

# Visit to Bretton Woods Project

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Jon Harle, UCL

## Who are Bretton Woods Project?

The Bretton Woods Project works as a networker, information-provider, media informant and watchdog to scrutinise and influence the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). Through briefings, reports and the bimonthly digest Bretton Woods Update, (available on line at [www.brettonwoodsproject.org/update/](http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/update/)) it monitors projects, policy reforms and the overall management of the Bretton Woods institutions with special emphasis on environmental and social concerns. Created as an independent initiative by a group of British non-governmental organisations (NGOs), it works with an extensive network to press for increased transparency and civil society participation in World Bank and IMF policies and interventions. This includes over 7000 non-governmental organisations, policy-makers, journalists, researchers and parliamentarians worldwide. By encouraging information exchange and debate, it seeks to move the Bretton Woods institutions (World Bank and IMF) away from simplistic approaches to development.

## Where BWP fits into the 'research spectrum'

BWP is not a membership body like many environment, development and human rights NGOs, and it does not tend to produce popular publications for the general public. This keeps it at the upper end of the research spectrum, alongside other think tanks and research-focused organisations, and ensuring that there are good links to academic research. For example, it didn't get involved in Make Poverty History as it was too niche to add particular value to the campaign. BWP does participate in campaigns, but almost always in conjunction with other NGOs. Sometimes other NGOs will pick up on the issues which BWP cover, and in this way some of its work will ultimately feed into a public campaign.

## Funding

BWP is an independent initiative, originally established by a group of UK based NGOs. It receives funding from this group as well as the US-based CS Mott Foundation. It is hosted by ActionAid UK's London offices.

## Employment and internships

BWP is a very small organisation so opportunities for employment are infrequent, and are generally only suitable only for experienced graduates, or those with a substantial research, policy and/or campaigning background. A small number of unpaid internships are available, lasting between 3 and 6 months. These are not usually advertised and are instead generally filled from prospective applications kept on file. If you're interested you should download a volunteer application form from the website, and return this with a CV and brief explanation of your specific interests and how these fit into BWP's areas.

## Skills and experience of BWP staff

All staff members of BWP have considerable previous experience of campaigning, development and/or environmental work in other NGOs and grassroots movements, both paid and as volunteers. All BWP staff have at least six years of experience in the sector each. They all have a postgraduate degree in development studies or the social sciences, and have experience of working in the South. One staff member took the MSc in Development Studies at SOAS. Collectively their experience includes fundraising, journalism, communications work, environmental conservation, human rights advocacy and community economic development.

Academic and research credentials are vital, but other skills are also important. For example, campaigning, media and policy work BWP work with NGOs, journalists and academics. This balance is reflected in the style and level of their work. Key skills include:

- Ability to synthesise a large volume of information into a concise document
- Ability to write well and quickly – the speed of research and writing is such that most briefings are begun only a couple of weeks before publication
- Awareness of the dynamics of NGOs and civil society movements, particularly in the areas of human rights, development and the environment
- Ability to facilitate different groups. BWP depend on strong networks
- Public speaking and media work
- Multimedia skills, such as updating the website and desktop publishing
- Good communication skills and the ability to adapt writing style to that of BWP
- Fluency in spoken and written English and at least one other languages
- Experience of working in a southern country
- A commitment to equal opportunities and cultural sensitivity

As with all jobs, some of these skills will obviously be developed through the course of work, and few people have the full set straight away! While these were mentioned specifically with regard to BWP's work, they will be a good guide for other similar research roles.