

COLLINS ANFO



My name is Collins Anfo, a graduate from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), situated in Kumasi, Ghana. I pursued a degree in BSc. Business Administration with majoring in International Business Management. When I received the life-changing information of being awarded a comprehensive scholarship into the prestigious Educational Pathways International (EPI) in 2019, I was filled with equal parts disbelief, exhilaration, and apprehension. I simply could not foresee the immense impact this opportunity would have in empowering me over the next four critical years of my academic and personal growth journey. From honing invaluable professional skills to gaining eye-opening global perspectives, EPI proved essential to helping this once shy and uncertain student transform into an empowered leader driven to create positive change.

I vividly remember sitting starry-eyed amongst fellow scholars in the opening EPI orientation ceremony as the Program Director revealed the organization's inspiring vision to empower promising youth like us through comprehensive scholarships, workshops, conferences, and mentorship. The emphasis on holistic development, from building self-confidence to developing business acumen, deeply resonated with my goals. My early interactions with senior EPI scholars further reinforced my decision that this supportive family would help me thrive in my competitive field of study.

I ultimately chose to pursue International Business Management to gain insights into how intricate business decisions shape multifaceted real-world social, political, and ethical realities across borders. Beyond promising career prospects, I felt drawn to understanding the complex machinery of globalization and the weighty responsibilities that business leaders and entrepreneurs hold to drive sustainable widespread growth. I hoped to one day similarly create ethical, inclusive businesses to uplift my nation, Ghana.

EPI's diverse skills building workshops/seminars proved invaluable to me to keep pace with the rigorous International Business Management coursework over the next four years. From the monthly personal development workshops and in-depth seminars, EPI continuously opened my eyes to new professional avenues to explore within my domains of interest.

However, my most perspective expanding experience was undoubtedly the EPI funds that helped me to fund an exchange program opportunity I partook at Germany's prestigious Umwelt-Campus Birkenfeld in 2022. Spending six unforgettable months fully immersed at a foreign university and culture initially pushed me far out of my comfort zone but ultimately gave me invaluable confidence and life lessons. The hands-on interactive sustainability projects and global business

management courses opened my eyes to real-world issues I had only read about previously, further solidifying my passion.

I also fondly recall weekend trips touring cutting-edge German companies to gain firsthand exposure to their innovative environmentally, conscious practices as well as long evening walks mesmerized by fairy-tale European architecture with my newly international friends. Each memorable cross-cultural exchange was an important reminder that business in today's hyper connected world ultimately transcends borders, religions and ethnicities, much like my wonderfully diverse EPI community itself.

By the time I finally returned to Ghana, I felt wholly transformed into a more open-minded, culturally dexterous individual with an ignited passion to make a difference. The EPI exchange program undeniably played a pivotal role in discovering my advocacy for ethical, socially conscious business practices that benefit communities like mine in Ghana. It also awakened the exhilarating realization within me that limitless personal and professional possibilities exist through cross-border collaborations.

Alongside eye-opening global experiences, my EPI journey has been enriched profoundly by guidance from inspirational mentors who became family. My heartfelt gratitude especially extends to our Program Director, Auntie Eunice of EPI for selflessly taking my fellow scholars and I under her wing. Through her wisdom sessions filled with impactful career advice and life lessons, she continuously empowered us to recognize and seize our highest potentials beyond what we can envision for ourselves. From mentoring us on acing challenging academic projects to providing warm advice on navigating personal struggles, Auntie Eunice's unfaltering support has undoubtedly nurtured the leader I am today.

As my incredible journey ends, I can proudly say that I graduated with a First-Class honors degree in International Business Management as a more driven, globally minded individual. However, what I treasure most are the relationships forged, mentors gained and wholeheartedly committed to paying forward the gift of empowerment generously bestowed upon me to uplift others in need.

In the short term, I aim to consolidate practical skills and global perspective by gaining work experience across border in regions from Asia to Europe and beyond. However, my ultimate vision is to establish a non-profit foundation and scholarship initiative modeled after EPI in my hometown. I hope to similarly sponsor talented but financially disadvantaged youth to access quality higher education, enriching global exposures and holistic development opportunities.

My dream is for this initiative to organically grow into an empowering network that connects business leaders and aspiring young entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds across borders. By facilitating the exchange of ideas and collaborative development projects grounded in ethical, sustainable values, I believe we can collectively uplift communities worldwide. I also intend to eventually establish my own social enterprise leveraging my international business skills to make trade more accessible for marginalized local farmers, artisans, and women-led cooperatives by connecting them to global consumer markets.

I hope to inspire the next generation of youth in my community to boldly pursue their passions just as my EPI family inspired me. With continued courage, compassion, and community, I know we can make the vision of progress and empowerment across my beloved continent an enduring reality. As I prepare to embrace the exciting unknown of this next chapter ahead, I am sincerely grateful to EPI for selflessly investing in us and nurturing our potential to be the change.