

Stijn Gabriel has graduated in International Security



Stijn Gabriel has graduated from the Master in International Security. Stijn works as a Project Development & Reporting Officer at the International Organization for Migration's office in Niger

What is your role and main responsibilities?

In practice, this means that I am responsible for all reports on any of the +-25 projects (total value of +- 130 million USD) that we have ongoing at any moment. I also develop new projects based on emerging trends in Niger, including sudden (forced) displacements or new migration routes. Lastly, I frequently meet with (potential) donor countries or partners to represent [IOM](#) and raise attention to the challenges that we are trying to address on a daily basis.

How did you secure this role?

After my internship with the [Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) as part of my master at [PSIA](#), my old supervisor reached out to me to point me towards a Junior Professional Officer (JPO) function that they funded. Because I had let them know about my interest in working in the Sahel, they encouraged me to apply for this position. After several interviews, I finally got offered the job a few days before the graduation ceremony in Paris and left for Niger in September 2019.

What is the most fascinating and/or surprising aspect of your role?

One of the things I really enjoy about my current job is that I get to

explore new topics every other week. Developing new projects in response to emerging trends or phenomena, as well as working on reports for all thematic units across the mission, allows me to be exposed to different topics and aspects of the Organization's work. This breadth of experience has been incredible as it has given me the opportunity to decide which areas I find particularly interesting and would like to focus on in my next role, while also learning from my colleagues who have decades of experience all across the UN and all across the world. Traveling in Niger has also been a fascinating experience – after reading for years about the challenges in, for example, the city of Agadez, driving across town myself was a pretty special moment!

How did your PSIA experience help you with the role?

Looking back, PSIA prepared me for this role in multiple ways: I use the strategies and approaches from the classes on diplomacy, negotiation, public speaking, and speechwriting at least once every day when discussing negotiating budgets or new projects with donors or counterparts in the Government of Niger. Second, the fact that PSIA allowed me to develop my own curriculum and to take classes on different topics in the same semester, taught me a lot on how to switch rapidly between complex subjects and how to filter key points from large amounts of information in short amounts of time (learned this the hard way with some all-nighters for paper deadlines...). Lastly, being part of the diverse PSIA student body demonstrated the incredible added value of discussing with colleagues from different backgrounds, and this is something I am lucky enough to do at my current job as well.

What advice would you give to others?

Don't focus too much on getting the 'perfect' job right after graduation. Every experience will include valuable lessons, and if worst comes to worst, show you the things you do not like to be working on. I also strongly recommend to actively stay in touch with your fellow classmates after graduation, as well as with your professors. Some of my professors at PSIA, many of whom had longstanding experience with the UN system, were essential in helping me prepare for my interviews with IOM and providing me with great insights about how the recruitment process works from the other side of the table.

Learn more:

- [About the Master in International Security](#)
- [About IOM Niger](#)
- [Contact Stijn on LinkedIn](#)