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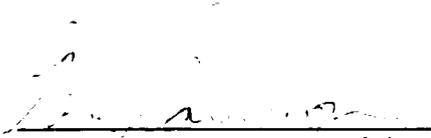
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**CIDA's strategy to involve Canadian youth in International Development:
A Case study of Saint Mary's University's experience with the
CIDA International Youth Internship Programme.**

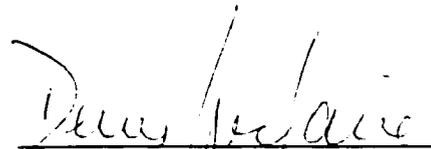
A Practicum Report

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in
International Development Studies, Saint Mary's University.

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Advisor



Mr. Denis Leclaire

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
September 1999



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Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	ii
List of Acronyms	iii
Section A: Introduction	
A Brief History of Canadian Development Assistance	3
The beginning of Youth involvement in Canadian Development Assistance	6
Section B: CIDA and the International Youth Internship Programme	
Canada in the World	8
The Canadian International Development Agency	10
CIDA's Strategy for Youth: Our World Too	13
The Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy	16
CIDA International Youth Internship Programme	18
Section C: Case Study	
Saint Mary's University's experience with CIDA's International Youth Internship Programme	21
CIDA Interns	24
Results of questionnaire	31
Section D: Reflections	41
Section E: Appendix	
Section F: Bibliography	48

Abstract

**CIDA's strategy to involve Canadian youth in International Development:
A Case study of Saint Mary's University's experience with the
CIDA International Youth Internship Programme.**

*Jennifer Gosselin
September 1999*

This practicum report is based on the author's work experience as the Project Manager responsible for the implementation of the Canadian government funded International Youth Internship Programme (IYIP) at Saint Mary's University. It specifically looks at Saint Mary's University's experience with the CIDA IYIP.

The IYIP came out of CIDA's strategy on youth entitled *Our World Too – Building Canadian Co-operation into the 21 st Century*. The IYIP is intended as a tool to meet the strategy's objectives which are to involve youth in international co-operation and provide them with valuable professional work experience. This report looks specifically at Saint Mary's University's experience to see whether CIDA has been successful with providing youth with opportunities to be involved in international co-operation.

The success of the programme is determined through the results of an open-ended questionnaire that was given to the Saint Mary's University sponsored CIDA interns who have completed their internships. In addition, conclusions are drawn based on the reflections of the author. Results show that the interns had very valuable and positive experiences. The majority were provided with an opportunity to put their University education into practice in a professional setting. In addition they gained valuable personal and professional skills. As well, most became interested in pursuing work in international development and felt that they made a contribution to sustainable development.

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I would also like to extend my gratitude to all of my colleagues at the International Activities Office. To Denis Leclaire for providing me with this work opportunity and for acting as a reader of this practicum, as well as his valuable feedback. Thank you also to Heidi Taylor for allowing me to fit my classes into a hectic work schedule and for the many allowances provided to complete my schoolwork. To Rosa for moral support and her assistance with formatting.

Special thanks also goes out to my wonderful friends, Nick, Cheryl, Suzanne, Tara, Doug and Stephanie who constantly encouraged and supported me, and were always there to give me a boost when I needed it, especially on Wednesday evenings at the Granite. And to Will, who made me dinner when I had to work late, listened to my rants and always told me I could do it, I also owe a huge debt of thanks.

Finally I must thank my family who have always remained my biggest supporters.

List of Acronyms

AUCC	Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada
CBCM	Community Based Conservation Management
CCIC	The Canadian Council for International Co-operation
CIDA	The Canadian International Development Agency
CUSO	Canadian University Service Overseas
DFAIT	Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
DOF	Department of Fisheries
ESRC	Environmental Science Research Centre
FAU	Fujian Agricultural University
HRDC	Human Resources Development Canada
IAO	International Activities Office
IYIP	International Youth Internship Programme
ODA	Official Development Assistance
RUA	Royal University of Agriculture
UPCD	University Partnerships in Co-operation and Development
YES	Youth Employment Strategy

Section A: Introduction

CIDA's strategy to involve Canadian youth in International Development: A Case study of Saint Mary's University's experience with the CIDA International Youth Internship Programme

From January 1999 to the present (August 1999) I have been the Project Manager responsible for the implementation of the International Youth Internship Programme (IYIP) at Saint Mary's University.

Saint Mary's University was awarded funding from Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) to act as an implementing organisation for the Youth Internship Programme. This funding was for the 1998/1999 and 1999/2000 fiscal years. Since March 1998, Saint Mary's University has successfully organised forty-three internships; twenty through HRDC, thirteen through DFAIT and ten through CIDA; of the CIDA funded interns, 5 have completed their assignments.

This practicum report focuses on Saint Mary's University's experience with the CIDA's IYIP. This Programme was created as a tool to involve more young people in international co-operation by providing those between the ages of 19 and 30 with hands-on work experience to increase their employability as well as to get young people more involved in international development.

Using Saint Mary's University as a case study this paper explores whether CIDA has been successful in implementing its strategy to involve youth in international co-operation. This will be done through responses from past CIDA interns as well as an examination of my experience as the Project Manager.

This paper is divided into four sections. The first section provides a brief historical background on Canadian development assistance and the origins of the importance of including youth in international co-operation programming. The second section describes Canada's foreign policy statement, CIDA, CIDA's strategy on youth, the Youth Employment Strategy (YES) and CIDA's IYIP to demonstrate how all are inter-connected to ensure that youth are included in international co-operation. The third section looks specifically at Saint Mary's University's experience with IYIP and describes the CIDA interns' host organisations as well as provides job descriptions for the assignment the youth undertook during their internships. The results of a questionnaire are then examined to determine whether or not the CIDA interns found that their experience met the objectives set out by CIDA in its strategy on youth. The final section are my reflections on this practicum experience with IYIP which allows me to discuss whether or not CIDA has met its "youth strategy" objectives, and provides an opportunity for me to discuss successes and recommendations for the future.

