

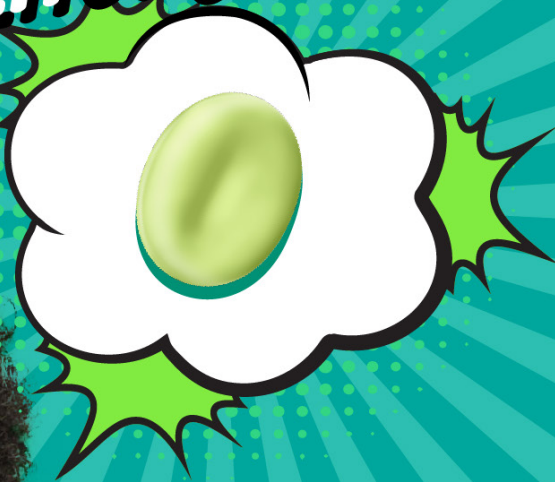
ABACUS SCHOLARSHIP REPORT

Alumni Impact Study **2011-2023**

**Impact of the PSU-Abacus Scholarship Programme
on its Beneficiaries and the Under-served Ugandan
Communities**

Dr. Jonans Tusiimire
Dr. Miriam Josephine Nakiwala
Dr. Nuru Mugide
Dr. Zam Namweseza

scratchy throat?
when in doubt,
have a menthoxyl!



NEW
LOOK

DOUBLE ACTION THROAT AND NOSE LOZENGES
AVAILABLE COUNTRYWIDE





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Editorial



Greetings to you all. First and foremost, I would like to thank the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society of Uganda (PSU) and Abacus Pharma (A) Limited (APL) for the thoughtful and impact-driven collaboration that birthed this scholarship scheme. There is absolutely no doubt, based on the inspiring stories presented in this report, that the scholarship scheme has left an indelible impact on the scholars. It's a pleasant milestone!

ABACUS has been so relentless in their love and support for the training of pharmacists in the country. Not only have they sponsored needy pharmacy students through this scholarship scheme, but they also provide industrial training to students and interns all the time. This can only enrich the PSU and the pharmacy profession at large.

Over the past 3 months, the Study Team has worked so tirelessly behind the scenes to meticulously document the achievements and impacts of the scholars. In this, we were supported by the PSU Secretariat, particularly

Martin and Prisca, who did some of the photography work. Collectively, we are proud to bring to life these hitherto unknown but inspiring stories from the scholars.

We're really proud of all the scholars who gave us information. We hope that you will keep raising the PSU flag higher and higher. For everyone reading this report, it's our prayer that you will be inspired to continue pursuing your dreams and breaking barriers.

Dr. Jonans Tusiimire

Principal Investigator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr. Jonans Tusiimire', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.



Principal Investigator

Dr. Jonans Tusiimire

Vice President and Chairman, Education and Grants Committee, PSU; Deputy Dean, MUST Faculty of Medicine



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Co-Investigator

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Head of Quality/ Pharmacist, Abacus Parenteral Drugs Ltd

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Foreword


Over the last 12 years, the PSU in collaboration with Abacus Pharma (A) Limited (APL) have sponsored 59 needy pharmacy students under the PSU-ABACUS Scholarship scheme. This joint scholarship scheme has enabled the scholars to pursue their coveted careers in pharmacy, which would not have been possible had it not been for the scholarship. Through the scholarship, the beneficiaries have not only enrolled, trained and graduated as pharmacists but they have also subsequently gone on to serve as professionals in different communities.

I would like to sincerely appreciate the great efforts of all those who have contributed to the success of this scholarship scheme. These include: the previous Councils together with the Secretariat, who conceived, nurtured, supported, maintained or otherwise kept this scholarship running since 2011; the universities in which these scholars trained; and the beneficiaries. In a special way, I would like to appreciate ABACUS who are the main sponsors of this scheme. As Council, it is our statutory mandate to operate schemes for helping distressed pharmacists and pharmacy



Dr. Pamela Achii

President, Pharmaceutical Society
of Uganda



students; therefore, it gives me great joy seeing the fruits of our intervention. I am so proud of the achievements of the scholars and of the significant impacts that they have made in their places of work and other communities.


The current Council, of which I am the Chairperson and President, has been very thoughtful and deliberate in the way we do things. As we promised members when came into office, we have strived to look at the Big Picture of things; it is no longer business-as-usual. Look at the progress made on the Pharmacy House. Look at the researches being done, the collaborations. Look at the technical reports we have written to government. Look at all those engagements we have held with key stakeholders. Our goal is to lift the profession of pharmacy; and along with it, all pharmacists! It is no wonder, therefore, that it is this same Council that is documenting these kinds of achievements by the PSU after a dozen years of collaboration. It is always good to evaluate what we have done. This gives us a new direction where to go.

On this note, I would like to recognize the Education and Grants committee for the tremendous work they

have done in conducting webinars and CPDs, writing research grants, and seeking new collaborations. Special appreciation goes to the team that conducted this study. The study has highlighted a number of recommendations that the PSU Council will have to consider. For instance, how can we expand this scheme to have an even wider impact, especially in the specialty areas of pharmacy practice in which we currently have a shortage, such as R&D, artificial intelligence, and data science? How can we help the scholars to form a forum through which to consolidate the gains and ensure effective tracking of their impacts in the communities? The Council will have to find suitable answers to these questions.

As I conclude, I am really proud of the scholars who volunteered information for this study. I encourage all scholars to keep raising the profile of pharmacy as a profession through innovation. I hope the findings and success stories shared will be of some lesson to all PSU members.

Per medicatum servium!



The current Council, of which I am the Chairperson and President, has been very thoughtful and deliberate in the way we do things. As we promised members when came into office, we have strived to look at the Big Picture of things;



A top-down view of various medical supplies including a syringe, a blister pack of orange capsules, a blue vial, and several white and blue pills, all arranged on a light blue background with a faint hexagonal pattern.

Celebrating a Decade of Empowering Underprivileged Pharmacy Students in Uganda

I am thrilled to share with you a remarkable milestone that fills our hearts with pride and gratitude. For the past twelve years, ABACUS has been unwaveringly committed to making a meaningful impact in the lives of underprivileged pharmacy students through our scholarship program.

