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Transcript – Linda

Yeah, I'm Linda Lohnqvist from Finland and I work at INTRAC which is the International NGO Training and Research Centre in Oxford and I'm a researcher and I've worked here for about a year and a half. Our work is really wide ranging because everything we have to do is related to international development but specifically to the non-government sector, so the charities and trade unions and football clubs and religious associations and anything else you could call civil society.

The thing is with the development sector, it's tricky, the whole, um, there is no career path essentially and when the previous generation got their jobs in international development it was enough to be white and have a bit of chutzpah and want to go out into the field and have some solidarity with the peoples of the world. But, er, so that's for example what my dad did in the early 80's, he went to Zambia and worked as a woodwork teacher and now he's a highly paid education consultant, but for people of my generation you can't just do that because the sector, the entire industry, has taken off in a big way, has grown, become much more professionalised. It's all very much more structured so you need a Masters degree, specialisation, you have to know whether you're into economic development or social development, or governance or policy or infrastructure and water so there's 500 different career paths that you could potentially take.

Originally I came to the UK to study, I did Development Studies and Swahili at SOAS in London. I'd recommend that to anyone, it's good to know the language of where you want to go. And then, I, after, it's just the way life takes you really. I'd spent quite a lot of time already in the UK, and Tanzania for my degree. I had a British boyfriend, friends in London and got an internship after I finished my degree. Getting a job in Finland always seemed a bit superfluous, like why would I do that because there was so much more going on in Britain and of course I wanted to be abroad. So the Finnish



international development pond is very small and very cosy, once you're in there you're in there but getting a foot into the Finnish scene is not so straightforward though they do value a lot of the international perspective. In a way going to Finland means retreating into a bit of a cul de sac. There's not many other places you can go from Helsinki. So I think maybe when I want children and I want to settle down and to have a calm life, I'll give that a go. I always assumed that you get your job through networking and knowing people and being in the right place at the right time but it just so happened that I answered an advert in the newspaper for this one, sent in my job application, filled in the forms, interviewed and got the job. So the skills needed, it'll vary but partly it's having a Masters degree, several years of experience, speaking a few languages, knowing something about the topics involved, but what really clinched it for me in this job was my experience from Tanzania. I went there with my English boyfriend at the time, just looked for a job in the town where we lived. Although that had been quite a random process for me in the past, that experience was very useful when I applied for this job. For someone hoping to work in the UK, I'd say, yeah, go for it. Living expenses are very high and there's a bit of bureaucracy to sort out but if it doesn't work out you can always do something else.