A Brief History of Canadian Development Assistance

Development assistance evolved considerably after the Second World War, beginning with the introduction of the Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of Western Europe. It began with the insertion of much needed capital, \$13 billion dollars over four years, into the economies and infrastructure of that region. Its success went beyond the greatest expectations of its initiators. By the early 1950s the Western European economies had achieved such large economic gains that they were able to maintain rapid rates of growth through their own efforts (Krueger, 1989:1). However, it soon became apparent that the countries of Western Europe were not the only ones in need, and the major Western powers were called upon to provide support to many Third World countries who were breaking their colonial ties and who also required assistance.

In the 1950s it was assumed that development assistance would be a temporary measure like the Marshall Plan. However, it soon became apparent that international development was going to be a long-term process.

Although Canada did not have the type of colonial ties, which bound many European countries to Asia, Africa and Latin America, by the early 20th century there was nonetheless a small but not insignificant Canadian missionary presence overseas. Many missionaries had begun to combine some elements of relief of human suffering with their pastoral work (Herbert-Copley, 1987:57). In fact, prior to 1950, few Canadians had worked or travelled in what became known as the Third World (Morrison,

1998:2).

The Cold War and decolonisation in Asia framed Canada's decision in 1950 to offer capital and technical assistance, through the Colombo Plan, for Co-operative Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia. Since then Canada has disbursed over \$50 billion in official development assistance (ODA) to countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America. A small player in Western Aid efforts in the 1950s, the Canadian government became more enthusiastic in the 1960s, a time of optimism, idealism, and prosperity, when support for international development captured the imagination of growing numbers of Canadians (Morrison, 1998:1).

Concurrent with the establishment of the Colombo Plan, a number of refugee and relief agencies were created in Canada, often serving as fund-raising branches of European or American organisations (such as CARE, OXFAM, Foster Parents Plan). Decolonisation in the 1960s saw the setting up of agencies like CUSO/SUCO to send volunteers to emerging nations. International co-operation moved away from its missionary origins and an increasing number of agencies active in international development were established. The 1960s represented the coming of age of the voluntary development community in Canada. The creation of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) was the first step toward inter-agency co-operation. In the 1960s, the government also began to give direct financial support to development NGOs. Canada was one of the first western aid countries to establish a program specifically to support the involvement of its citizens in international development by

matching private donations to voluntary agencies. In 1968, the federal Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was established. This agency set up a Non-Governmental Organisations division with the mandate to promote citizen participation in development activities, provide development assistance to emerging nations through non-governmental channels (by means of matching grants), and tap the expertise and resources of the non-governmental sector for development purposes. The 1960s and 1970s saw a tremendous expansion in the number of agencies active in international development. At the same time, there was a gradual shift away from a charity or welfare approach to the problems of poverty, which emphasised direct assistance to needy individuals and families, to a more development approach, stressing the strengthening of local capacities for self reliance (Brodhead and Herbert-Copley, 1988).

The beginning of youth involvement in Canadian Development Assistance

Prior to the creation of CIDA various individuals and organisations were examining ways to involve Canadians in assisting developing countries. One such person was a young PhD student from the University of Toronto, Keith Spicer. In the summer of 1959 he received a pre doctoral Canadian Council fellowship to study Canada's small aid programme in Asia. While doing research he found a book written the year before by a Canadian missionary, Dr. Donald Faris who was working in Asia. The book titled "To Plow with Hope", provided a general overview of aid programmes and grass roots development. However, what sparked Spicer's interest was an imaginative proposal to involve **youth** in overseas development assistance.

"Our youth", Faris wrote, "possess a tremendous potential of energy, idealism and enthusiasm, just waiting to be tapped.

The reagent needed is that challenge that life's fullest expression is found in serving others. To this end visualise placing not just a few thousand balding experts in the field to cope with the advancing enemy, but a hundred thousand young people to supplement the other and more seasoned men and women.... they would be available for loan to governments or private agencies to work with indigenous leaders in the world's needy villages ... if, in addition to technical skills, these junior experts were equipped with humility and courage, with sincerity and wisdom, they would be able to transmit not only physical satisfaction to the needy, but also lasting values such as friendship, goodwill and understanding" (Smillie, Ian, 1985:9).

Spicer teamed up with a Toronto Member of Parliament, Fred Stinson, to go about establishing an organisation that would send youth overseas to assist in developing countries. They began by talking to young graduates and found that many were interested in becoming involved. In addition, Spicer and Stinson called upon their various contacts overseas and found no shortage of placement opportunities. While this paper is not meant as an examination of the births and evolution of various development

organisations in Canada, it is important to note that youth and the value of youth involvement has always been at the forefront of their programming. This desire, not only to involve youth but appreciation of the value of their contribution to development, began with a plan initiated by Spicer and Stinson in the form of what later became known as Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO) and continues today with CIDA's strategy on youth and the creation of the IYIP.

Section B: CIDA and the International Youth Internship Programme

Canada in the World

While I have outlined a brief history of Canadian development assistance and the importance of involving youth, it is important to briefly examine Canada's Foreign Policy statement, "Canada in the World", as Canada's Official Development Assistance (ODA) Programme is underpinned by this policy.

Canada's key objectives are outlined in its Government Policy Statement "Canada in the World". During its foreign policy review in 1995, Canada undertook to update its purpose in providing official development assistance. This purpose can be summarised as follows: "To support sustainable development in developing countries, in order to reduce poverty and contribute to a more secure, equitable and prosperous world." (CIDA 1997:5).

International Assistance is a vital instrument for the achievement of the three key objectives being pursued by the Government. They are:

- The promotion of prosperity and employment;
- The protection of our security, within a stable global framework; and
- The projection of Canadian values and culture.

These objectives are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. They guide decisions on priorities and on the allocation of resources (Government of Canada 1:1995).

Also included in the statement, under the section, International Assistance, is the need for a commitment to strengthening partnerships. “Canadian partners are a key source of the skills, know-how and technology that are needed to promote sustainable development ...Canadian youth can assist in building these partnerships, especially at the grassroots level. The Government will encourage our young people to help out in the developing world, both to enable to gain rich experience through international co-operation, and to assist those countries where the talent and energy of Canadian youth can make a difference” (Government of Canada, 43-44:1995).

Canada’s Foreign Policy Statement emphasises the government of Canada’s commitment to involving youth in International Development. As CIDA is designated as the federal agency responsible for planning and implementing the majority of Canada’s International Development Co-operation programmes, a brief examination of the agency must also be included.

