

to India, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Cameroon, in addition to secondments to CIDA and PCO.

Dave says the greatest change he's witnessed is in the composition of the department's workforce. "The staff is now much more gender-balanced and far more representative of Canada's diversity than when I joined back in 1981."

Change in general has accelerated throughout government, and new employees have to take that into account, he says. "I wouldn't try to plan a career for the long term, because you can't envision it now. Keep your eyes on the next two to five years—and that way, if you continue to be curious and flexible, you'll have a lot of fun here."

Caitlin Workman, who has been working for six months as a spokesperson for Trade Media Relations, looks forward to spending many years in the department. "The tone and climate here at DFAIT are really special, and I like the generous mentoring I've been getting from everyone."

The daughter of a television foreign correspondent, Caitlin acquired an early taste of living abroad. She left Canada with her family at the age of 8, and for the next 15 years lived first in Jerusalem and then in Paris. That cosmopolitan upbringing was part of what lured her to DFAIT.

She believes that communications work at the department is more exciting than ever. "Communications is moving into the forefront of what government does, and a new generation is clamouring for new media, including Twitter, Facebook and blogs. There's a brave new world in communications and it will be fun to be part of it."

France Desilets, who retired 11 months ago after a career that included 10 postings abroad, says there were two great sources of pleasure in her DFAIT career: the travel and the many friendships she developed with fellow employees.

Her advice to new employees is simple. "Having a satisfying career is all about relationships and learning. Get to know the people you work with, and try to learn from everybody, whether they're a janitor or a head of mission. Your whole career will become an experience of growth and you'll look back on your DFAIT years with pleasure."

Ten months ago, Amanda Klamman joined the department as a field operations officer on the Afghanistan Task Force. From the beginning, she was given some daunting responsibilities, including having to organize a series of 37 meetings in the capital region for the new deputy head of mission in Kabul—during her first week on the job. "I was completely new to this, but I found it thrilling to be entrusted with so much so soon."

She doesn't pretend to know the shape of the career she's facing, but believes the range of challenges will almost guarantee a satisfying work life.

"I've noticed from the beginning that everyone seems to be always looking ahead and imagining their future in the department. It's like you don't have a single career here, but a series of mini-careers, moving from place to place and facing different challenges each time."



Seasoned foreign service officer Dave Edwards is nearing his 30th anniversary at DFAIT.



Caitlin Workman is excited to be a part of the "brave new world in communications" at DFAIT.



Amanda Klamman, a new field operations officer on the Afghanistan Task Force, says it's been thrilling to be entrusted with so much so soon.

"For me, that's a formula for a good professional life."

Generations of employees have found that same good professional life at DFAIT, each arriving and absorbing the department's culture and commitment to excellence from the veterans—a passing of the baton to carry forward into the future.

*Please visit Our World Online for a related story on a young girl's dreams of working for the department, "Diversity Through the Eyes of a Child."*