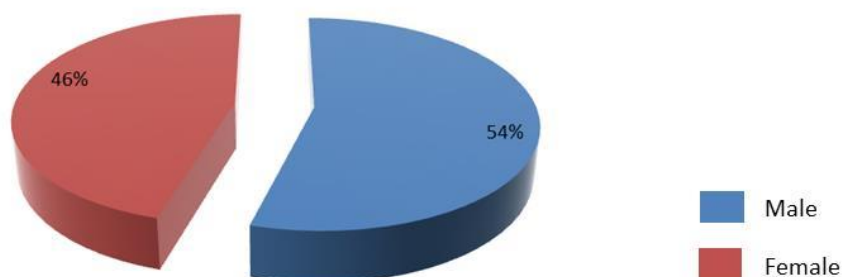


Figure 2: Interns by region (%)

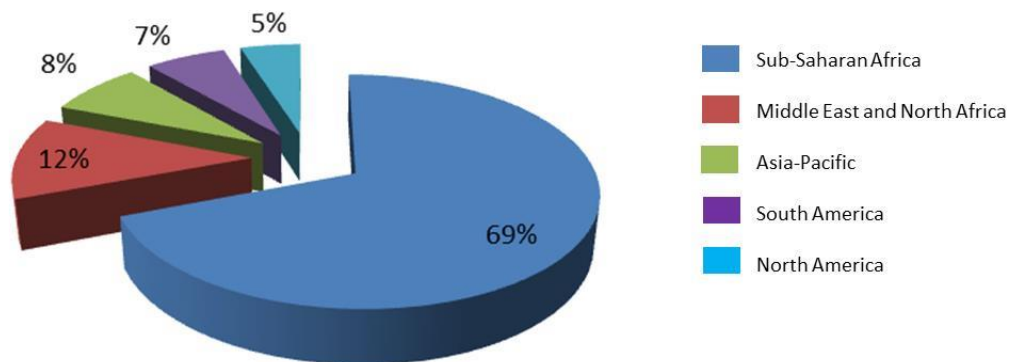


Figure 3: Interns by level of qualification (%)

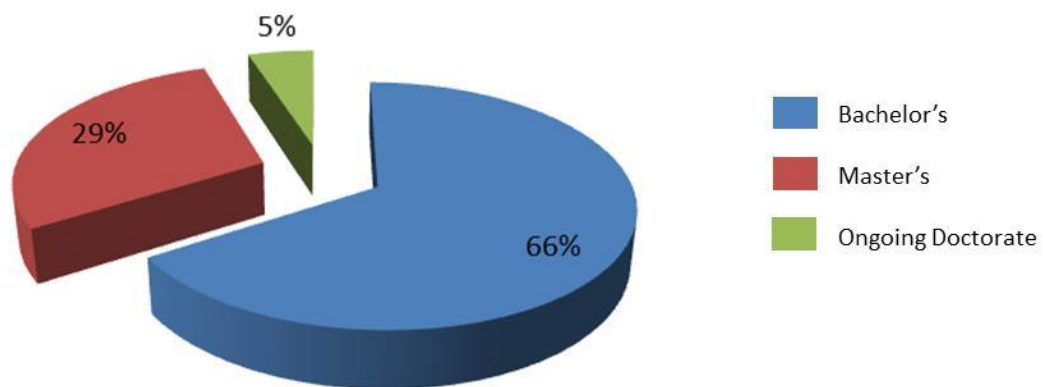
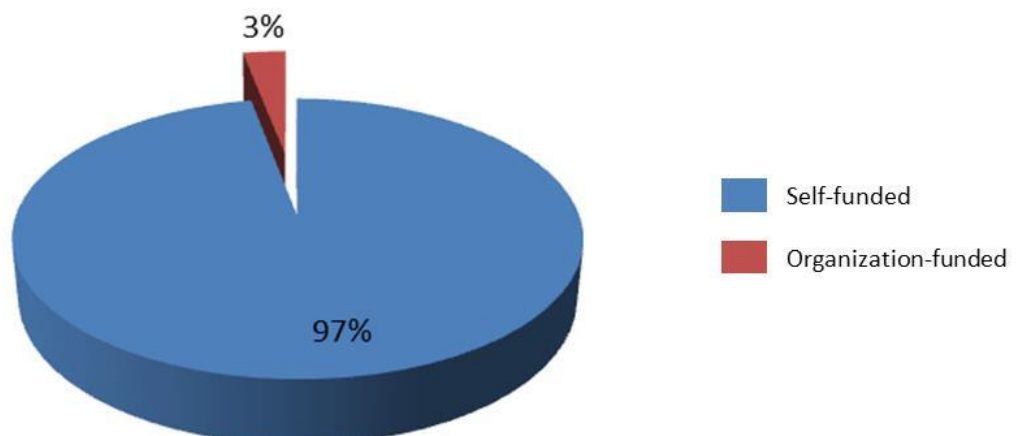