The Canadian International Development Agency

“The purpose of Canada’s Official Development Assistance is to support sustainable development in developing countries in order to reduce poverty and to contribute to a more secure, equitable and prosperous world” (Government of Canada, 1995).

CIDA was created in 1968 as the government department responsible for administering the majority of Canada’s aid budget. CIDA administers approximately eighty percent of the aid budget while the other twenty- percent is administered by the DFAIT. CIDA supports projects in more than one hundred countries, which represent four-fifths of the world’s population. CIDA works in partnerships with developing countries, Canadian organisations and agencies. As stated in Canada’s foreign policy, the main purpose of the ODA programme is “to support sustainable development in developing countries, in order to reduce poverty and to contribute to a more secure, equitable, prosperous world” (CIDA, 1999).

The objective of CIDA policy is to facilitate the efforts of the people of developing countries to achieve self-sustainable economic and social development in accordance with their needs and environment, by co-operating with them in development activities; and to provide humanitarian assistance, thereby contributing to Canada’s political and economic interests abroad in promoting social justice, international stability and long-term relationships for the benefit of the global community.

To achieve these goals, CIDA concentrates on the following

Six priorities:

- 1) **Basic human needs** to support primary health care, basic education, family planning, nutrition, water and sanitation, and shelter. Twenty-five percent of ODA is committed to this area.

- 2) **Women in development** to support the full participation of women as equal partners in the sustainable development of their societies.

- 2) **Infrastructure services** to help developing countries deliver environmentally sound infrastructure services - for example, rural electricity, roads, telecommunications, clean water and sanitation - with an emphasis on poorer groups and building local capacity.

- 4) **Human rights, democratic development and good governance** to increase respect for human rights, including children's rights; to promote democracy and better governance; to strengthen the components of civil society, such as civic organisations and trade unions; and to ensure the safety of the individual.

- 5) **Private Sector Development** to promote sustained and equitable economic growth by supporting private sector development in developing countries and

- 6) **The environment** to help developing countries to protect their environment and to contribute to addressing global and regional issues (CIDA, 1999).

In order for a programme/project to be considered for CIDA funding it must be directly linked to one of these priorities.

CIDA's IYIP of which this Practicum report is using as a case study is aimed at promoting sustainable development and creating a valuable work experience for youth, which fits in the CIDA mandate and priorities.

CIDA's strategy for youth: Our World Too - Building Canadian Co-operation into the 21st Century

CIDA spent two years consulting with their partners and young Canadians in order to ascertain means to involve youth more fully in their programming. What was determined is that if Canada wishes to achieve the objectives set out in Canada's Foreign Policy statement, *Canada in the World*, namely, prosperity, security and Canadian values, they must involve Canadian youth in international co-operation. During these consultations it was discovered that today's youth want to be involved in international development and they want to be fully involved in Canada's role in the world today and tomorrow.

After these consultations CIDA realised that they needed to take a leadership role to create new opportunities to involve youth in international development. They set out to challenge their partners and organisations to involve young people in international co-operation; to provide work opportunities, share expertise, provide international development experience and challenge young people to get involved.

What evolved from all of this was an approach developed by CIDA designed to involve young people in the various aspects and stages of international development, both directly with CIDA and with its partner organisations. CIDA helps to involve young people in international co-operation in practical ways and by including them in more of their development related programming.

The Goal of this approach is “to involve youth fully in international co-operation”.

The Principles are to:

- Use *Canada in the World* as a foundation.
- Support young people in training and looking for a job. Offer them the coaching and mentoring they need.
- Promote access to information, consultation and involvement of youth in all stages of co-operation.
- Encourage innovative approaches based on the strengths of young people.

The objectives are to:

- Involve youth in co-operation programs.
- Make it easy for youth to become involved in co-operation. Remove barriers.
Share the vision.
- Smooth the transitions from the classroom to the work force. Help them develop skills and leadership abilities.
- Make young people aware of co-operation issues. Tell them how they can get involved. Access to information is key (CIDA: 1997).

Our World Too is a multi-faceted project aimed at getting youth more involved in international co-operation. For the purpose of this Practicum report I am going to focus on one activity, the International Youth Internship Programme which was created to achieve the strategy's main objectives of creating work experience in international co-operation and preparing youth in clearly understanding global issues.

The Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy (YES)

One of the main problems facing today's youth is that they are caught in a trap. It's better known as "no experience, no job - no job, no experience" cycle (HRDC, 1997). While University and College degrees provide youth with a foundation; there is no bridge that links them from the classroom to the work force. Youth are in need of opportunities that will supply them with skills so they can gain employment in the field that they were educated in.

The Government of Canada announced in February 1997 that they would take steps to help combat the issue of youth unemployment and to help Canadians make the transition from school to work and their first job (HRDC, 1997). After a year of consultations with youth, parents, the private sector, educators and people who work with youth; a Ministerial Task Force on Youth was established and a National Conference on Youth was held. Canadians were asked what their needs were and the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy (YES) was born.

"Canada's Youth Employment Strategy is a major drive to get more young Canadians plugged into the new economy. The Strategy builds on more than two billion dollars in new and existing funding. It pulls together the programs and services that help young people find work and build careers" (Pettigrew, 1997).

The YES is a two-pronged approach to addressing the issue of youth employment. It provides:

- work experience opportunities for unemployed or underemployed youth and students through internships in growth sectors of the economy; and
- access to relevant information on Canada's labour market.

The YES has three major elements. This first is access; the Strategy aims to reach more young Canadians. It will give them better access to the information, services and supports they need to find their way into the workforce. The second element is to build on what works. This includes partnerships to help young people get the first job experience they need. The third element of the Strategy is providing a range of internships to provide youth with work experience opportunities. The third element will be the focus of this Practicum report, more specifically with reference to the Canadian International Development Agency' International Youth Internship Programme (HRDC, 1999).

Funding for the YES is provided by HRDC. While HRDC provides internship opportunities in which wage subsidies are provided to Canadian employers to create meaningful work experiences for unemployed and underemployed youth, they also provide funding under the international internship stream to the CIDA.

CIDA's International Youth Internship Programme

CIDA's International Youth Internship Program was implemented in co-operation with HRDC as part of the *Youth Employment Strategy* in April 1997. CIDA was allocated a total budget of nearly \$ 14 million to implement this two-year program (\$7.3 million in 1997-1998 and \$ 6.4 million in 1998-1999). This HRDC funding was added to the international aid budget.