A decade ago, we embarked on a journey fueled by the vision of empowering deserving students who, despite facing financial hardships, possess the determination

and passion to excel in the field of pharmacy. Today, as we celebrate ten years of this scholarship initiative, we reflect upon the transformative journey we have collectively undertaken.

Over the years, PSU-ABACUS scholarship has provided financial support to aspiring pharmacists, enabling them to access quality education, pursue their dreams, and contribute to the healthcare sector. We have not only lightened the financial burden for

these students but also instilled hope, resilience, and the belief that their circumstances need not define their futures.

Our scholarship recipients have gone on to achieve remarkable feats— from serving in their communities to setting up successful business ventures. They embody the ethos of ABACUS by not only excelling in their academic pursuits but also by giving back to their communities, carrying forward the spirit of compassion and empowerment.

As we look back on the past dozen years, we extend our deepest gratitude to all those who have been part of this journey. To our employees, partners, and stakeholders who have contributed their time, resources, and expertise – your unwavering support has made this milestone possible. Our collective dedication has reaffirmed that when we come together with a shared purpose, we can create ripples of positive change that extend far beyond our immediate reach.

Looking ahead, we remain steadfast in our commitment to nurturing the ecosystem and potential of underprivileged pharmacy students. Our scholarship program will continue to evolve, embracing innovation and adaptability to ensure that it remains a beacon of hope for generations to come.

As we celebrate this milestone, let us also recommit ourselves to the values that have guided us thus far – inclusivity, excellence, and the power of education to transform lives.

Thank you for being an integral part of this remarkable journey. Together, we are not only changing lives but also shaping a brighter, more equitable future.

With gratitude and enthusiasm,

Ashok Bhatia
Group CEO, ABACUS

Over the years, PSU-ABACUS scholarship has provided financial support to aspiring pharmacists, enabling them to access quality education, pursue their dreams, and contribute to the healthcare sector.



As Healthcare Professionals, Pharmacists Provide Unique and Critical Services in the Country



As the Pharmaceutical Society of Uganda (PSU), we are very proud and profoundly grateful to the management of ABACUS sponsoring the PSU-ABACUS Scholarship scheme which has seen 59 Bachelor of Pharmacy students supported over the last twelve (12) years. This scheme started at a time when the annual number of Bachelor of Pharmacy graduates from the pharmacy training institutions in Uganda was averaging 70 to the now over 200 pharmacy undergraduates per annum. The number of pharmacists in Uganda has almost tripled over this period, currently at close to 1,800.

Pharmacists are key health professionals who provide unique critical services ranging from community pharmacy services that are first contact facilities for the majority of patients/clients, to pharmaceutical care/patient care in health facilities, pharmaceuticals and health supplies management in various institutions,

medicines regulation, pharmaceuticals manufacturing and research. These diverse roles of pharmacists call for the need for specialization through undertaking postgraduate training to have an adequate pool of pharmacists with advanced skills and knowledge in the different specialties of pharmacy.

As such, there has been a paradigm shift of focus of the Council Pharmaceutical Society of Uganda towards creating more opportunities for postgraduate training of pharmacists. We as such look forward to having the PSU-ABACUS Scholarship scheme transiting and expanding to supporting pharmacists undertaking postgraduate training in priority pharmacy specialties. We also look forward to having the scholarship opportunities expanded through strategic partnerships with other institutions that appreciate the pivotal roles pharmacists play in the human and animal health sectors.

We are very pleased that the beneficiaries of the PSU-ABACUS Scholarship scheme continue to make substantial contributions to the development of the pharmaceutical sector through providing pharmacy services to the communities around them and beyond. As PSU, we shall always be indebted to the management of ABACUS for its outstanding contribution towards the training of pharmacists in Uganda.

“Per Medicatum Servium”

Edson Ireeta Munanura

Secretary, Pharmaceutical Society of Uganda



Background

In 2011, the Pharmaceutical Society of Uganda partnered with Abacus Pharma (A) LTD (APL), through its parent company the AK Lifesciences Ltd, to establish a scholarship scheme to sponsor needy pharmacy students. The scholarship scheme was part of Abacus' commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by supporting the development of disadvantaged communities in the countries of their operation. The priority of most of Abacus' CSR activities focus on sustainable life-enhancing and awareness-raising projects to address public health concerns through promotion of health-related initiatives and responding to medical emergencies. Provision of scholarships to pharmacy students is, therefore, one of the core CSR activities that also include supporting nationwide health camps and health centres, and providing relief in response to local emergencies.

Brief about PSU

The Pharmaceutical Society of Uganda (PSU) is a professional body for pharmacists established by the Pharmacy and Drugs Act (PDA) 1970, Cap 280. The PSU is managed by a Council which is charged with the general responsibility for securing the highest practicable standards in the practice of pharmacy and with the administration and management of the Society. Among other functions, the Council of the PSU is mandated to encourage research in the subject of pharmacy and chemistry and generally to secure the well-being and advancement of the profession of pharmacy. It is the duty of the Council to supervise and regulate the engagement, training and transfer of pharmacy students and to make

provision for the registration of students. The Council also has a statutory mandate to operate a scheme for the purpose of aiding distressed pharmacy students, members or former members of the society, their widows or orphans.

Brief about Abacus

Abacus Pharma (A) Ltd is part of the AK Lifesciences Ltd which also includes Abacus Parenteral Drugs Ltd (APDL). Their product and service range includes pharmaceutical manufacturing, pharmaceutical distribution, warehousing, among others. The group's vision is to be Africa's trusted leader in providing quality healthcare and wellness products and solutions. The mission is to be Africa's #1 health and wellness company across the spectrum of diagnostics, preventive and curative medicines, surgical and consumer health products and solutions.

About the scholarship scheme

The PSU-Abacus scholarship scheme aims at sponsoring needy Ugandan nationals interested in pursuing a career in pharmacy at an accredited

university in Uganda. This scholarship is open to first year and continuing pharmacy students, and covers tuition, functional fees and accommodation for a period of not more than 4 years. Although the scholars can study in any accredited university, most of the beneficiaries so far have been in the public universities of Makerere and Mbarara (MUST). Upon completion of the bachelor's degree, internship and subsequent registration as pharmacists, the scholars are expected to serve in an underserved facility, area or institution as deemed necessary by the Council for at least two years with pay as any other professional.