Figure 4: Interns by funding arrangement (%)



## 2.2 INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

### 2.2.1 Technical Knowledge Acquired

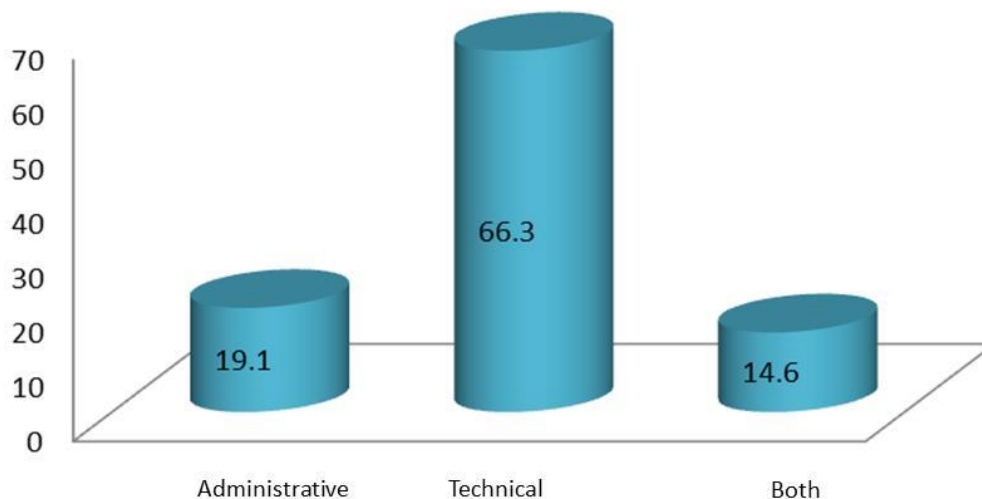
This section aims at evaluating the daily activities of the intern and the interaction with supervisors and trainers.

Administrative responsibilities are those which are not related to the field of studies of the interns. They include responsibilities such as answering incoming calls, determine purpose of call and transfer call; taking and delivering messages; maintaining clients' databases; interacting with clients and vendors; scheduling appointments; proposal drafting; and preparing operations budgets.

The interns who had administrative responsibilities are mostly from the field of studies of administration and law. In addition, interns with ICT background were most of the time providing technical support to less savvy interns.

The interns with statistics and data science background were more likely to have responsibilities matching with their field of studies. This include questionnaire design and data collection methods, study design, for experiments and surveys, modelling of data, data mining and analytics, interpretation of analyses and quality graphical presentations.

Figure 5: Interns by technical knowledge acquired (%)



## 2.2.2 On-demand industry skills acquired

The objective of this remote internship program is to prepare international development practitioners who will be directly implementing and evaluating intervention programmes.

This objective has been achieved as interns were found to be familiar with sourcing for international development data, mobile data collection platform, developing templates, project evaluation and GPS mapping for development projects.