While IYIP is funded under the YES its goals differ slightly as it focuses more on international co-operation. To begin with it offers young Canadians the opportunity to acquire work experience and added professional qualifications in an international environment by participating in activities related to sustainable development. The objectives of this program are:

- To help young graduates to make the transition from school to the job market by giving them their first work experience in an international environment.
- To increase the number of young people interested in international issues, especially sustainable development, and prepared to raise public awareness of these issues.
- To increase the number of young people prepared to meet the challenges of the global economy, especially in new sectors of mutual interest to Canada, developing countries and countries in transition (CIDA, 1999).

About 1,100 young people have participated or are currently participating in international internships - 489 in 1997-1998 and over 600 in 1998-1999. Their participation in the program should lead to long-term employment or self-employment.

Partners in the IYIP are non-governmental organisations, academic institutions, professional associations and private businesses. To be eligible for funding, these partners must:

- Have programs or affiliations and work experience in countries eligible for CIDA support.
- Be able to offer 6 to 12 months of work experience to recent graduates in a field related to their training or studies.
- Offer support for interns to assist them in finding long-term employment leading to a career.
- Show that they possess sound management capacities and a sound financial position.
- Share the cost of the program through contributions in cash or in kind.

In early December 1998, the current Prime Minister of Canada announced that the YES would become a permanent government program with guaranteed funding for the next three years. The Internship Program is thus beginning its third year.

The greatest challenge for university and college graduates is to acquire their first professional experience, making use of their knowledge, skills and creativity. Even though they are highly qualified and motivated, many graduates are unemployed or doing jobs that have nothing to do with their field of specialisation. Lack of relevant experience limits their job opportunities and the contribution that they can make to society.

CIDA's IYIP aims to give young people access to the work experience they need to obtain long-term employment in their professional or technical field. It also offers partner organisations the opportunity to invest in youth, our most valuable resource (CIDA, 1999). CIDA's IYIP also aims to increase the number of young people interested in international issues, especially sustainable development. It is also the hope that the positive outcomes of CIDA's IYIP will raise public awareness of international co-operation issues. Finally, IYIP will hopefully increase the number of young people prepared and willing to work within the new global economy. This will be a benefit to Canada, countries in transition and countries in the developing world.

Section C: Case Study

Saint Mary's University's experience with CIDA's International Youth Internship Programme

In this section I will provide a brief overview of Saint Mary's University as an institution, as well as, the role of the International Activities Office (IAO) which is responsible for managing the IYIP. I will then give a brief description of the projects that the CIDA interns were involved in as well as provide a summary of their individual job descriptions. From there I will examine the five CIDA internships in relation to CIDA's strategy on youth (as outlined in section B) to determine whether or not CIDA has met the objectives of its strategy as it relates to the Saint Mary's University's experience. As part of the methodology I use the results of an open ended questionnaire (Appendix A) that I gave the CIDA interns, to determine whether or not the strategy has met its intended objectives and whether or not it has been successful.

Saint Mary's University is committed to the ongoing process of the "internationalisation" and "globalisation" of its campus. Saint Mary's University is dedicated to public accessibility and regional, national and international outreach. Two basic tenets of the University's statement of mission are to "strengthen and broaden the University's international links in the areas of the world that complement our programmes..." and to "reach out to the community...". Implementing the IYIP is consistent with this mission as it builds on existing linkages and areas of operation. The University has extensive international experience, having established projects and linkages with institutions, private companies and governments in different parts of the

world.

Saint Mary's University also has extensive international project management experience and, over time, has developed strong administrative structures for managing international projects (International Activities Office, 1997-1998).

An office responsible for International Activities was established in 1992 demonstrating the University's commitment to the process of internationalisation. The role of the International Activities Office is to co-ordinate the international activities of the University, to serve as liaison with governments, non-governmental organisations and international agencies involved in overseas programming, and to assist in developing and managing the University's international contracts. The mandate of the IAO includes the development of international programming, the development of strategies and programmes for international student recruitment, project management, liaison with the private sector, and improved communication within the University community (Saint Mary's University: 1998).

In May 1998 Saint Mary's University applied to CIDA for funding to act as a sponsoring organisation to implement the IYIP. This was done for several reasons. First, they wanted to provide recent Saint Mary's University graduates with internship opportunities to gain international experience. Also, IYIP would assist the University with promoting its commitment to the continued globalisation of its campus. In addition, acting as a sponsoring organisation of the IYIP would assist Saint Mary's University's

partners in terms of providing them with youth who could assist them with new ideas and add value to their present, on-going and future projects. Interns were all placed with Saint Mary's University's international partners. The primary focus of all of the CIDA internships was the development and management of international projects that are in support of CIDA's priorities on global issues.

To date, five CIDA interns have completed their internships. The following are descriptions of the host organisations, as well as, a description of the intern's placement.

CIDA Interns

Saint Mary's University is the lead institution in a University Partnerships in Co-operation and Development (UPCD), Tier 1 Program called Community-Based Conservation Management (CBCM) in China and Vietnam funded by CIDA. The Program objectives are to assist China and Vietnam to develop expertise in the sustainable conservation management of natural resources and ecosystems and biodiversity through the building of institutional capacity. An international network of individuals and institutions specialising in issues related to community-based conservation management build on their respective local communities, and with their broader global community (UPCD Tier 1, 1998).

The successful implementation of the CBCM Program will better position China and Vietnam to employ the longer term societal impact of sustainable use and protection of natural resources to meet the physical, social, and economic needs of individual children, women and men.

After discussions with the Project Manager and Director of this Program it was decided that it would be positive for all partners of the project to involve youth interns in this program. The interns' involvement would provide an incremental "value added" component to the start-up phase of this program. Three interns were placed for a period of six months in Fuzhou and Xiamen, two cities in China where the partner institutions are located.

One intern was placed at Xiamen University in Xiamen, China. It is located in a region of rapid growth and faces similar conservation issues related to community development and habitat loss. This growth has produced such a concern about conservation that they have already developed internal structures to focus on community-based conservation management.

The Environmental Science Research Centre (ESRC) at Xiamen University is involved in a community-based project on coastal zone management through a regional initiative. The CBCM Program is able to build on expertise developed through this project, help fill gaps related to community-based aspects of conservation management, and strengthen the integration of the social and technological components of conservation management (UPCD Tier 1, 1998).

