

# Scholar Story

## Sandra Garwe

### **Sandra Garwe graduated in 2019 with an MSc in Global Health Policy.**

Her experience as a scholar at the University of Edinburgh was a catalyst for her to realise her talent for and interest in communications. After graduation she won an internship with the MCF team at the University of Edinburgh to lead their external communications.



After six months, Sandra returned to Zimbabwe where she led a new Policy and Advocacy 'lab' at a local think tank. The global Covid-19 pandemic led Sandra to reflect on her purpose, and she took the bold decision to "return" to the health sector. "That is where my passion was. I am so grateful for the other experiences, but I realised after Covid that I needed to go where I was passionate." She now works at the Clinton Health Access Initiative in Zimbabwe, in a programme funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

"I started off there as a volunteer. I just wanted to be there. Before my contract was up, I contacted Human Resources and told them I wanted to stay, and asked if there were any other opportunities." She now works in the HIV Prevention team. "I am excited to be here. This is a technical role rather than working as an implementing partner, so it is different to what I am used to in the health sector."

Sandra credits the Scholars Program with helping her develop self-belief, a key factor in her transition 'back' to health and securing a permanent role at CHAI.

Importantly, she also highlights the role of an informal group of alumni who graduated from the same degree programme. "CHAI came to my mind because another former scholar worked there, and another one was applying. It was aspirational. We supported each other through the application

process." She feels this kind of sector-based peer support is unique and should be nurtured by the program. "We still help each other and ask for advice as we develop our careers in global health."

She would encourage future scholars to "network, make the most of leadership opportunities made available to you, and make yourself marketable by finding a niche during your time at the University of Edinburgh."



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