

30 STORIES OF SERVICE

JOINT JAPAN / WORLD BANK Graduate Scholarship Program

MEET ANITA APAU, GHANA

Johns Hopkins University (2022)
USA



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

After completing a two-year mandatory internship after medical school, I worked with International SOS for two years, in both community and hospital settings at remote places, including mining sites, gas plants, construction sites, and offshore projects. My field of work was occupational health, where I treated the workers on the site with varying degrees of occupational-related injuries. I was also responsible for their overall health and well-being.

I later worked with the United Nations COVID Field Hospital, Ghana, as a physician and the COVID-19 Case management team lead. My duties included identifying suspected COVID-19 cases, isolating confirmed cases, quarantining close contacts, and maintaining related data. These roles, coupled with further reading, advanced my knowledge in primary healthcare, epidemiology, and management of infectious diseases. This ultimately created a strong passion for pursuing a career path in public health.

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

The most rewarding part of my study abroad was the professional relationships I developed with my academic advisors, faculty, and preceptors at the Maryland Department of Health during my internship. I still have these professional relationships maintained today.

The challenging part of my educational experience was the fast-paced nature of the public health program. However, with time, I was able to keep up. Despite the difficulty, I finished with a perfect 4.0 GPA in my last four terms and was inducted into the Delta Omega Honorary Society in Public Health.

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

As a physician, I have gained substantial expertise in disease control and prevention, particularly infectious diseases. I have also developed a strong understanding of infectious disease epidemiology, which will serve as a stepping-stone to pursuing a career in public health, specifically infectious diseases.

My long-term goal is to become a researcher in the field of public health, coordinate research on national health priorities, and improve pandemic preparedness, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Thanks to this scholarship, I now have some of the required credentials I need to pursue my goal.

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

As an alumnus, one piece of advice I would give to anyone pursuing the JJWBGSP scholarship is that one should start the application process as soon as possible when the application window opens. And in so doing, ample time will be available to draft essays meticulously. Furthermore, this allows referees enough time to organize and submit their recommendations well in advance of the deadline. Overall, this would prevent applicants from submitting their scholarship applications in a haste close to the deadline, which might result in mistakes that could diminish their chances of being selected.