One intern was sent to Xiamen University to assist with the start up of the CBCM pilot project. Initially he was going to be responsible for Environmental Impact Assessment work, however his duties expanded and ended up ranging from developing an action plan for the pilot project, collecting baseline data for the project and assisting in the preparation of a workshop for all partners held in China. In addition, the intern taught an environmental discussion class in English.

Two other interns were placed at Fujian Agricultural University (FAU) which is the sole university for higher education in agriculture in the Fujian province, China. In 1994 the Department of Land and Environmental Science opened with the goal of

training students in sustainable development and conservation management for rural communities. FAU has little practical experience in environmental conservation and community participation, but it is very much aware of the deforestation, soil erosion and chemical contamination in its own “back yard”. The Department of Land and Environmental Science is therefore placing a focus on its own university as the “community” for study and improvement in sustainable agriculture, and ecosystem restoration (UPCD Tier 1: 1998).

A second intern worked in the Department of Plant Protection investigating bio-remediation of insecticides in vegetable fields. She also worked on the effect of heavy metal pollution upon the growth and development rates of vegetables. In addition to these activities she also assisted a PhD student with experiments as well as the third intern at FAU with his study on the bio-diversity of insects.

The third intern’s research was also connected to the CBCM project. He studied the species composition and abundance of insect species associated with a number of crops grown on the university campus. The objective of this study was to provide a preliminary record of insect bio- diversity, which could be used to help conserve the natural habitat around campus. In addition, both interns were asked to do some teaching to graduate students in their areas of expertise. Also, the interns were called upon to critique and revise academic papers for various members on staff.

The fourth CIDA intern worked as a Marine Park Officer with the Marine Affairs Section, Division of Agriculture, Tobago House of Assembly, Trinidad and Tobago. He was based in Tobago and was involved in supporting the activities surrounding Buccoo Reef, a small-Restricted Area that has coral reef, seagrass and mangrove. This area is surrounded by existing and planned development thus stresses on the system are many and varied, ranging from resource use to pollution. The responsibility for management is with government so this brings all the associated bureaucratic constraints with it. Personnel, resources and facilities are small and relatively limited and having an intern for six months provided much needed assistance. The intern assisted with general park operations as well as contributed to developing and improving management systems. His duties ranged from administrative tasks to assisting in ongoing projects to working independently on small assignments.

The fifth CIDA intern was involved with a UPCD – Tier 2 Project titled, Aquatic Resource Management in Cambodia funded by CIDA through the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC). The purpose of this project is to provide the Cambodia Department of Fisheries (DOF) and its human resource development agencies, the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA) and Prek Leap Agriculture College, with the program development knowledge and skills to design and deliver aquatic resource management programming at various levels, to students, the fisheries administrations and to other stakeholders groups.

The intern's placement was with both the Prek Leap Agriculture College and the RUA and he rotated his time between the two institutions. He assisted with project management and aquatic resource management workshops on fisheries management and fisheries processing. In addition, he assisted with English language instruction, computer training, curriculum development and library improvement.

Questionnaire

As this practicum report focuses on CIDA's strategy to involve youth in international development I thought it would be beneficial to pose questions to the interns to determine whether CIDA has achieved their stated objectives. To do this I created and distributed a questionnaire to the five CIDA interns who have completed their internships. This questionnaire was sent via Electronic mail and posed questions, which required reflection on their own experiences. Through their answers I will better be able to judge whether CIDA's strategy, *Our World Too - Building Canadian Co-operation in the 21st Century*, created specifically to involve youth in international co-operation has been successful.

Prior to examining the responses from the questionnaire it is important to first explain my role as Project Manager to shed light on my relationship with the interns. As Project Manager I have been involved in all aspects of the design, planning and implementation of the IYIP. This includes: proposal writing, planning of activities, coordinating the intern positions, recruitment, interviewing, providing a pre-departure orientation session, monitoring the interns, both during and after their internship, providing a debriefing, job search strategy sessions and assistance with finding future job opportunities. In short, throughout the internship cycle I developed a professional relationship with many of the interns, especially during the monitoring stage, which was done via Electronic mail while they were overseas. Most interns had little or no overseas work or travel experience and exposure to different cultures. Having regular contact

with someone like myself, who has worked and travelled abroad, provided them with a sympathetic and understanding ear to discuss situations that they found challenging. In fact many have commented to me that knowing there was someone they could communicate with regularly who was empathetic to the challenges they faced was beneficial in both their learning and understanding not to mention their day to day survival. While the comments that come out of the questionnaire are from the interns themselves I thought it was crucial to explain my relationship to the interns as my analysis alone could be perceived as bias.

Results of Questionnaire

Below are the questions and responses from the interns as well as an analysis of how each one fits into CIDA's overall strategy.

1) **What were your expectations prior to departing for your internship? Did CIDA's IYIP meet your expectations?**

- My internship was a fantastic opportunity for me to gain relevant (and invaluable work experience while gaining contacts whom will surely be called upon at some time in the future. It also gave me the confidence in myself and in my choice of career. Nothing worse than getting a degree only to find no one willing to hire you due to your lack of experience.
- To gain international experience and better my communications skills as I would have no one to rely on for assistance in grammar and spelling
- I was a bit apprehensive about leaving for the trip and truly did not know what to expect. My expectations were a bit different than my actual experience of course, especially with the amount of independence I had. I now have a great deal of confidence working independently!
- Before going, I expected to get experience doing fieldwork in biology while having the opportunity to experience another culture. Yes, my expectations were met. I gained valuable experience in the field of entomology, which has resulted in contract work with Agriculture Canada. I also gained invaluable cross-cultural experience which I am sure will help me in my future endeavours.
- Prior to leaving for China all I remember thinking was that I was going to a country that I knew very little about. However, I realised that China had a long and proud history and their people value tradition and their codes of conduct. Therefore, I was expecting a very structured society with many social rules different than in Canada. In term of preparation prior to departure, I feel that the program and staff exceeded my expectations. There were episodes when our Canadian contacts took too long in response to our queries and issues that arose.

All of the interns were primarily interested in gaining work experience which all of them accomplished. An interesting point is that in the process their experiences seem to have exceeded their expectations as they gained so much more than just work experience but appreciation of different cultures, self-confidence and humility.

