



Advocates for International Development

the
CareersGroup
University of London

Advocates for International Development www.a4id.org

By Jeff Riley, Careers Adviser at The Careers Group, University of London. March 2009

I interviewed Katie Hutt who has been involved with the organisation since its inception.

What is A4iD?

A charity that, since 2006, has been acting as a broker between the development sector and legal advocates from the law profession and academia to help further the Millennium Development Goals..

“A4ID receives requests for legal advice and assistance from local and international Non-Governmental Organisations ("NGOs"), Inter-Governmental Organisations, social enterprises and a range of developing and less developed countries and matches them with lawyers who are able to assist ('Legal Partners'). A4ID ensures that its Legal Partners abide by the Pro Bono Protocol and that all work is of the same standard as that done for paying clients”

Part of the impetus behind the founding of A4iD was a desire within the legal profession to make a contribution in the wake of natural disasters such as the tsunami. Increasingly the profession has a role to play on a whole range of issues protection of rights around food and education, for example, corporate law, competition law, due diligence. We want to coordinate the contributions of law firms to help them make a greater impact In the longer term to help developing countries negotiate at the highest level in trade agreements and a whole raft of economic, social and cultural rights.

Why do law firms get involved? A range of reasons. Partly its about staff retention, enabling staff to get involved in projects that enable them to contribute to projects they feel a deep, personal commitment to. Firms may have made a formal commitment to Corporate and Social Responsibility and this helps discharge that. Undoubtedly the work may also help global firms build up experience and credibility in new areas of work as well

How do people get involved? We take requests from our development partners and circulate requests in the legal language our law partners understand. Once we have chosen the relevant partners we step back and the law firms treat them exactly as they treat other clients. It isn't just for experience law professionals either as we have a newly Qualified Lawyers programme and one of the first participants spent five weeks providing legal assistance to SICHREM, an Ngo working to combat human right abuses in India. Students can get involved by becoming members (£30 a year). You don't have to be a law student though the bulk of our membership is. You can then take part in a number of different activities – working groups on travel and investment, debt and finance, governance and development rights, visits and events to Oxfam and the Tearfund for example. As a member you can also sign up for our part time law and development course – a 35 hour course run on Saturdays. There are also online forums and social networks that are being developed and the interns will be involved in developing and managing those.

Internships – We have recently started an Internship programme. They are unpaid but we are working towards having them as expenses paid. At the moment there is no money but we only insist on two to three days a week and hopefully applicants can get paid work to help fund this contribution. Internships run September to December, January to May and May to the end of August. Details are on the web site and applications are by CV and letter. No one in the organisation will be giving legal advice but interns do have an opportunity to get involved in the programme of activities offered by the organisation. The internships are open to everyone – not just those on law courses. So people who are already qualified in law, for example, who want to move into development or development law may consider it.