The pioneers of the scholarship in the 2011/2012 academic year were only 7 students. Of these, 6 were from Makerere and 1 from MUST. So far, the scheme



The pioneers of the scholarship in the 2011/2012 academic year were only 7 students. Of these, 6 were from Makerere and 1 from MUST. So far, the scheme has sponsored 59 students mainly from the above two public universities...



has sponsored 59 students mainly from the above two public universities, but also 2 from Kampala International University (KIU) which is currently the only private university training pharmacists in Uganda. Of the 59 scholars in total, 50 have so far graduated from their programs, the rest are still students.

About this study

Over the past 12 years of this scholarship, many scholars have successfully enrolled, trained and graduated. Most of them have also completed internship, earned their registration as Pharmacist professionals and subsequently gone on to serve their communities in different capacities. However, there has not been any systematic study to trace these alumni. As a result, little was known regarding their career progression and impact especially in the underserved communities. It was clearly apparent that a study of this nature was required. Therefore, this study evaluated the impact of the PSU-Abacus scholarship on its beneficiaries and their communities. The findings will inform all relevant stakeholders about the achievements of the scholarship and what more needs to be done to maximise impact to the pharmaceutical sector and the disadvantaged communities.

Study Objectives



Main objective

To assess the impact of the PSU-Abacus scholarship programme on its beneficiaries and the under-served Ugandan communities.

Specific objectives

- ▶ To ascertain the employment status of the scholars.
- ▶ To assess the relevance of the scholarship programme to market demands.
- ▶ To determine the career paths and achievements by the scholars.
- ▶ To assess the level of satisfaction of the scholars with their careers and judgment of the level of relevance to their qualifications.
- ▶ To highlight the contributions of the scholars in underserved healthcare facilities and other communities in which they serve.

To evaluate the PSU-Abacus scholarship programme against its intended objectives.

Methodology

Study design, setting and population

A mixed methods study was conducted to collect both qualitative and quantitative data from PSU-Abacus scholars since inception of the programme to date. We collected data at a single point in time (cross-sectional design) but from individuals who received the scholarships in different years. The respondents to the survey were at different stages in their career progression.

Sample size and sampling technique

This study focused on a fairly small population of only 59 PSU-Abacus scholars. Thus, a census survey approach was used. As inclusion criteria, all PSU-Abacus scholarship awardees who were alive, reachable and consented to participate at the time of the study were considered. A list of all the scholars containing their respective email addresses and phone numbers was obtained from the PSU Secretariat.

Data collection tools and study variables

A previously-developed and validated online questionnaire was emailed in a link to the



respondents. The questionnaire collected data on background characteristics such as the age, sex, programme of study, years of study (joining and completion), additional training taken and qualifications (e.g. fellowships) obtained since completion, highest level of academic qualification, professional memberships and other affiliations. In addition, data was collected on employment status, relevance of the scholarship and programme studied in meeting market demands, career achievements, level of career satisfaction, and contributions to the underserved health facilities/areas as well as any other communities being served. A Likert scale was used to explore the data on the relevance of the scholarship and programme and level of career satisfaction using: (1) very high, (2) high, (3) somewhat, (4) limited and (5) not at all.

Data management and analysis

All data collected was automatically synchronized onto the Kobo Toolbox server platform which hosted the online tool. This permitted real-time data capture and entry, minimized errors at entry and eased data cleaning. At the end of data collection, the dataset was downloaded into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for cleaning. Data cleaning involved checking for accuracy, completeness and consistency. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 22 and MS Excel programmes.



Results

Background information

A total of 50 scholars who had graduated were contacted out of whom 35 (70%) responded and consented to the study. Of these respondents, one scholar did not wish to participate.

The mean age of the participants was 33.17 ± 4.98 years. The males were the majority, accounting for 26 (74.3%) of the participants; the female participants were 9 (25.7%).

As shown in Table 1 below, the majority of the participants had studied from Makerere University, accounting for 20 (57.1%) of the participants. On the other hand, MUST had 13 (37.1%) of the participants. KIU had the least number of participants at 2 (5.7%).

Table 1: Study participants and their previous institutions

University	N	%
MUK	20	57.1
MUST	13	37.1
KIU	2	5.7

As shown in the table below, the participants included scholars who had enrolled on the BPharm in each of the years from 2008 to 2023, except during the Covid-19 hiatus of 2020-2022. However, the first scholarships were awarded in 2011 (see list of all scholars, pg. 28).

Table 2: Years of BPharm enrolment for the study participants

Year	N	%
2008	1	2.85
2009	2	5.71
2010	2	5.71
2011	7	20.0
2012	4	11.4
2013	1	2.85
2014	2	5.71
2015	4	11.4
2016	3	8.57
2017	2	5.71
2018	3	8.57
2019	2	5.71
2023	2	5.71

Academic qualifications of the participants

Table 3: Scholars' academic qualifications

Award	N	%
MSc	15	42.9
PGD	7	20.0
PG Certificate	6	17.1
None yet	13	37.1
Other	2	5.7

Professional affiliations of the participants

Table 4: Professional affiliations of the scholars

Membership	N	%
PSU	34	97.1
Other body	6	17.1

Only one participant was not yet a PSU member. The other professional affiliations included:

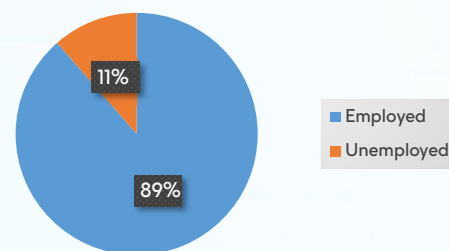
- ▶ Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council,
- ▶ International Society of Pharmacovigilance,
- ▶ Pharmaceutical Society of Kenya,
- ▶ Uganda Dispensers' Association,
- ▶ International Association of Public Health Logisticians (IAPHL)

Each of these associations had only one participant.