2) Did your internship placement provide you with experience to bridge the gap between completing University and entering the work force?

- Yes it did. Concrete work experience is what an employer wants to see, and my internship offered me just that.
- I already had experience in the work force, but the internship makes my resume much more appealing to employers.
- I hope so! I am still currently looking for the other side of the bridge, but I am positive that it will be of great benefit to my future employment.
- In some respects yes, it was the chance to use the basics I learned in university and apply them in the workforce. However, I found the working conditions so laid back that it did not prepare one for the typical Canadian work style where high productivity in little time is stressed.
- Yes, the internship placement provided me with the experience to bridge the university - work force gap. The experience from this internship was instrumental in my acceptance to the Masters program at Acadia University and being rewarded a teaching assistantship.

Canada's Youth Employment Strategy aims to bridge the gap between University and young Canadians' first career related job. All of the interns were lacking the first real experience to put the information they had learned in University into practice. All of the interns agreed that the opportunity to participate in IYIP provided them with the "take-off" they needed to gain specific career related experience and all feel that they are now able to compete in the work force.

3) Did you develop additional skills while on your internship that will assist you in your future job search? What were they?

- Although I graduated with a biology degree, I had no true specialisation. The internship brought me a new skillset specialising me in a particular facet of the biology field.... I am now much more attractive to any employer seeking an employee with marine-related experience.
- Not really
- I have definitely gained organisational and leadership skills. My typing skills have increased as well.
- In addition to various entomology techniques I learned, I also developed a better understanding of how to relate and deal with people from other cultures. Realising that “different” is not “wrong” and that things you can’t explain are not bad was the biggest lesson I learned. Where I am interested in becoming a teacher I think this will help me relate to students from various cultural backgrounds, and hopefully, be able to share my experience to help others.
- As an intern, I organised a number of academic and social activities on campus, which are skills valued by employers. It provided me with new social and organisational skills which has helped my confidence to do such things in the future. Also, on a more professional level I was able to gain skills using advanced microscopes and doing fieldwork. Plus, I learned a great deal about networking, patience and diplomacy.

One of the main goals of CIDA's IYIP is to increase youth employability. The majority of the interns stressed that they gained specific skills that they did not possess before. One intern commented that he now has a specialisation, which is a definite advantage in his favour. While it was the intention of the youths to gain valuable job skills through their internship many also gained other skills such as cross-cultural adaptation, acceptance of difference and personal skills such as diplomacy and patience. This point was also reflected in a CIDA evaluation conducted after the first year of the IYIP. It is interesting to note that the majority of interns questioned were also satisfied with the program. The interns believed that they had developed communication, organisational, interpersonal skills, cultural sensitivity and professional skills that will help their employability.

4) As a result of participating in the Internship Programme are you now more aware of development and global issues?

- On a Caribbean level, I became more aware of the problems that such countries face on social and political levels, but also saw that, to a certain degree, Canada face many similar issues. Trinidad and Tobago are considered third world, yet they are rich in many ways and are progressing with each passing day. I think what may pose potential problems is that the way we as North Americans define 'development' may not be acceptable or sustainable form of development for Trinidad and Tobago.
- Yes, I now have a realistic awareness of how hard things are to change and that things must be done slowly.
- My awareness has increased 10 fold, and as a result has led me to be interested in continuing in the international development field.
- Yes. Prior to my internship I had no idea of the problems one has to deal with when trying to help other countries with development, such as the attitude of people within the country itself. I did not realise that many people in underdeveloped countries such as China felt that many of the "helping" countries were hypocrites for preaching what they had not even done themselves. I was able to see development issues from another perspective.
- Since I have returned from overseas, I now no longer sit atop a perch of global ignorance and indifference. I am aware of the struggle to develop infrastructure and the hurdles involved in modernising a country like China. Before I thought the plight of other countries to strive towards a better life was whiny and a serious drain on developed countries resources. I guess nothing is more enlightening than a dose of reality.

CIDA's main goal in its strategy on youth is to involve them in international co-operation. The responses from this question show that they have accomplished this many times over. All of the interns gained an awareness of development and global issues and are much more aware of the challenges facing developing countries, which they did not have before they started their internship. It is interesting to note that everything was not taken for granted and that they also took the time to question development and Canada's role in this process.

5) Identify a development issue related to your internship

- Inefficiency of government actions, decisions etc. Things are all paper and no action.
- Community involvement in China
- The development and conservation of natural resources such as fisheries. As well as the development of alternative fishery methods such as aquaculture and stock enhancement.
- My internship seemed mostly focused on environmental issues such as conservation of species.
- In a nutshell, environmental issues and waste management. In China, these issues were aeons behind North America.

I added this question to see if the interns were able to identify a development issue that was associated with the project they were involved in. All seemed to be able to do this and all of the issues mentioned relate to one of CIDA's six priorities.

6) Prior to participating in the Internship Programme were you interested in pursuing a career in International Development?

- Yes = 2 No = 3

As a result of your internship are you interested now?

- Yes = 4 No = 1

Please elaborate.

- Did not provide a comment.
- I would love the opportunity to work on more environmental development projects in the future.
- I have found development work to be very rewarding as well as challenging, with the added benefit of travel, meeting new people and seeing wonderful things.
- I may be interested in working in the education field of international development, either by educating people here in Canada about it or by educating in a developing country.
- I wish to work in conservation biology in the protection of endangered and fragile ecosystems threatened by development.

After participating in the intern programme the majority of interns were interested in continuing to work in the area of international development. This is positive, as today's youth are needed to continue the momentum of involvement. It is interesting to note that many of the interns came from scientific backgrounds as opposed to international development and wish to be involved in opportunities that incorporate the two areas.

7) Were you provided with adequate information to assist you with your future job search and career possibilities, i.e. provision of information on career opportunities, job search strategies etc.?

- Ms Gosselin was very helpful, sending off many job postings to us via e-mail. I was unfortunately not in Halifax at the time of the formal debriefing so I believe that I missed out on key strategies, and career opportunity info etc.
- I received a call for an interview on my first day back in Canada.
- I did receive a great deal of information from Jennifer. However, I was unable to make proper use of it at the time because I was travelling.
- Yes, the speakers and presenters at the debriefing gave a very good overview of the types of jobs available and some of the means to get experience in the field.
- Yes. I now have the skills to search for opportunities available to people with the skills that I have to offer. Also, I have a better understanding of how to sell myself to potential employers.

