

MASTER'S INTERNATIONAL VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Male Voice: *One of the benefits of being a Peace Corps Volunteer is to learn from another culture - to live in another society and to see that society through their eyes.*

Female Voice: *Peace Corps is the ideal opportunity for you to learn and to explore, and come back to the United States and be able to share everything that you've learned from your experience.*

Male Voice: *Peace Corps allows me to do two things at once- gain work experience in the health fields and the developing world. And get the academic background I need to better serve those populations.*

NARRATION: At more than 60 campuses across the country, Master's International allows students to incorporate Peace Corps service into a Master's degree program. Established in 1987, Master's International helps meet an increasing demand overseas for Peace Corps Volunteers with high levels of education and technical expertise. The program also allows universities to provide a unique internationally focused experience for their students.

Maria Marasigan: *I chose to do Master's International because I just feel that having that hands-on experience I think is the best way to be learning and I'd be able to do service at the same time I'd be learning all of the things in the classes at graduate school.*

So when it was time to start focusing more on my thesis work, I knew I wanted to move towards looking at organic farming. And so I started with focusing on the use of worms through vermaculture to create organic fertilizers and how they could use local resources so that they could make it themselves. And that way it would also be cheaper and more sustainable.

There is a lemon tree that you can see over here. It's one of the trees they actually applied the liquid fertilizer to and you can see how big the lemons and how much fruit this tree is bearing right now.

NARRATION: The Master's International process is fairly straightforward.

- 1) First, you apply to the participating graduate schools of your choice.
- 2) Once you have been accepted, you will submit your application for the Peace Corps.
- 3) You'll complete one to two years of graduate study and
- 4) Then work overseas as a Peace Corps Volunteer for 27 months. Your geographic placement will be based on your area of study, when you are available to depart, language level, and program availability.

5) Following service, you will complete your academic project or any other outstanding work required for your degree.

6) After finishing your degree requirements, you will have obtained a master's degree in your chosen field with two years of significant international work experience.

Success in the Peace Corps requires a combination of flexibility, focus and dedication. When overseas, your first obligation is to be a Peace Corps Volunteer. Specific assignments are developed by overseas Peace Corps staff, and are based on the needs and requests of the host countries. Your academic work and project will emerge out of your Peace Corps experience.

Eric Peterson: I just treated my research as if it was a Peace Corps project in and of itself. So, when I wasn't working on my goat project or my cow project or my tree nursery or bee keeping or HIV/AIDS, I was working on my research question.

The fact that you get to spend two years in the field is one of the biggest benefits of Peace Corps Master's International because you get all sorts of contextual and anecdotal knowledge that you can add to your formal research and really sort of makes you an expert on your field and on the place where you studied.

Johanna Looye: One of the nicest parts about the experience is that the students are overseas, but they know they have the support of the MI office here in Washington, that they have faculty support.

NARRATION: Every school has a Master's International coordinator who, along with your faculty advisor, provides ongoing guidance and resources both during your time on campus and while you're overseas.

Joe Anzalone: When they get in the field, we like to be a resource for them. So, they need to kind of write to us, communicate with us, say, "hey. I'm working on this thing. Can you help me with this idea?"

NARRATION: Your advisor will work with you as you plan, develop, and complete your master's final project, whether that's a paper, thesis, portfolio or another form of academic work.

All students receive academic credit for their Peace Corps service. However, each school differs in the structure of its Master's International Program and has its own academic requirements for Master's degrees.

Many schools offer research or teaching assistantships, and waivers to reduce tuition.

In addition, all Peace Corps Volunteers receive outstanding language training, airfare, living expenses, medical coverage, loan deferment, readjustment allowance, and job search assistance.

Another benefit is the bond Master's International students make with other Volunteers. This is a network that can last a lifetime.

Jennifer Samnick: *I came in with a cohort, about a dozen other students and we really bonded as a group and went through our core courses in gaining some basic skills and information that we would probably be using when we got to Peace Corps. When we were in our different countries, we got placed all around the world, we were able to stay in touch by e-mail. I came home roughly around the same time as half of my cohort and we all used each other as peers to look at our degree project drafts and use that as an opportunity to reflect on our experiences and kind of have some closure afterwards as well.*

NARRATION: There are over 100 degree programs available in a wide range of fields. You can search the Grad School page on the Peace Corps website for more information.

Sara Rives: *I wanted to get the most out of my Master's program as possible. And I feel like Peace Corps are the first two years of my professional experience in the field. If I want to do policy, if I want to do program management in the future, I'll have a basis for understanding "that's not going to work" or "this might work" or "we need to do this to find out if it would" to make good policies that will be effective.*

Zach Moore: *It was really nice to be able to take the classes that I'd done at home on policy and different acts like The National Environmental Policy Act and put it into use in Mongolia and do trainings on those and try and implement what we do here that helps keep our environment safe there.*

Adam Goldberg: *I would recommend Master's International to other potential students because it is a great gateway. You are well prepared for Peace Corps and when you come back you really have a focus to your degree. It strengthens both experiences.*