

ALUMNI PROFILE

Joint Japan/World Bank Graduate Scholarship Program

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—FIZZO CHIDAKWA

FIZZO CHIDAKWA, ZAMBIA
Erasmus University, Institute for
Housing and Urban Development
Studies (2024)
The Netherlands



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

Walking through the unplanned settlements in Zambia, Zimbabwe and some parts of South Africa where uneven roads wind between makeshift homes, I once listened to a family in Soweto, South Africa describe their daily struggle with inadequate housing. Their words resonated deeply, as they mirrored my childhood experiences in a similar environment back home in Zambia. That moment crystallized my understanding of how inequitable governance structures perpetuate cycles of poverty and sparked my commitment to transforming them. My passion for inclusive development and sustainable governance, coupled with nearly a decade of experience in public policy, drove me to pursue the Master's in Urban Management and Urban Development at Erasmus University's Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies in Rotterdam, the best university in the world in this field.

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

The most rewarding has been tapping into the global crystal of pragmatic skills and meeting with minds from across the world all solving the same problem with a strong drip of culture. The most challenging parts of my study were two-fold, Academically transitioning through my thesis was a strong learning curve for me I could truly say I got an upgrade from my skills to the nuances of

Local economic development thinking. Studying abroad also has cultural challenges from race relations to perceptions that have an impact on mental health, am glad I had the resilience and support to navigate through that phase.

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

The support of this scholarship was not only financial, it was a generational shift on the impossible made possible. The opportunity has opened-up global opportunities that ordinary would not be accessible. It will help me also assist my community with more advanced thinking and strategies while being able to take up new and higher responsibilities.

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

My advice to young professionals is do not hesitate to apply and be sure to reach out to alumnus in your space for advice and guidance, additionally make use of the JJ/WBGSP website which has a plethora of information you can use, but most importantly, you must desire to make the world a better place on life at a time, one street and one community in every season. That to me is what the graduate program intends to do as it generously supports individual like me from forgotten regions of the world to get advanced skills and be a blessing to my generation and the next. Go ahead and Apply. You are well able.