



## Supporting international development through the integration of relevant ‘soft-skills’ into geoscience education

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Geologists have an important role to play in international development, improving disaster risk reduction and access to clean water, sanitation, infrastructure, and natural resources. That geologists can contribute to international development is well established. Less so, however, is an understanding of the ‘soft’ skills required to do this effectively. The fight against global poverty requires an integrated and interdisciplinary approach, demanding a host of skills other than technical geology. Factors such as cultural understanding, cross disciplinary communication, diplomacy, community mobilisation and participation are all aspects that, if lacking, may result in a project failing to have maximum impact.

Whilst project success may be highly dependent on these skills and aspects of knowledge, opportunities to develop them throughout a geologist’s education are not common. Through a discussion of two case studies (based on water and hazards work), this study seeks to demonstrate the value of an integrated approach and the skills that geologists should invest in at an early stage of their career. It proceeds to examine a range of practical ways by which geology students can develop these skills during and after their education. A number of these opportunities are currently being utilised by Geology for Global Development (GfGD), a not-for-profit organisation working in the UK to support young geoscientists to make a long-term and effective contribution to international development.