

**Meet the next generation
development professional**

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THERE IS A LOT OF BUZZ ABOUT THE FUTURE OF DEVELOPMENT...

Global conversations are being sparked at the every level about how to create a more sustainable future and how increased local engagement will continue to evolve the current aid landscape.

As a growing number of non-traditional donors take a seat at the table as major development influencers, there is already a noticeable shift in how aid funding is being utilized.

And while it's clear that there is a lot of momentum around the future in our industry, one thing considerably less discussed is the development implementers actually pushing these changes forward.

Don't all of these discussions make you just a little curious about what the next generation of aid workers will look like?

How will they be different from you as a development professional today? What skills will they – or you for that matter – need to be successful in a decade? What sectors and regions will require the most attention? What affect will these kinds of changes have on hiring trends industry-wide? These are just some of the questions we turned to our community to try to answer.

MEET OUR SURVEY RESPONDENTS

More than 1,000 global development professionals participated in the survey Devex conducted in partnership with PSI and USAID U.S. Global Development Lab. Here’s what you should know about them:

Participants ranged in age from **18-65+**



A majority of our respondents were male



They also come from a broad variety of development sectors, particularly:

- 1. Economic Development
- 2. Monitoring & Evaluation
- 3. Administration/Policy
- 4. Education
- 5. Health

Our respondents have the most experience working in:



65% of respondents had at least 10 years of experience working in global development



So now, without further ado, let’s get you introduced to the aid worker of the future...

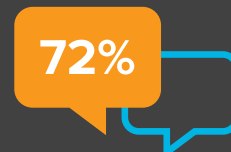
THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONAL IS:

✓ HIGHLY EDUCATED



79% of respondents believe professionals will need a graduate level education to succeed in international development.

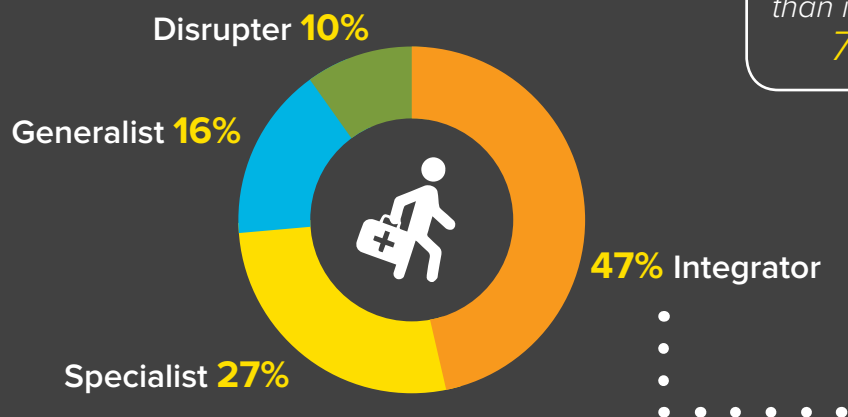
✓ BILINGUAL



72% of respondents believe professionals will need to be fluent in **at least 2 languages** to be successful.

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✓ AN INTEGRATOR



65% of respondents believe that in 10 years, proficiency in Arabic will be more important than it is today across all development sectors. **75%** said the same is true for English.

An integrator understands multiple specialties and how they impact each other. They excel in fostering collaboration between various sectors who may not be accustomed to working together.

✓ A PEOPLE PERSON



78% of respondents felt that aid workers will need to have an equal or greater balance of people versus technical skills to be successful in the future.

THEIR TOP 5 SOFT-SKILLS

1. Flexibility
2. Proficiency in implementation and execution
3. Ability to work in teams
4. Resourcefulness
5. Empathy

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*Ranked last was **salesmanship**, with only **1%** of respondents categorizing it as the most important soft-skill to be successful.*

WHERE WILL THEY BE WORKING?

The top **3** regions predicted for the highest development assistance needed in 10 years are:



Out of the **24** choices presented, **the top 3 sectors** predicted for the highest development assistance needed in 10 years were:

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY



CONFLICT, PEACE AND SECURITY



CLIMATE CHANGE



Development professionals will probably spend more time working from a home-base in the future. **57%** of respondents believe that more international expats will be needed to provide short-term expertise, while long-term positions will be increasingly filled by local professionals.



WHO WILL THEY BE WORKING WITH?

While it's generally believed that traditional development organizations will continue to have the largest impact, respondents predict that these types of organizations will have the most growth in impact on global development in the future.

**HIGH-TECH FIRMS
AND SOCIAL
IMPACT INVESTORS**
82%



CORPORATIONS
79%



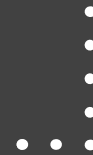
**VENTURE
CAPITALISTS**
67%



MILITARIES
33%



31% of all respondents believe militaries will have less impact in the future, but 40% of health professionals felt that they will have more.



90% of respondents believe that in 10 years it will be more important for professionals to have a basic understanding of working with a wide range of funders than a deep specialization working with one specific type.

Respondents also predict that individual or community beneficiaries will play the greatest role in deciding how to invest global aid funding:

**INDIVIDUAL OR
COMMUNITY
BENEFICIARIES**

41%



**HOST
GOVERNMENTS**

34%



**TRADITIONAL AID
DONORS AND
ORGANIZATIONS**

41%



Bilateral and multilateral donors largely agreed with this prediction, while representatives from host governments ranked themselves last as decision-makers, putting traditional aid donors and organizations first when it comes to deciding how aid is invested.

HOW DO YOU BEGIN TO STAY AHEAD OF THE CURVE?

A good start is to think about the top 5 approaches our respondents said they wish to gain more training and education in, and find practical applications for them in your own career.





Keep on top of new technology and approaches. **84%** of all respondents believe that in ten years the technology, skills and approaches used by development professionals will be significantly different than they are today.



Stay in the know about sustainable development practices. Sustainability topped the list of approaches that will be more important for development professionals in the future.

We also asked respondents to provide one piece of advice for the next generation of development professionals. The most commonly prescribed items we heard were:

“listen to the people around you”

“look for opportunities to learn continuously”

“adapt based on what’s happening around you”

These sentiments seem to be the golden thread lacing together all of the survey findings. They’re also actionable takeaways you can start putting to use as you shape and become the next generation development professional.



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