

**kamr HUSSEIN**Consultant at the Sustainable  
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## profile

Kamr Hussein works as a consultant at Ipsos MORI, primarily focusing on Sustainable Development. Before her time at Ipsos, she worked for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee at the UN secretariat and was responsible for dealing with the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance.

She was also involved in the coordination of humanitarian response to the Yemen crisis.

### **What does your role as a Consultant at Ipsos Mori entail?**

I work in the Sustainable Development Research Centre which Ipsos established to draw together the company's expertise across the SDG themes and across our global footprint. I work on research and evaluations on key international development concerns such as governance and institutional development, crime and security, health and wellbeing, finance and economic inclusion, enterprise, industry and trade, international diplomacy and cooperation, education, energy, and gender equality.

Our experience includes large-scale multi-country social surveys and evaluations, as well as targeted local studies, and we have worked for clients ranging from donor agencies to multinational corporations to grassroots Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

## **Can you describe a typical day at work?**

I feel that in international development, there is never a ‘typical’ day at work! There are different deadlines, client demands or proposals that go on, so there is a new challenge every day.

Given how many offices Ipsos has around the world, one day I could be talking to colleagues in Egypt, and the next with colleagues in the Philippines. That's what makes international development so exciting – you'll never have the same day in the office, especially in the political climate we work in these days.

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## **Why did you decide to pursue a career in International Development and Research?**

Before moving to the UK, my family fled conflict and took refuge in the Netherlands, and so I heard stories first-hand on how dire the situation can be in conflict-affected areas. I'm

also of the opinion that there needs to be an increase of diaspora-driven development which is why I was so eager to contribute through the development sector.

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**You previously interned at the UN, briefly tell us about your main roles and responsibilities.**

I worked for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Secretariat – the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance. It's a unique forum involving the key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners. My role as an intern was minimal, but there were numerous avenues for me to contribute to the Principled Humanitarian Action Task Team where I was involved in contributing to the preparation of various written inputs including; a policy note on how Humanitarian assistance is currently being affected in the field due to the Counter Terrorism policies in place. I also had the chance to organise the eight regional World Humanitarian Summit Consultation meetings, which was very exciting!

**You have helped to implement projects on behalf of DfID, the FCO and EuropeAid. What does this mean and what role did you play?**

In respect to the donor agencies, it's always a great opportunity to see how they work as clients and what their key focus is at the time. The frequent interaction definitely exposed me to their different mandates, approaches, methods, and general knowledge.

## How did you feel initially going from working with a large organisation like the UN to private organisations like ICF and Ipsos Mori, and how do they differ?

They are different. The UN is quite bureaucratic, but you get to meet some of the most interesting and intelligent people in your career. Everyone there has a cause they want to fight for which encourages you to do better, given the level of diplomacy involved. In addition, I was also introduced to what usually happens when a conflict and/or a humanitarian crisis occur. It was riveting to see the different steps taken by the the UN to mitigate some of the damages caused by said conflicts in different countries.

In consultancy (and the private sector), the pace is much quicker and much more demanding. It is, however, just as rewarding in the sense that you are aware of how instrumental your work is to the world around you. You also get to learn more about the other multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, IMF, EU, etc. what they do and how they conduct their affairs.

## What's the most challenging thing about your job?

Not seeing immediate results, I would say. Sometimes with consulting, you don't always get the chance to see what effects your project has on the ground. However, if your work involves a lot of fieldwork, that may not be the case.

## **What's that one thing you now know that you wish you knew before entering the profession?**

The different options there are in the Development sector. I was always convinced that you would either join an organisation like the UN or end up in an NGO. I didn't really think of life as a consultant prior to my career – which was very unfortunate because I now find consultancy to be the best way to go about development in some ways.

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## **What's your biggest advice to anyone looking to either become a consultant or work within the Development sector?**

Biggest advice is to not give up! Try to maintain a positive 'can-do' attitude and try to get yourself out there a bit more. Networking events are usually good places to start. Talk to people and introduce yourself – you'll meet the most interesting and inspiring people in the development sector that way and if you're lucky, might just find the right people early enough to mentor you as you discover more areas that you like.