Employment status

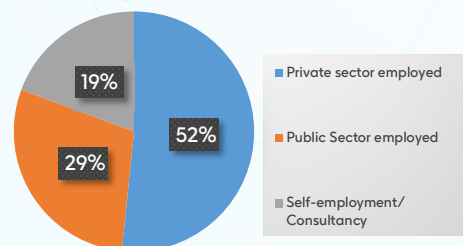
Most of the participants were employed, accounting for 31 (89%) of the participants. The rest 4 (11%) were unemployed. With the exception of one participant who was working in the East African Community, all the rest of the employed participants were based in Uganda.

Figure 1: Employment status of the scholars



Forms of employment

Figure 2: Sectors in which the scholars are employed

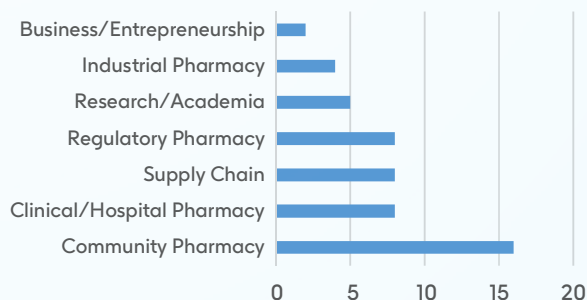




Specific areas of pharmacy practice

Figure 3 shows the major practice areas of the scholars. The “others” were: operating businesses (e.g. mini supermarkets) and supervising the supply of radiation, laboratory and cancer equipment and consumables to the MoH in regional referral hospitals in Uganda.

Figure 3: Pharmacy practice areas by the scholars



Major career achievements since graduation

Pursuit of further studies

“I am grateful for the foundation the Abacus Scholarship gave me. After my bachelor’s degree of pharmacy, I got a job with Ministry of Health (Bududa Hospital in 2017). In 2019, I attained a postgraduate diploma in global health procurement and supply chain, and in 2022, I graduated with a master’s degree of pharmacy in clinical pharmacy.”

“I have progressed to study an MBA and an MSc. Microbiology.”

“I have upgraded to get a master’s degree in Pharmaceuticals and Health Supplies Management.”

“I work with Mulago Specialized Women and Neonatal Hospital, Hefra Pharmacy as a Pharmacist. I have also been approved by the Ugandan government to



do a master's degree in Radiopharmacy funded by the International Atomic Energy Agency in Safako Makgoth Health Sciences University, Pretoria, South Africa next year."

"I have pursued a postgraduate diploma in clinical pharmacy and a master's in business administration."

"I am currently pursuing a master's degree in Public Health at Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH)."

"I am currently working with CiplaQCi as a Production Officer, currently pursuing a master's degree in Supply Chain Management from UMI."

Impactful service provision

"I started working as a Regulatory Pharmacist for Aiveen Uganda Limited from 9th January 2020 till 31st December 2022 during which I handled all pharmacovigilance, dossier review and submissions, submissions of variations, GMP application submissions, self-inspection, and staff trainings. I also headed a team of 5 Pharmacists during my tenure with

Aiveen. Currently I work with Regal Pharma Uganda Limited as their Regulatory Pharmacist still doing the same roles I was doing at Aiveen."

"I have successfully registered and helped to start up a wholesale pharmacy as the technical personnel."

"I have been consulting for over 5 local and global companies on QA, QMS and PV."

"Since graduation I have worked with Management Sciences for Health to strengthen health supply chain systems in Uganda. Majorly doing capacity building for Local government leaders in districts to improve governance for supply chain commodity management and health facility leaders and technical staff to enhance digitization of health commodity supply chain for data visibility at national level."

"I have gained a lot of experience as a clinical trial pharmacist and also done a lot of mentorship for pharmacist interns."

"I have successfully coordinated ART-Pharmacy related roles in Bunyoro region in the period 2015-2020."

"Worked with different organizations ranging from hospitals, NGOs and UN agencies. Also lecturing at Makerere University. Attained a MSc. Pharmaceuticals and Health Supplies Management. Pursuing a professional qualification CIPS at UMI."

Setting up successful business ventures

"I successfully participated in the winning and now servicing the following tenders with government of Uganda."

1. Procurement of a PET center and assorted oncology equipment at UCI.
2. Supply, delivery, installation, commissioning and maintenance of Computed Topography (CT) scanners and MRI scanner.

3. Supply, installation, testing, user training and commissioning of assorted medical equipment for UPDF National Referral Hospital: Lot 2 (Diagnostic equipment, Radiology, imaging and laboratory).
4. Licensing and supervision of two community pharmacies. retail and wholesale.

"I have been able to appreciate the different fields a pharmacist can explore. I have also been able to establish my own pharmacy related business."

"I started up wholesale pharmacy business to serve my community, worked for national Drug Authority to evaluate drug applications for marketing authorization, attained WHO training on prequalification of drugs, attained a masters in Biotechnology Innovations and Regulatory Science from Purdue University, currently pursuing a PhD."

"I own a company manufacturing a range of cosmetic products with a goal of manufacturing pharmaceuticals in the future."

"I have gained solicited money with my three colleagues and we have now set up a community pharmacy to provide a comprehensive pharmaceutical service to the community."

Acquisition of esoteric technical experience

"I have greatly advanced in my pharmacy practice and currently head the department of pharmacy at the institution for which I work."

"I have gained great knowledge concerning clinical research regulation."

"I pride in practical QA related knowledge and activities."

"Assignment of function of Regional Manager."

"I have obtained good clinical skills and this has enabled me to identify and manage common clinical conditions in the community. With this I hope to do masters in clinical pharmacy."

"I have not yet graduated but apparently I am working with First Pharmacy as a dispenser. I started working with this pharmacy when I was still in my 3rd year at the university. It has greatly helped to pay fees for my little brother who just completed S.6 (Advanced Level) & the little sibling who is currently in P7. I have also managed to buy medicines for my diabetic and hypertensive mother who lives in the village. While at campus, I set up a small company which I named Kim Drugs and Medical Supplies dealing mainly in supplying lab equipment to my fellow medical students including lab coats, stethoscopes, scrubs and amongst others. Apparently I am the leading supplier of these equipment in Makerere University not only at the College of Health Sciences but also at other colleges e.g. COVAB, CEDAT. Unfortunately, I have not yet registered this company but I have started to process my paper work to have it registered. Now that I have finished my course, I am planning to start up a small drug shop in my home district of Kalungu, hopefully by the beginning of next year, God willing. I intend to be a self-employed Pharmacist with several branches of my dream community pharmacy chain (KIM Pharmacy). All this after God, I wouldn't acquire if it wasn't this SCHOLARSHIP. I am so grateful to Abacus Pharma Ltd."

