

30 STORIES OF SERVICE

JOINT JAPAN WORLD BANK Graduate Scholarship Program

MEET IQBAL HAMAD, JORDAN
ERASMUS UNIVERSITY ROTTERDAM (2015),
THE NETHERLANDS



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

Indeed, the development sector is the most passionate sector for me. It was the first sector I was involved in deeply after I finished my first and previous studies.

Jordan faces potentially serious impacts on its natural ecosystems. Climate change will have serious implications on the country's efforts to eradicate poverty and realize sustainable development for current and future generations ultimately, making an equity issue inapplicable. Climate change scenarios indicate that Jordan could suffer from reduced agricultural productivity and water availability among other negative impacts regarding the socioeconomic situation focused in urban areas. The increase in population, the internal migration between the governorates from rural to urban areas, and the Syrian refugees' crises places pressure on the natural ecosystem, and on the municipalities to provide basic services to the refugees especially since Jordan faces many challenges and obstacles economically, socially and environmentally due to changes in demography, climate and global economy. All together, leaving Jordan as one of the vulnerable countries and as a result, a collaborative approach is needed to overcome or eliminate this dilemma.

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

- By applying what have been learned.
- By opening new horizons for the future.
- By learning new disciplines and improving my knowledge and experience.
- By enhancing my relationship with other scholars and to be part of the climate change activists.

What role has your family, friends, and/or employer played in your study abroad experience? How has this helped or hindered your journey?

Actually, mum, brothers and my manager all pushed me and encouraged me to never give up whether at the beginning of the process of filling out the application of university admission, searching for the sponsorship to cover the tuition fees or during the study year.

Though I do have some of my friends who, first, tried to decline my ambitions to pursue my study and second to study abroad.



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How has your master degree studies help you contribute to your country?

My specialization was at the university in the field of urban environment and climate change focusing on the water governance approach. Therefore, enrolling in such program gave me the power and built my capacities to adopt the initiative relevant to the climate change since the climate change is the greatest challenge of our time and we have to be aware of our climate whether at a local or global level. That's why I decided to study in this field. For instance, the master degree helped me build my capacity in research and assisted me in becoming more organized in finding the needed information. Actually, I am now a member of several groups and initiatives where the climate change, water management and gender issues are part of their concern.

Moreover, the tools and the skills that I got while I am developing my research (I mean the qualitative and quantitative research strategies)! Right now I am using them for doing project research with different disciplines. For example, I am using them to write proposals which targeted the host local communities and the Syrian refugees to submit it later to donor agencies.

At the end, this master degree helped me to understand the complexity of urban dynamics based on economic, social, environmental and physical fundamentals, which also assist in creating an ideal urban area with consideration, tackling the ecological system and the equity of distribution. On the other hand, the master degree that I got helped me to address our issues in a more professional manner, through identifying the urban policies and how it can be approached from different perspectives. Moreover, this course helped me to clarify the ideal method of involving the urban communities and the different actors in managing their issues and structuring it based on Jordan context.

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

The biggest challenge was being far from family and friends, not only far geographically but also culturally. In fact, studying abroad forces you to build your personality, by building your relationships and your networks at a time when your family is away from you. Having friends from all over the world is a matter of having the opportunity to know different cultures and open your horizon to different thoughts. ...One of the most interesting parts to study abroad is to experience the crazy adventure and to learn from it with new friends. To know the system of your host country and to find out the similarities and the differences with other European countries. When you have the opportunity to study abroad, you will experience the new style of education. To say the truth, I enjoyed every minute while I was abroad. Moreover, you will experience incredible food, customs and social atmosphere. Also, study abroad will assist to improve your skills in regards to language and you will change your thoughts about others. In addition to that, you will return to new perspectives, language, skills and education in which you can use them for the future job as well as many new opportunities with high reputations will open for you. Actually, studying abroad is an amazing experience unlike any other.

What advice would you offer to other women who are considering applying for the JJWBGSP?

Study abroad is a great opportunity and could never come again so you need to be serious to take this step for having a pretty future. In fact, this step will never be achieved if you do not have the willingness and the sponsorship. Looking to find a scholarship, is the most difficult part and could hinder your ambitious to take a step further. To say the truth JJWBGSP gave me the space to have this opportunity and to make my dream real... The allowance/stipend is enough to survive, to study and enjoy your time. The JJWBGSP covered all the tuition fees as well as the insurance health fees. At the end, I am very thankful and grateful to JJWBGSP for their support and contribution, where without them my dream would have never been accomplished.