

Scholar Story

Dorcus Mensah

Dorcus Mensah graduated from University of Edinburgh in 2017, after completing a Masters in Africa and International Development.

She has returned to Ghana (where she completed her undergraduate degree in Business Administration at Ashesi University in Accra) and is now on Advisory Lead for Challenges Worldwide, a global organisation which supports the growth of enterprises in emerging economies.



Dorcus was introduced to the organisation, Challenges Worldwide - headquartered in Scotland - through an internship opportunity which she applied for whilst studying in Edinburgh, to build on the skills she had acquired through her undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

"During the course (of my postgraduate masters) in International Development, I realised that business has a place in development and there could be a way to combine the two, to create development outcomes. I needed to find a sustainable approach to development, that was not solely donor led. Challenges Worldwide does exactly that."

Dorcus was offered an internship position working on the development of an accelerator programme which supported the scale up of small and medium enterprises in Uganda. Upon completion of her three-month internship, Dorcus was offered a role in the Ghana team in January 2018, and she has been there ever since.

Dorcus' work has taken her to new parts of the country, where she has worked with local communities to build their ability to run effective organisations: "I have provided capacity building to informal groups, to support people to put governance and operational structures in place to help run effective mission-driven organisations." She has realised that there are many economic opportunities within the agricultural value chain

that young people could tap into. "All of my work has young people and women, and opportunities for them at the forefront."

Dorcus has seen the team in Ghana grow from four people to over 20 and has taken on management responsibilities. "It has built my confidence; managing people above you in age and experience. It has been intense and challenging but good."

Dorcus was able to draw on the transformative leadership training she received at Edinburgh, particularly from sessions with her reflection coach. "This has been so helpful to my journey. Leadership was something I learnt over time, until I was able to walk confidently into meetings. I understood that I need the will to achieve and humility to learn." Dorcus is keen to share her learning around leadership and entrepreneurship more widely with young people across Ghana. "There is space to go back and think about how to support people. How do we make entrepreneurship into something more widespread and rooted into the academic fabric of Ghana? We need to encourage people to think outside the box from a young age."



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