"I am a Production Officer at CIPLA Quality Chemical Industries Ltd."

"I have been able to curve out in private practice."

Training for capacity building

"I have trained and mentored Pharmacy Technicians and Junior Pharmacists."

Research publications

"I was a co-author in publication of an article in a peer review journal."

Increased drug access

"I have contributed towards improved medicines and health supplies management at my workplace."

Professional membership with PSU

"I have achieved membership of PSU."

"I graduated from Makerere University in 2016 and completed my internship training in 2016. I then became a member of PSU in 2017 and started to practice pharmacy in Uganda the same year as a community pharmacist the same role I continue to play to date. Still in 2017 worked with Wide Spectrum as a medical representative for 3 months. In June 2017, I joined Management Sciences for Health as a Supply Chain Intern and left the organization in February 2018. In March 2018, I joined public service to work as a hospital Pharmacist at Entebbe RRH the position I still hold to date. In 2019, I was admitted at the University of Rwanda to pursue a Master's degree in Health Supply Chain Management, unfortunately Covid affected our progress but we finished defending our research and now awaiting graduation. In 2022, I graduated from Makerere University, Health Tutors' College Mulago with a post-graduate Diploma in Medical Education."

Internship completion

"I have completed the mandatory one-year internship programme and applied to PSU for membership."

"Just finished internship."

Relevance of the programme

All the participants responded that the relevance of the study programme to market needs was very high, N = 33 (94.3%) or high, N = 2 (5.7%).

Level of career satisfaction

Table 5: Level of scholars' career satisfaction

Value	N	%
Very High	20	57.1
High	12	34.3
Somewhat	2	5.7
Limited	1	2.9

Relevance of qualification to the community

All the participants responded that the relevance of the study programme to market needs was very high, N = 25 (71.4%) or high, N = 10 (28.6%).

Skills acquired during the programme

These were assessed based on the skillsets required of a nine-star Pharmacist, listed below:

1. Ability to effectively communicate health information to patients as well as serving as a link between the prescriber and patient.
2. Ability to willingly take up leadership roles for the overall benefit of the patient and community and demonstrate compassion and empathy while in these roles.

Ability to effectively and creatively manage resources and information to optimize patient care and I also feel comfortable delegating duties and being managed by others.

1. Having a sense of unity and being comfortable working with my colleagues both in the profession and outside for the overall benefit of the patient.
2. Drug expertise with ability to provide high quality pharmaceutical services to patients as well as the community through education, information

and recommendations concerning medicines and their use.

3. Ability to think analytically, clearly, and critically while solving problems and making decisions during daily practice and while conducting research.
4. Ability to assist with education and training of future generation of pharmacists with an aim of passing on new knowledge and fine-tuning skills
5. Commitment to advancing one's knowledge and skills as a pharmacy professional and continuously put in effort to update oneself on the current advances in health and medicines
6. Ability to enhance patient care by creating new outcome improvement paradigms, innovate new pharmacy business solutions that enhance the patient's experience and strengthen business community pharmacy.

The results are presented in Figure 4

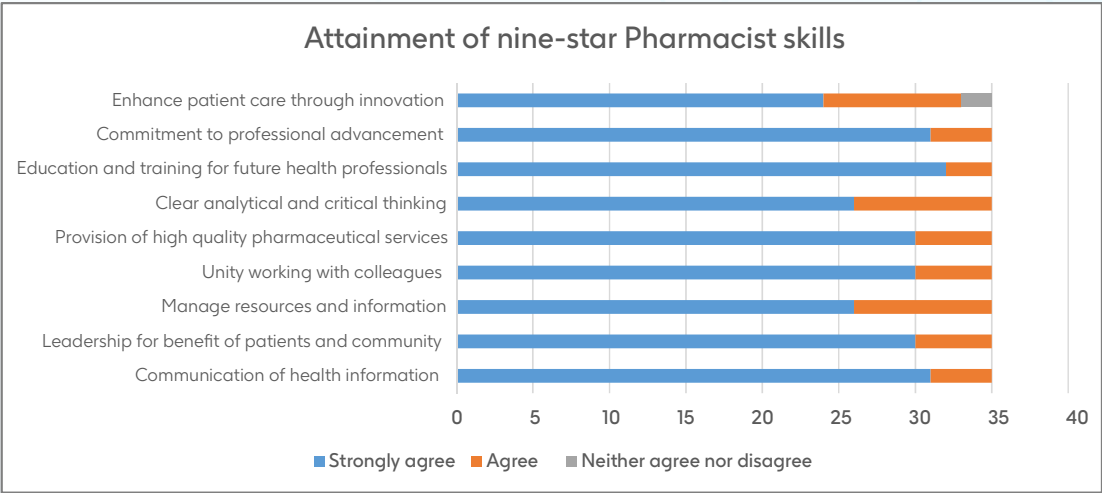
Service in underserved communities and health facilities

All beneficiaries of the PSU-Abacus scholarship, upon completion of internship training, pre-registration exams and registration as a pharmacist, are expected to serve in an underserved facility or area as determined by PSU for two years with pay as any other professional. The study revealed that only 62.9% (n=22) had done this, while 37.1.0% (n=13) had not done so. The latter were unable to serve in disadvantaged communities for the following reasons (Table 6):

Table 6: Level of scholars' career satisfaction

Reason	N	%
I knew, but I did not receive any communication from PSU after my registration	9	69.2
I did not know about this	3	23.1
I did not see any of my colleagues comply	1	7.7

Figure 4: Scholars' attainment of 9-Star Pharmacist skills





Scope of scholars' services in disadvantaged and underserved communities

From the analysis of the contributions made by the scholars to underserved communities and healthcare facilities since graduation, 10 themes emerged: quality health service delivery, training for health care capacity building, improving drug access, professional commitment in service delivery, professional mentorship and advice, financial contribution for needy patients, innovations for better healthcare, small business enterprise development, being a role model, leadership and supervision.