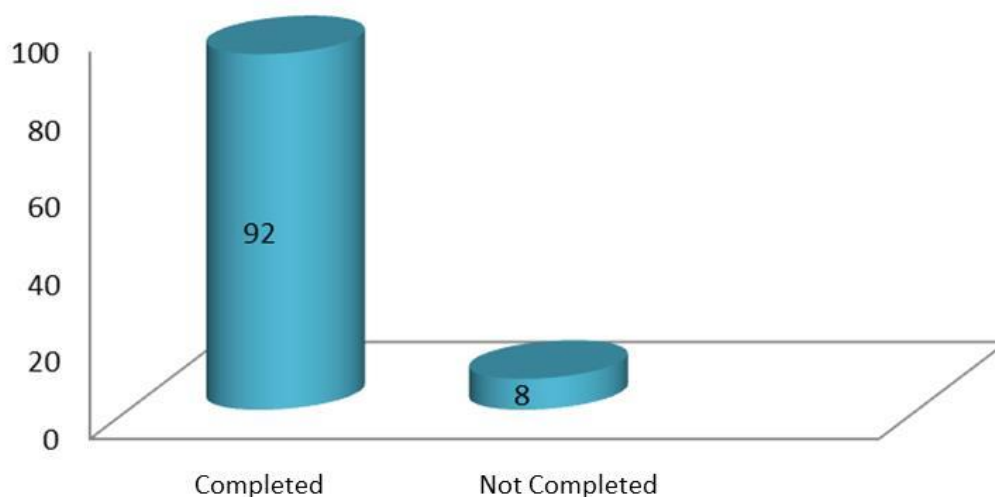
Interns with administrative background (social science, arts, management and law) gained practical knowledge on professional email correspondence, team work and client support, developing request for proposals (RFPs) and report writing.

Participants with industry experience became more proficient in programme implementation, developing budgets, monitoring and evaluation and data analysis using SPSS and Stata.

## 2.2.3 Duration of the Internship Programme

The internship is scheduled to last 3 months and 92% of interns completed. Only 8% were unable to complete the programme, mainly because they had extremely poor internet connectivity. Other reasons were inability to complete routine tasks and illness.

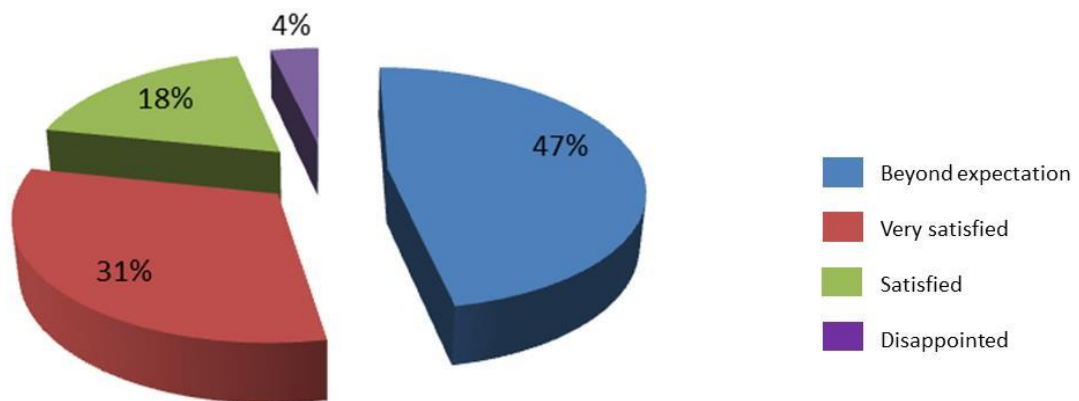
Figure 6: Interns by duration of internship (%)



## 2.2.4 Interns' rating on internship Programme

The interns rated the internship program out of 100 points by comparing their expectations before integrating the program with the results they achieved. The following ratings were used: disappointed (below 50%), satisfied (50-70%), very satisfied (70-80%) and beyond expectations (more than 80%). The outcomes are showed in figure 9.

Figure 7: Interns level by satisfaction (%)



In general, 78.3% of the interns are at least very satisfied with the internship program. The most satisfied are those who exercised technical responsibilities (mobile data collection, GPS mapping, template development and data analysis and management). They got opportunities to implement the theory on the ground, to acquire more practical knowledge and experience.

## 2.2.5 Supervisors' opinion on the intern performances

The supervisors of the interns gave their opinion on the interns' performances in as far as meeting their expectations were concerned. The items evaluated include practical knowledge and qualitative and soft skills.

The ratings used were as follow: 4= exceeds an expectation; 3= meets an expectation; 2= below an expectation and 1= unsatisfactory.