This question was included, as one of the major elements of the YES is to provide youth with information and support to assist with gaining entrance into the workforce. According to the positive response from the interns Saint Mary's University successfully assisted them in this area.

8) Does CIDA's International Youth Internship Programme make a contribution to sustainable development?

- Staffing was a problem so the help, which I offered the office, helped to lighten the load. The fact that I was not replaced by a local worker nor hired by the organisation, which I worked for leads me to believe that with my particular internship sustainability was not achieved.
- Yes, my internship started the Xiamen community involvement project.
- That certainly was part of the objectives of the project that I was involved with in Cambodia.
- It is hard to say. Some people made it seem as if they were only interested in personal gain rather than learning about how to work at sustainable development. There were, however, some groups of people that the programme helped to start up discussions about ideas of sustainable development. So I guess I would have to say that yes, it makes a contribution, but I am not sure how much of one.
- Absolutely. One can only speculate about how many people will be affected by these programmes. I would imagine that there will be a ripple effect for a great deal of these projects.

Another one of CIDA's main goals of the IYIP is that the intern's make a contribution to sustainable development. It is interesting to note that each intern seems to have interpreted "sustainable development" and the question differently. I believe that this is important as many organisations also have different ideas on what they believe sustainable development means. From their comments it does appear that the majority of interns believed that their role as an intern did make some kind of contribution to sustainable development.

9) Are you more employable as a result of participating in the IYIP?

- Through contacts that I made and experiences that I gained throughout my internship I am a lot more employable as a marine ecologist/researcher.
- Yes, before starting the internship I was unable to find work for five months. Once finishing I found work right away.
- I hope so. I feel like I am, but I have yet to find an employment opportunity where it would be appreciated. I certainly believe they are out there it is just a matter of getting connected with them.
- Definitely! Not only does the experience set my resume apart from others, but by learning basic entomology techniques I was able to get a short term contract with Agriculture Canada working with bees and pollen. This is something I would not have had experience for otherwise.
- Yes I was accepted into a Master's programme as a result of my participation in IYIP as well as was rewarded a teaching assistantship.

While all of the interns are at different stages of employment all believed that their experience through IYIP was a benefit and that they are now more employable.

Any other comments.

- The IYIP was a tremendously valuable opportunity and I am much more employable now than I was this time last year. Thanks!
- This experience was the best experience I have ever had, and I believe that everyone should have the opportunity to work abroad to better understand the challenges of life.
- CIDA's internship program is a wonderful opportunity for young Canadians to see the world through the eyes of international development, increasing their awareness and appreciation for the developing world and the role of Canada in international development.
- CIDA's Youth Internship Programme is a wonderful experience for young people and I hope that funding is continued in the future.

These comments reflect the positive experiences of the interns. As a result of their internships most interns now have a greater knowledge and appreciation of development issues and increased awareness of the issues facing the developing world.

Overall, the interns who participated in the IYIP experienced a very high level of satisfaction with their internship. Their expectations prior to their internship were met and in most cases exceeded their hopes. The majority also found that the internship provided them with the opportunity to put what they learned in university into practice and make a valuable contribution to their host organisation. In addition, they developed skills and learned about global and development issues. One very valuable point that came out in the questionnaires was the increase in interest in development and pursuing a career in this area. This leads us to believe that CIDA's IYIP is making a valuable contribution by investing in Canadian youth and hopefully this will have a long-term impact in sustaining their interest in the field of international development. Finally, all of the interns believed that this experience will assist them in becoming more employable. In the following section I will conclude as to whether or not CIDA's overall strategy to involve youth was met from the interns perspective as well as my own.

Section D: Reflections

Reflections

The importance of youth involvement in international co-operation is included in Canada's Foreign Policy Statement *Canada in the World*. As CIDA is the federal agency responsible for planning and implementing the majority of Canada's International Development Co-operation programmes, they have taken on the responsibility of creating a strategy to look at ways to increase youth involvement in development assistance activities. To address the issue, CIDA created a strategy on youth entitled *Our World Too – Building Canadian Co-operation into the 21st Century*. One programme established to ensure that the goals of this strategy were met is the International Youth Internship Programme of which Saint Mary's University is an implementing organisation. While each step has progressed logically in fulfilling the mandate, the questions remain; does CIDA's strategy involve youth in international development? Was Saint Mary's University successful in implementing the programme? Is there a link between CIDA's mandate on youth and what actually took place? Is the programme effective?

In the previous section, the interns provided an overview of their experiences in their questionnaires. Based on their responses, the indication is that CIDA's IYIP did meet the goals of the strategy. From their responses all interns appear to have, a greater awareness of development and global issues, all gained valuable professional experience and skills and each made a contribution in some way to sustainable development. These accomplishments represent the themes of the strategy and are the threads that run through

the stages of the IYIP. These themes are the intended aims of the project and as the results from the questionnaire show, not only are Saint Mary's interns' expectations met but from my perspective this paper suggests that the strategy is meeting its objectives.

While I have discussed the responses from the Saint Mary's interns to determine whether or not CIDA's strategy to involve youth in international development was effective, I must also reflect on my own personal experience as a Project Manager for the IYIP, as well as, provide some of my own observations.

Prior to this it is important for me to provide a bit more detail on my past work experience as I may have a bias due to my past field experiences overseas.

I came to Saint Mary's University to further my studies in 1997 after having spent almost six years working in the area of international development in Southern Africa for a Canadian NGO. During this time overseas I spent a great deal of time working with and co-ordinating work placements for students and youth that were overseas for their first international work experience. Many of the youth I organised programmes for had very little travel or work experience and it was exciting to observe the changes that occurred in them as they developed new skills, learned about different cultures and grew personally. Since my first experience overseas I have come to learn and appreciate the value of having the opportunity to live and work in the developing world both on a personal level and to Canada in general.