The details are as follows:

Quality health service delivery

"I worked with Kiboga hospital for a period of fourteen months under a survey programme.

"I was able to seek and get an opportunity to serve in a hard to reach district hospital as the first hospital pharmacist since the setup of that general hospital that has existed for over 70 years."

"I have been serving in Lyantonde district for now almost a year (since registration)."

"Working in a community pharmacy in Kakumiro for one year."

"I supervised a pharmacy in Mbale district, and then Adjumani district between 2018 and 2019, both districts being upcountry stations that are normally underserved by pharmacists and pharmacies."

"I went to Bukomansimbi district, Kibinge subcounty, Misanvu village where I come from and we took there a free medical camp which my village mates appreciated. If God wishes I have hope of doing another."

"I provided Pharmacy related health services in Kamuli district."

"I resigned my role as a Supply Chain Officer at Management Sciences for Health and enrolled for Public Service at Entebbe Hospital as a Hospital Pharmacist. This hospital had taken more than 6 years without a pharmacist and so the community it serves was really underserved. I have been serving in this organization from 2018 to date as a hospital pharmacist."

"I have participated in better management of patients by providing relevant information to the prescribers regarding medication dosing, drug interactions and also medication related errors. This has led to better treatment outcomes for the patients and reduced length of hospital stay."

"I have been able to provide pharmaceutical care services with humility and respect regardless of the social status both in Bududa and Mbarara."

“I have provided quality pharmaceutical services to the community and thus improved the health of the community.”

“I provided employment to the people in the area and offered free treatment for some community members. I also facilitated the establishment of some new drug shops for some members.”

“I have given free opportunities for eye surgery to underprivileged patients. I have helped in the acquisition of free leg prosthetics to some of our clients. I have held awareness campaigns for cancer and other diseases that has saved a good number of clients. I have put up chronic disease prevention, diagnosis and treatment programmes. We have done massive blood donation drives.”

“I brought services nearer to the people working in the pharmacy as a dispensing pharmacist.”

“When I joined the hospital, service delivery to clients greatly improved including; health commodity availability, reduced wastages of health commodities and enhanced pharmaceutical care given to clients.”

Training for healthcare capacity building

“I am working with Kyotera District local government. It's a rural district where professionals including Pharmacists wouldn't wish to work but I have trained other health workers to provide better pharmaceutical care especially to HIV clients and also as a district medicines management supervisor I have ensured that there's better utilization of the life savings medicines we get from NMS. As a District Drug Inspector, I have tried to ensure that the private sector also provides good quality efficacious medicines to both humans and animals.”

“I have served in health facilities in 26 districts in central region to Train health workers in using software to manage inventory and dispense medicines to



patients which reduces on stock outs and improves medicines. Trained health workers in reporting for health commodities in order to avail data for decision making and improving medicines availability.”

“During Covid-19, I participated in the training of the community about the proper ways of managing Covid-19, how to implement the SOPs and also testing in my home village Nabutongwa-Kalungu.”

“I helped [the facility] for a short period of time to build capacity in inventory management for the period I was able to be there without pay.”

Improving drug access

“I was the Supervising Pharmacist for Super Medic Limited Arua branch for both wholesale and retail Pharmacy from 2020 till 2022. During this period, we supplied medicines to drug shops in rural areas within the West Nile region.”

“I opened a pharmacy in Bugiri district providing medical supplies to drug shops, clinics, the main hospital, and the general community for 4 years.”



"I have enhanced access to life-saving medicines to patients in Mid-Western and West-Nile regions in Uganda."

"By supplying quality medicines and delivering medical information to the rural drug shops as well as drug shops in town, I have served them in my capacity as a rural pharmacist."

"Through ensuring the availability of safe and quality drugs which are affordable and cost-effective."

"I have been working closely with Ministry of Health and District Health Teams in enhancing medicines access among the supported districts. In my opinion I feel that I have not yet contributed to my expectation but I hope to do so in the near future if God wishes. AMEN."

"While in Kiboga, I took it upon myself to ensure that the pharmacy team had CMEs every Tuesday. This enhanced the knowledge of the staff hence serving patients better."

"Many members from these slams who have been found positive have been encouraged to start on their medications. I also conduct education on hygiene."

"Most of the health facilities are able to report on their stock status. More than 50% of the health facilities inventory managers are able to manage their inventory and track expires in time."

"A remarkable improvement in the ability of the staff to manage inventory."

Professional commitment in service delivery

"I have managed to provide service to the patients of Mbarara RRH amidst the scarcity of interns and this has enabled the pharmacy to keep operating."

"I wished to volunteer in an underserved government facility but all in vain. But I managed to volunteer at PSU research and production unit. Then I have volunteered at Sean Perry foundation for 3 years whose activities are in slams around Kampala to link them and advise them on getting tested before use of medicines and taking medicines as required."

"I lobbied for the formation of internship committee in the Pharmaceutical Society of Uganda. I trained pharmacy interns for 4 years. I was the secretary to that committee for 4 years. I participated in the formation of the curriculum for training of pharmacy interns in Uganda. I opened up pharmacies in underserved areas where am serving under privileged people to date."

"I introduced in-patient Pharmacy at Kalisizo Hospital. This gives an opportunity to the few Pharmacy staff to directly deal with clients. Revitalization of the medicines therapeutic committee is also in process."

Professional mentorship and advice

"I was able to convince one of my colleagues to start up a pharmacy outlet in Kakuuto-Kyotera district in June 2020, thus serving the needs of a remote community."

"I lead reviews and submissions of dossiers, variations, GMP applications."

"I provide guidance on NDA regulatory matters. 4. Supervision of professional staff work. 5. Pharmacovigilance of drugs we import."

Financial contributions for needy patients

"I have been able to contribute to the Poor Patient Fund scheme in Mbarara regional referral hospital from 2019 to 2022."