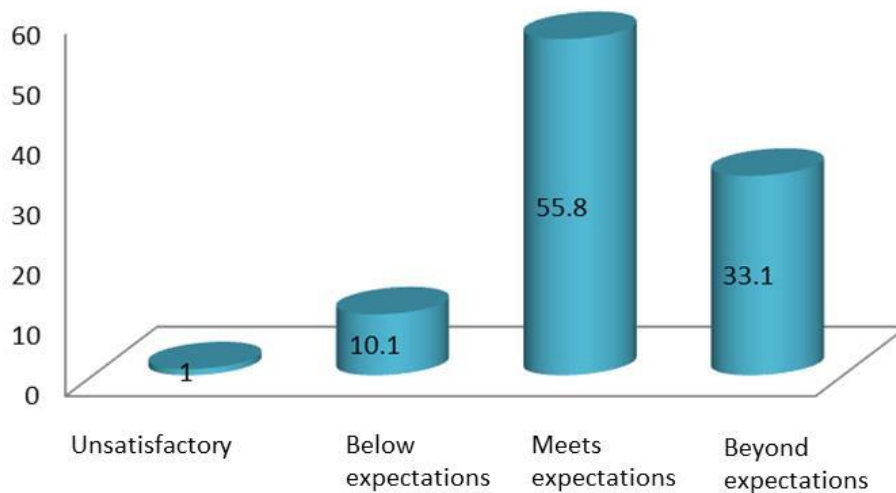
According to figure 10, most of interns (88.9%) met the host institution expectations with 33.1% performing beyond the expectations. Working in a team, meeting technical skills requirements and understanding job procedures are their strengths.

However, 55.1% of Agronomists performed below expectations. This could be partly explained by the fact that some of them worked from upcountry, in marshlands, in difficult conditions coupled with the small amount of facilitation allowance.

*Table 3: Interns by practical knowledge and ratings obtained (%)*

RATING ITEM	1	2	3	4	TOTAL
Meeting technical skills requirements		7.1	51.6	41.3	100.0
Managing team		11.3	53.6	35.1	100.0
Running activities	0.5	15.2	53.8	30.5	100.0
Running a project	1.9	14.0	60.5	23.6	100.0
Team work	1.1	4.9	44.3	49.7	100.0
Writing reports	3.4	12.6	56.9	27.1	100.0
Correspondence		13.9	58.3	27.8	100.0
Recognizing problem situations	1.6	5.4	53.5	39.5	100.0
Understanding tasks		10.7	67.9	21.4	100.0
Carrying out own initiatives	1.6	10.9	56.5	31.0	100.0
Maturity and problem solving skills	0.5	11.7	48.8	39.0	100.0

*Figure 8: Interns by appreciation of the supervisors (%)*



About qualitative and soft skills, the interns demonstrated weakness in responding to criticism and balancing the programme with personal life.



Some interns didn't consider themselves as subordinates and were amazed when the supervisors demanded them to behave accordingly. So, they were also always looking at job opportunities and were diverted from their routine activities.

However, sharing information and knowledge and interacting with colleagues and supervisors are their strengths.

*Table 4: Interns by qualitative and soft skills and rating obtained (%)*

RATING ITEM	1	2	3	4	TOTAL
Login frequency	1.1	14.6	37.2	46.8	100.0
Interacting with co-interns		9.6	43.1	47.3	100.0
Sharing information and knowledge	0.5	7.9	59.7	31.9	100.0
Balancing tasks and personal life	1.1	10.8	57.0	31.1	100.0
Team work		3.7	46.3	50.0	100.0
Responding to criticism		12.2	59.1	28.7	100.0
Confidence		9.6	55.3	35.1	100.0

## 2.2.6 Suggestions from interns and their supervisors

The interns and their supervisors gave the suggestions applicable to improve the internship program.

As shown by the table 5 below, most of the interns would like to benefit from the follow up of individual resource persons in their cohort (50.4%), to see the duration being increased (23.2%), to be placed in development organizations and given training sessions before the internship (19.6%).

Some interns, indeed, abandoned the program because they were at locations with extremely poor internet connectivity. Some others, as a result of ill-health and safety concerns.

However, most of them deemed internship program helpful in getting an employment. Some interns expressed concerns about the "after internship", because when they don't find an employment rapidly, they forget the skills acquired. That's why they wished an additional mentorship programme to maintain the momentum.

