

ALUMNI PROFILE

Joint Japan/World Bank Graduate Scholarship Program

“The Scholarship Program enhanced and maximized my learning experience at school, allowing me to commit my entire energy to build my foundation in econometric analysis and statistical programming at the professional level.”

—ATSUHIRO OGURI

ATSUHIRO OGURI, JAPAN
Georgetown University (2022)
USA



What motivated you to pursue a career in a development-related field?

My passion to address social issues and create impact motivated me to pursue a career in the development field.

I am naturally driven to identify and analyze social problems and devise evidence-based solutions. This aspiration led me to pursue a journalist career first. 8 year-experience as a journalist gave me deepened insight into various social issues, and I felt a desire to not only raise awareness, but also to act as a practitioner in solving them. This led me to become a development consultant and tackle the challenges facing farmers in Africa.

In my journey as a development practitioner, I realized that analytical rigor is the key to success, and I decided to leave the field for a while to develop a comprehensive academic foundation at a graduate school. Having gained foundations and strong analytical skills at Georgetown University, I am further motivated to devote my career and energy to tackle social problems.

What has been the most rewarding and challenging parts of your study abroad experience?

The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on my graduate studies experience was the most challenging part in my initial student life. Due to the pandemic, our two-year program started and remained online throughout the entire first year. However, the saying “necessity is the mother of invention” inspired me to find ways to build bonds among classmates despite the challenging circumstances, and I made additional efforts to foster a strong community. After two years, at the graduation ceremony, I felt immensely rewarded, recognizing the close and tight-knit group our cohorts had formed.

How will the scholarship help you to advance in your professional career?

The scholarship program enhanced and maximized my learning experience at school, allowing me to commit my entire energy to build my foundation in econometric analysis and statistical programming at the professional level. Also, it motivated me to contribute to the school community through several student organizations. This experience further developed my change-maker mindset. I have no doubt that those skills and mindset, coupled with my career background, will help me step forward and stand out in the international development sphere.

As an alumnus, what advice would you offer to others who are considering applying for the JJWBGSP?

Consider reflecting on your values and goals before applying to the JJWBGSP scholarship. Listen to your inner voice as much as possible to understand yourself. Then, clearly define your long-term goals and how you want to achieve them in an international career development path. These goals will reflect your identity and serve as motivation for your growth during and even after your graduate studies.

Get connected with peers and alumni of the scholarship program. They will provide you valuable insights and support. I am grateful to the alumnus who introduced me to the scholarship program and to peers and predecessors who shared their experiences and gave me great inspiration. Furthermore, “networking” is one of the most important skills in the international development. A broader network will benefit you in various occasions in your professional life and ultimately enhance your growth.