Innovations for better healthcare

"I have created a strong inventory management system for the hospital equipment by having a regularly updated register of the equipment. I have led the point prevalence surveys on antibiotic use that was implemented by IDI, made presentations to the antimicrobial stewardship subcommittee of the hospital MTC. I have supported the dialysis unit in mobilizing for the dialysis consumables from Kiruddu NRH. I have trained third year pharmacy students from both MUK and MUST during their hospital attachments. I have also trained the certificate and diploma students of pharmacy attached to the hospital."

"I was able to set up new systems for drug management especially drug accountabilities at the various user points like the in-patient wards."

Small business enterprise development

"I have been in position to assist individuals on procedures of setting up fully licensed drug shops. Additionally, I managed social media platforms of my work environment where I responded to questions from the community about drug use, reporting of adverse drug reactions and other health concerns. I am convinced beyond reasonable doubt that many people benefited from this."

Being a role model

"I occasionally go to the schools where I studied from and advise the little ones on how to succeed in life and keep up with books. They always take me as an

example since I am the only Dr. from the village & also the only one to have studied at Makerere University College of Health Sciences."

Leadership and supervision

"Being a part of leadership and making decisions that impact the facility positively."

"I conduct staff education and guidance on regulatory matters."

"I take lead in coordinating the regular CME programme for the hospital."

"As a pharmacist, I am ensuring that GMP is followed."

"Professional supervision of activities and services in all the hospitals and regions that we are working with."

"I am providing oversight leadership support in medicines management."

"I am making sure that cGMP is strongly followed and adhered to during the manufacture of drugs."

Scholar's impact at the workplace and in the communities

Health promotion through patient education

"Educating the community on side effects and adverse effects of the drugs they take."

"We have fought some drug related issues like self-medication, irrational drug use and drug abuse so we have also advised people to seek health information from our pharmacy."

"Ensure rational medicine use by sensitizing the communities, ensure medicines communities access are safe and effective."

"Promoting health."

"Improved patient care and awareness of use and handling of medicines."

Increased availability and access to essential drugs

"I have improved medicine access and availability."

"People are accessing medicines at favourable cost and getting great services."

"I have the responsibility of ensuring that quality health commodities are adequately available in the hospital, they are properly stored according to the manufacturers' recommendations and appropriately used. Health commodity availability and appropriate usage has greatly improved at the facility. It was possible to achieve this through formation of Medicines and Therapeutic Committee at the hospital, compiling regular reports and taking on leadership roles at the hospital e.g. board member of the hospital and secretary contracts committee."

Building capacity for healthcare

"I am offering capacity building in the above mentioned region."

"I train and advise other medical workers with drug related issues, I have improved on the performance and sales of the community pharmacy even attracting the attention of Infectious disease institute to provide ARVs and patient counselling to HIV patients."

"Training pharmacy students as a volunteer at Makerere University."

"I am applying the knowledge and skills I have acquired to contribute to the improvement of the health supply chain through imparting knowledge to new pharmacists that are interested in supply chain, working with different stakeholders within the health supply chain space, in order to ensure the timely availability of safe and quality health commodities to the community."

Pharmaceutical care with quality and safer drugs

"I have participated in fighting disease and saving lives in the communities where my pharmacies are operating."

"Apparently I am offering health services to the community where I live since I go and dispense in the evenings but of course with a pay. I also participated in several Medical camps like in Kulambiro Health Center IV, Kamwokya one of the suburbs of Kampala, Kabwohe health centre IV in Western Uganda. I also recently participated in the antimicrobial resistance (AMR) campaign which was organised by PSU during the World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (WAAW) early this year. However, like the saying goes, East and West, home..., I still have to offer a lifetime service to my home village. The first one is the drug shop I am intending to start at the beginning of next year. Inshaa-Allah."

"Enhanced pharmaceutical care."

"I am currently providing pharmaceutical care services to the people of Bududa and more so in the NCD clinic of Bududa hospital."

"Ensuring that I do diligently my duties so that at the end of the day, I contribute to the mandate of ensuring that the people of Uganda receive safe, effective medicines and vaccines."

"Implementing QA, QMS systems to maintain quality of products in the wholesale pharmacy."

"I am also providing pharmaceutical care to my community where I am serving. I am also sponsoring other children to study who are not even related to me."

“Being competent in providing good pharmaceutical care enables the facility to provide good pharmaceutical care services to the community.”

Industrial service

“Ensuring the manufacture and importation of quality medicines, and their proper handling and distribution. I am currently involved in increasing awareness and building capacity with regards to proper handling and distribution of pharmaceuticals to ensure their quality is maintained in the supply chain. This I have done by qualification of warehouses and transportation systems for pharmaceutical products.”

Mentorship of young healthcare professionals

“I have continued the role of mentorship for the team I work with and the interns placed under my care. I have also participated in the quality improvement plan where I have written a proposal and won an early career grant for this proposal.”

“Promoting rational drug use and mentoring other healthcare professionals.”

Increased compliance to drug regulation

“I have made sure all the regulation guidelines are followed, quality drugs from licensed suppliers are sold, qualified auxiliary staffs are being used.”

Creation of employment opportunities

“I currently provide employment to 20 members of my community. We are soon launching free vaccination services to children and free medical check-ups.”



“I manufacture cosmetic products solving some simple ailments in the community, I employ currently two youths.”

Effective management and decision making

“I am involved in management decisions that impact the organization positively in terms of better patient management and satisfaction.”

Infection prevention in clinical care

“I am tasked with ensuring that IPC for the hospital is complied with by ensuring effective quantification of the different coloured bins and that their corresponding bin liners are availed.



Summary of the Findings

The great majority of the PSU-Abacus scholars are in formal employment, mainly in the private sector, particularly community pharmacy practice.

Most of the scholars find the pharmacy program highly relevant to the market demands and in terms of skills obtained from the program, majority reported being able to train future health professionals and communicate health information to patients. Also most of the scholars are satisfied with their career choice.

Majority of the scholars pointed out pursuing further studies, particularly a master's degree, and their ability to impact communities they serve through specialized service provision as their major career achievements.

The most outstanding services provided in the disadvantaged communities were quality healthcare, capacity building, and improving drug access to patients in those areas. Scholars also pointed out improving the areas they currently serve through health promotion, leadership, providing skilled labour in hospitals and industries, creating employment opportunities, improving drug supply and its regulation among others.