*Table 5: Interns suggestion (%)*

SUGGESTION	PERCENTAGE
Increase follow up	50.4
Increase duration	23.2
Consider physical placements	19.6
Training session before internship	7.6
Reduce duration	6.8
Report after the internship	5.6
Post internship mentoring	3.2
Increase capacity building activities	2.0
Additional programme	1.2
Others	4.4

*Table 6: Supervisors suggestion (%)*

SUGGESTION	PERCENTAGE
Increase facilitation allowances	6.9
Increase duration	3.2
Consider physical placements	1.1
Advisory session before internship	0.6
Intern evaluation	0.6

Furthermore, 66.1% of the supervisors had a positive opinion of the interns. They appreciated their behaviors such as eager for tasks, quick learning, politeness, teamwork and would be ready to recommend some for job. Some supervisors however advised the interns to have more skills (especially in ICT), critical thinking and teamwork and problem-solving skills.

The supervisors further suggested that the interns should be evaluated after the internship and given the certificate according to the outcomes of that evaluation.

## 2.3 EMPLOYABILITY

The interns were evaluated in regard to employment. They were asked the time needed to get the first employment after internship, its duration and their employment situation during the survey period. If someone was employed, the factors that contributed to get an employment were asked.

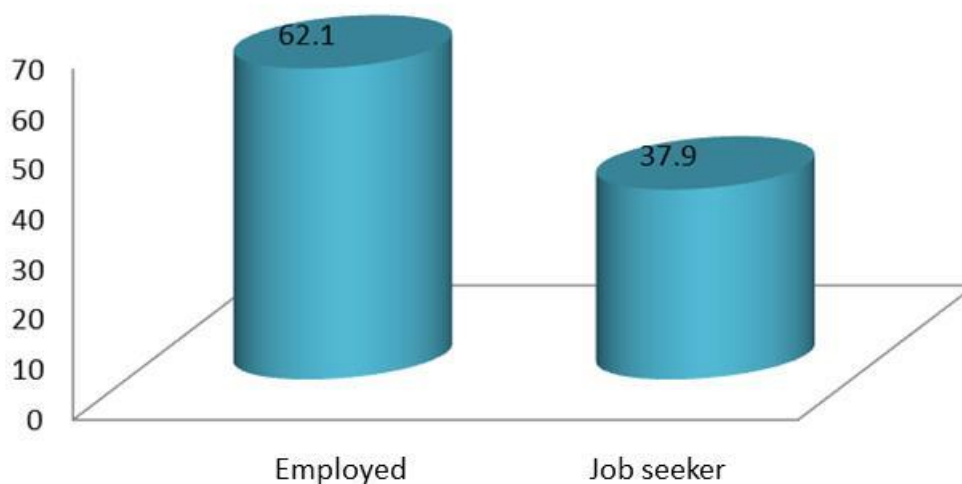
### 2.3.1 Intern employment before internship programme

The study found that 44.8% worked before the internship. Two thirds of those contracts had a duration which was inferior to one year. Most of the contracts lasted 1 and 2 years.

### 2.3.2 Intern employment after internship programme

The main target audience for this internship is international development prospects who will be directly implementing and evaluating programmes. Participants were provided professionalism development, effective work competencies and employability skills. After the internship, the intern uses the knowledge acquired to seek for employment in the international development sector.

Figure 9: Employment situation after internship (%)

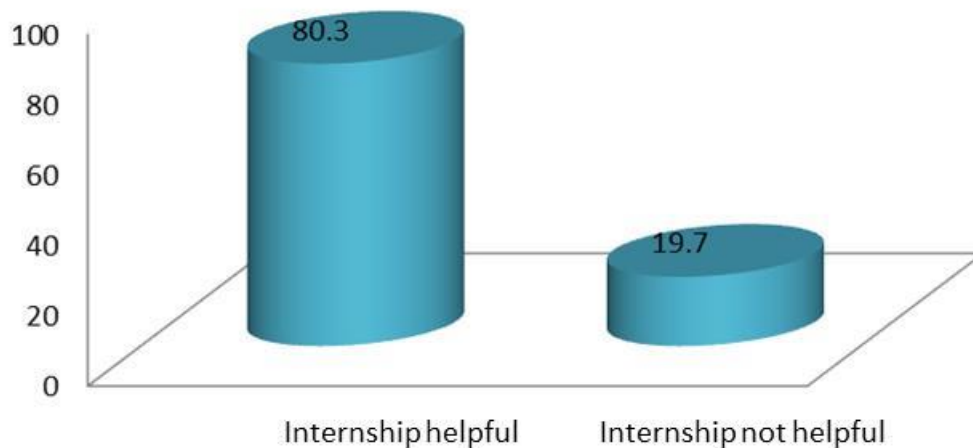


15.2% of the interns found the first employment before the end of internship, 13.6% within one month and 48.8% within 4 months (see figure 9).

