

Gareth Wall

MSc Poverty Reduction and Development Management (2007)

MSc Poverty Reduction and Development Management (International) PRDM 2004-06 (part time) and graduated in December 2007



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Who are you currently working for and what is your job title?

PhD student at the International Development Department, University of Birmingham. www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/government-society/students/doctoral-researchers/profiles/wall-gareth.aspx (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/government-society/students/doctoral-researchers/profiles/wall-gareth.aspx>)

How has your career developed since graduating from the University of Birmingham?

I worked at the University of Bath for 2 years following my graduation before studying an MPhil in applied economics at the Centre for Development Studies, Kerala, [India. www.cds.edu](http://india.www.cds.edu) (<http://india.www.cds.edu>)

What is the best thing about what you are doing now?

Being able to build on what I learnt both in my MSc in IDD and my MPhil from CDS.

Why did you originally apply to Birmingham?

The field study component of the course was what made the programme stand out from the other international Development masters in the UK. Also, the course covered a broad area of development studies, ideal for someone like myself who is coming from a none social science background.

What are your fondest memories of the University?

Interacting with all the IDD students, I have some very good friends from all corner of the world now. The academics are a friendly bunch too.

How did you grow as a person by coming to University?

The course provided an excellent opportunity to start understanding the complex issues related to poverty across a range of world regions. Beyond just the course modules, I was able to interact on development issues with a wider range of students through the Guild of Students societies such as the UN association, the WaterAid Society and the African Development Forum.

What did you think of the learning experience within the University?

The facilitated interaction across a wide and knowledgeable class (with many civil servants and NGO staff from around the world) enabled me to learn about many more countries than I can ever visit/ work in as well as an appreciation of different cultures and views of development.

Did you find the degree programme at Birmingham challenging or easy?

I found the MSc productively challenging as I had never studied social science before, or spent any extensive time in a developing country and so the course introduced me no only to many issues relating to poverty and development but also to a diverse range of methodologies and literatures across the social sciences.

Did you find the University or your degree helpful to you in getting your first job?

The course as well as the stimulating interaction with the academics and fellow students at Birmingham led me directly to a desire to deepen my understanding of the issues of development through further study and research.

What advice would you give to current students studying on your degree programme?

Go to as many seminar and conferences at the University as possible, you never know when you may hear something inspiring!

I would also advise students to venture beyond IDD, other dept such as POLSIS, Dept for West African studies, Religious studies, Development Economics and the Centre for Global Ethics not only run similarly interesting seminars and conferences but also run modules that may be of relevance for you to take as an optional module (such as Ethics of Development, in the Centre for Global Ethics).

Finally and especially to international students, look into the different accommodation options before you sign up to halls of residence, such as private house share, as this can save a lot on accommodation fees.