While I have provided information based on results from a questionnaire I provided the Saint Mary's University CIDA interns I must also make reference to a CIDA IYIP evaluation that was conducted involving the intern participants of the first two years of the IYIP. Several of the findings were similar reinforcing the ideas brought out in the questionnaire I gave the Saint Mary's CIDA interns. One point, which is critical for this study, is that:

- 70 % of former interns were employed in their field/area of specialisation upon their return
- 19 % have returned to school for further studies
- 4 % plan on returning to school
- 7 % are currently unemployed

(Baldwin, Ruth, Youth Internship Program Evaluation, 1998)

If we examine Saint Mary's interns they seem to fit in with these statistics as, two have decided to return to University; two are employed in their fields and one is looking for work.

In the next section I will discuss what I believe are some of the key successes and offer a few recommendations to improve the programme.

During the past two years, as a Master's student and as Project Manager for IYIP I have had the opportunity to speak with many students and youth who were either interested in the IYIP or in obtaining more work experience in "development". After my conversations with these young people and reviewing hundreds of resumes one thing

became very clear. Youth today have very little practical, hands-on work experience and they are having a very difficult time finding a professional job. Youth today want more out of their education besides a degree, they want practical and professional experience. One of the main goals of IYIP is to provide them with this experience and I believe CIDA has accomplished this. This is reinforced in the questionnaire I gave as well as in the evaluation that CIDA conducted after the first two years of the programme.

Another point I found pertinent was the high number of interns who were interested in pursuing careers in development as a result of this programme. If Canada is going to continue to maintain its positive standing in the world it needs youth to continue the successful work that has been initiated to date into the 21st century, as well as, bring new and innovative ideas to projects and programmes already in place.

Prior to departing for their internships, each intern was provided with a job description of duties they would be responsible for while overseas. In almost every case, the number of actual tasks performed by the interns far exceeded their original job descriptions. In the end, all of the interns gained much more experience and skills than they had initially anticipated. Also, interns not only gained specific job skills but also acquired valuable personal skills such as diplomacy, humility, independence and cultural experience. These are all skills that cannot be learned in a classroom or read in a book. This point was also emphasised by the interns who participated in CIDA's evaluation of the first two years of the program

While the programme has proven to have many positive aspects I do have a few concerns and recommendations. The first concern I have is with the IYIP's focus on the high unemployment rate of youth aged between 19-30. Is this program really solving the unemployment problem or are our unemployed youth being sent overseas to take the pressure off the Canadian government to provide jobs in Canada and perhaps lower the youth unemployment statistics in Canada?

My second concern is regarding the actual benefits to the host organisations overseas. While CIDA spends a great deal of time gathering information from their interns there does not seem to be any critical analysis available from the international organisations where the interns were placed, leading one to wonder who benefits more from this program.

Next, I am not in agreement with the age limit of thirty. While I appreciate that the government has determined the problem area for high unemployment to be for youth between the ages of nineteen and thirty they are omitting a group who are also in need of an intern experience. This is the group of older students who have returned to school to upgrade their qualifications or who are making a career change as they have been laid off or made redundant. Technically, today's youth are in fact getting older and older and with Canada's changing economy provisions are going to have to be made to accommodate them. This could be done by increasing the age limit, or by opening the programme to all recent graduates regardless of age.

Another recommendation I have is regarding the numbers of CIDA interns being funded. While I appreciate fiscal constraints CIDA should come up with more ways in which to fund internships as there seem to be far more youth than positions available, judging from the high number of inquiries and resumes that our office received. For example in the first recruitment period (April to August 1999) Saint Mary's University received 400 e-mail inquiries and 300 resumes. One suggestion is to have intern positions built into all CIDA proposals. This would assure that more internships focusing on international development are created as opposed to ones which focus more on the private sector.

Through our experience in implementing the IYIP, Saint Mary's University has seen the benefits first hand of involving youth in international development. The programme itself as well as youth involvement has been instrumental in fulfilling the objectives outlined in *Canada in the World*, namely prosperity, security and Canadian values. More specifically, it is my opinion that IYIP has achieved the goal of involving youth fully in international co-operation, which is the overall goal of CIDA's strategy on youth entitled *Our World Too: Building Canadian Co-operation in the 21st Century*. While the short- and medium-term benefits to the interns are evident through the positive experiences that the interns had the long-term benefits will take more time. Many youth that were involved with volunteer type sending organisations in the past have continued to be involved in the field of development. From my own personal experiences with people I have met who have worked in development, many also continue to be involved in development whether through their work, involvement in the community or through

education and training. In conclusion, CIDA's internship programme is a valuable way to educate young people about development and global issues and different cultures, as well as an opportunity for them to develop job related skills and gain valuable work experience. Hopefully this is only the beginning of international co-operation for the youth that participated in this programme and that their involvement will continue well into the 21st century.

Section E: Appendix

Tuesday 10 August 1999

Dear CIDA intern,

I am doing a practicum report for my Master's degree in International Development Studies based on CIDA's International Youth Internship Programme. I would greatly appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to complete the attached questionnaire and return to me by Monday August 16, 1999.

Questionnaires can be returned to me by e-mail: jennifer.gosselin@stmarys.ca or by fax to (902) 420-5530.

Thank you very much for your time.

Kind regards,

Jennifer Gosselin

CIDA Intern Questionnaire for Jennifer Gosselin

1. What were your expectations prior to departing for your Internship? Did CIDA's International Youth Internship Programme meet your expectations? Please explain.

2. Did your Internship placement provide you with experience to bridge the gap between completing University and entering the work force? Please explain.

3. Did you develop additional skills while on your Internship that will assist you in your future job search? What were they? Please explain.

4. As a result of participating in the Internship Programme are you now more aware of development and global issues? Please explain.

5. Identify a development issue related to your internship.

6. Prior to participating in the Internship Programme were you interested in pursuing a career in International Development? Yes __ No __

As a result of your Internship are you interested now? Yes __ No __
Please elaborate.

7. Were you provided with adequate information to assist you with your future job search and career possibilities, i.e. provision of information on career opportunities, job search strategies, etc? Please explain.

CIDA Intern Questionnaire for Jennifer Gosselin

8. **Does CIDA's International Youth Internship Programme make a contribution to sustainable development? Please explain.**

9. **Are you more employable as a result of participating in the International Youth Internship Programme? Please explain.**

10. **May I use your name and the results of this questionnaire in my practicum report?**

Any other comments that you would like to share that you believe would be important for me to include in my report on CIDA's International Youth Internship Programme?

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your time is very much appreciated.

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