Moreover, 16.0% of the interns got a permanent employment (see figure 10). The temporary contracts have an average and median durations of 188 days and 120 days respectively. In addition, 80.3% of the employed interns declared the internship program helpful in finding the employment.

After the internship, 16.0% of interns found a permanent employment, 14.8% a temporary contract between 1 and 3 months, 10.0% between 8 and 12 months and 9.6% between 5 and 8 months.

Figure 10: The role of internship programme in getting employment (%)



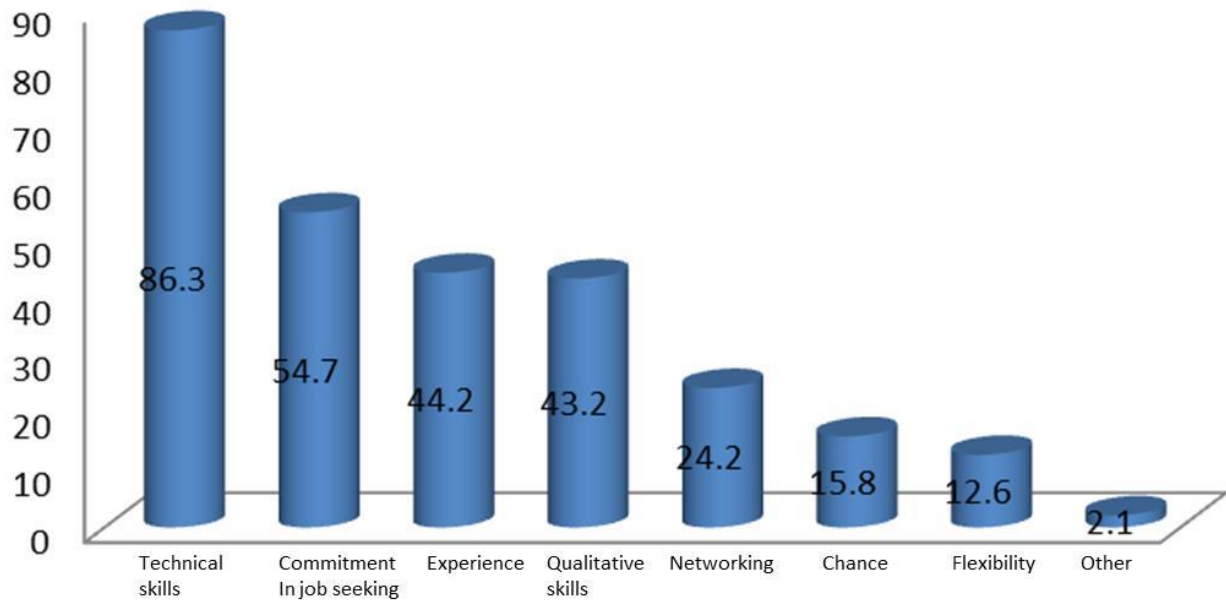
### 2.3.3 Intern employment situation during the survey period

The interns were asked their employment situation during the period in which the survey was being conducted. The outcomes show that 39.4% were employed. Moreover, 16.8% were in permanent employment. 67.7% worked in public institutions and 24.0% in private institutions

For the interns who were employed, "technical skills" was the most important factor in finding an employment, because their recruitment was based on the outcomes of the written and oral tests. The figure 11 shows also they found an employment after many applications (54.7 % of the employed interns declared the commitment in seeking job, one of the main factor to find an employment).

Although they declared not easy to assess the qualitative skills, they thought it is necessary to have them even though it is not the sufficient condition to get a job. Contrary to the people belief, some employers accepted to recruit a no experienced candidate if he/she had the technical skills they needed. Considering the current labour market situation, some interns deemed themselves lucky to have been recruited.

Figure II: Interns by factors contributing to the employment (%)



## 3.0 INTERNSHIP IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### 3.1 Statistical Model of graduates' employment

This survey aims at evaluating if the internship program has achieved its main objective which is to provide the recipients with the necessary practical knowledge and soft skills to reinforce their employability. In other words, the study aims at determining whether an intern is more likely to get an employment after the programme. It is in this regard, 360 participants of the programme have been sampled.

The binary logistic model was used considering salary employment as dependent variable and internship program, age, sex, the field of studies, training institution, level of education, grade, specialization and number of years spent looking for an employment after graduation as independent variables.

According to the test outcomes, the internship programme has a strong impact on the graduates' employment. A graduate who attended an internship program has 2.7 times more chance to get an employment than someone who did not.

The sex, the field of studies and the number of years a graduate spent seeking for an employment are other variables which determine the graduates' employment.

These data did not, however, show the impact of age, level of education, grade, specialization and training institution on the graduates' employment.

Nevertheless, it is worth highlighting that this statistical model explains only between 13.0% and 18.6% of the graduates' employment. It is therefore important to undertake other studies to discover the employment determinants for graduates with internship experience in international development.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The graduate remote internship programme in international development has proven its usefulness and a positive impact on the graduates' employability. All the graduates, those who benefited from it and those who are still waiting to be admitted into the programme, have a positive opinion of it, and they wish every graduate could get a chance to participate in the scheme.

The supervisors also deemed the program is beneficial to both the interns and the host organization. The interns have indeed contributed to the smooth running of the host institutions' organization and most of the supervisors are ready to consider an intern for an employment if a position is available.

Although the number of the male is superior to the female, statistically, gender balance is respected in placement.

During the internship, the interns acquired the technical skills related to the field of international development particularly implementing and evaluating intervention programmes and qualitative skills as well. They were also very satisfied with the program and most of them completed it. Those who couldn't complete the internship did so because they had poor internet connectivity in their location, ill-health and safety concerns.

The supervisors also appreciated the quick learning of interns and the contribution they gave to the host institution. That's why both sides (interns and host institutions) would like to see the number of interns and the internship period increased.

In terms of employment, the internship programme gave the interns the opportunity to get in touch with the realities of breaking into the development sector, to acquire practical knowledge, to prove their competency to occupy a position and to enrich their curriculum vitae and network.

The interns were also 62.0% to have either a temporary or a permanent employment after the internship. During the survey period, 39.2% of interns were employed against 26.1% were job seekers.

Among the interns who were seeking for an employment, some thought getting a higher level of education like a Master's Degree could be the solution to unemployment; others had begun freelance consulting even though insufficient work experience was hampering access to technical demands from industry clients.

In order to improve the internship program, the following recommendations have been put forth:

1) To strengthen the cooperation with the academic institutions across the globe as the number of interns in the academia is still low.

2) To be more regular in following up the interns in the host institution. This could help in ensuring that both the interns and supervisors are doing their part as required.

3) To increase the amount of the facilitation allowance. The amount of facilitation allowance was fixed long time ago and it is not considered to be enough.

4) Supervisors should adequately plan and guide the interns from start to the end of the internship period.

As a conclusion, it is worth highlighting the following points:

#### Strengths:

1. The internship program exposes and prepares interns pursue careers in the global development sector by providing practical working experience.

2. The internship program increases the chance of interns to get an employment in the sector.

#### Weakness:

1. Lack of track mechanisms after internship to establish how many were employed, how many became private consultants, how many are furthering their studies and how many have dropped.

2. Poor internet connectivity and familiarity with Windows basics prevents some graduates from attending the internship program.

3. Post-internship mentorship is weak or insufficient in the host institution.

#### Opportunities:

1. Contribution to the skills development as the first African institution to host a remote internship programme in the field of international development.

2. Partnership with the global development community – multilateral and bilateral donors, foundations, nonprofits, companies, consultants, advocates and entrepreneurs – working at the forefront to boost worldwide prosperity and ensure sustainable development.

#### Threats:

1. Failure of interns to obtain employment after attending the internship program may discourage others to attend;



2. Poor broadband connectivity and ICT skills in developing countries hinders the success of this remote internship.

This report is made possible by Dataville Research LLC through support from its Institute for Development Research. The contents do not necessarily and may not be construed to reflect the views of IDR and the Consortium.

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