Evidently, the primary objective of the scholarship was achieved in that more than half of the scholars (69.2%) are serving or have ever served in a disadvantaged community and continue to positively impact lives within these communities.

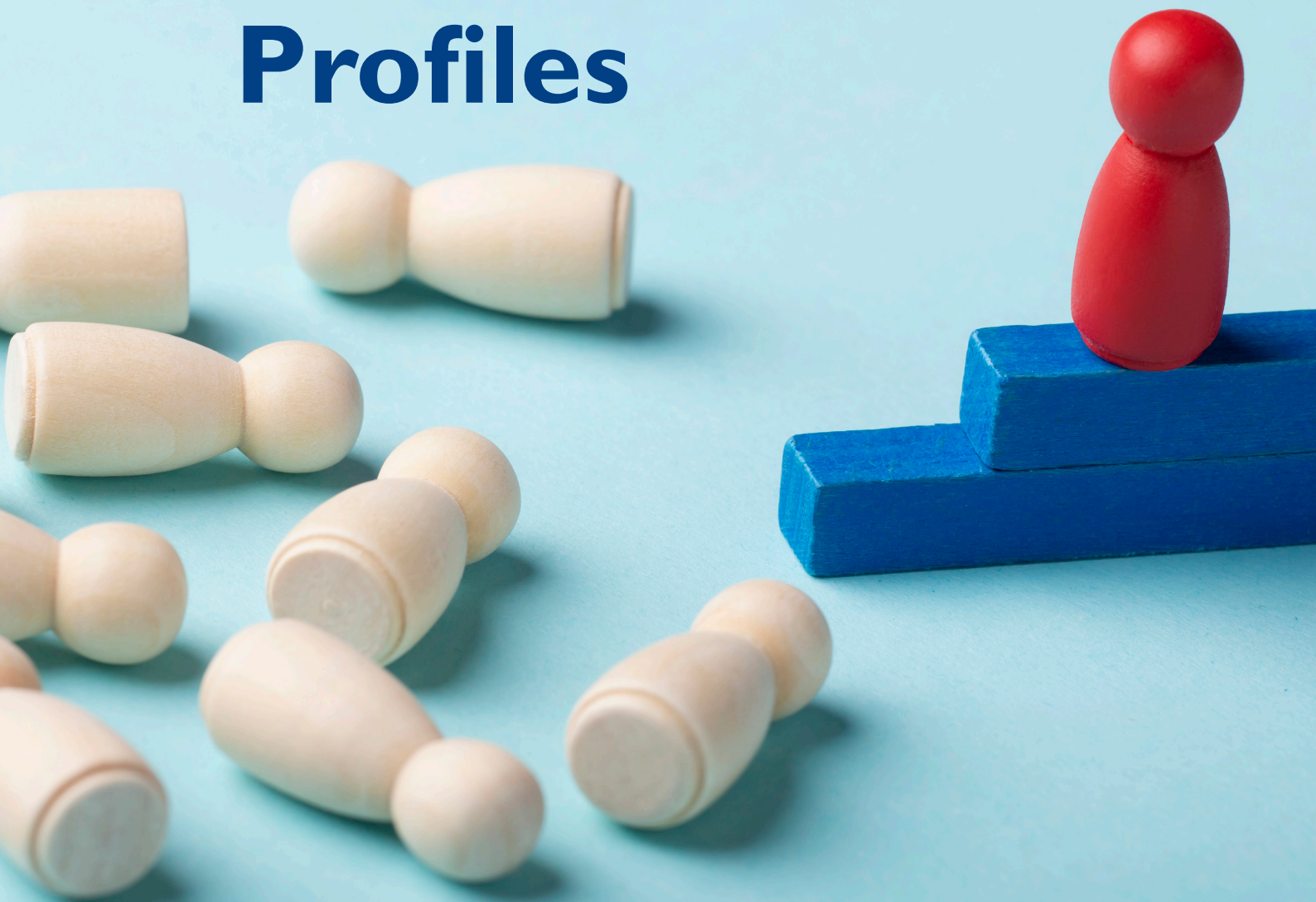


Recommendations

Based on these findings, the following recommendations can be made:

- 1** The scholarship programme should be sustained and possibly expanded to cover postgraduate training. Select specialized areas with limited specialists such as industrial pharmacy-related disciplines and emerging areas of interest such as data science and artificial intelligence can be prioritized.
- 2** There is need for formal engagement of the alumni by forming a forum through which to consolidate the gains made so far and ensure effective tracking of their impacts in the communities.
- 3** There is need for increased monitoring of the scholars during campus, internship and post-registration to ensure adequate academic and on-job performance, and to remind them of their responsibilities as PSU-Abacus scholars.
- 4** The posting of the scholars to their areas of practice post-registration should be consistent and incentives should be institute to encourage innovativeness and creativity in the workplace.

Selected Scholar Profiles





Dr. Merab Babirye, PSU- Abacus Scholar, MUST, 2012-2015

My name is Dr. Merab Babirye, born and raised in Masindi district. A fifth born amongst seven siblings, I attained my primary leaving education from Asaba primary school, Masindi. For my O' level, I went to Katikamu Secondary School, Luweero and in A' level, I joined Makerere College School, Kampala. In 2015, I graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Pharmacy from Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST). Additionally, I have a Postgraduate Diploma in Global Health Procurement and Supply Chain Management, and a Master's degree of Pharmacy in Clinical Pharmacy from MUST. Currently, I am working with Bududa hospital as the Pharmacist.

Inspiration to be a Pharmacist

Growing up in a hospital setting helped me develop the passion for medicine and this inspired me to pursue a career in pharmacy in order to make an impact in patient care.

Early expectations

At the beginning of the pharmacy journey, I had many expectations such as translating basic science knowledge into clinical applications, providing pharmaceutical care services and having a lucrative career. Am so glad that my expectations are being met.

First impression of PSU

I learnt about the Pharmaceutical Society of Uganda in 2010 when I had just joined Mbarara University of Science and Technology through a notice that had been pinned at one of the notice boards.

First impression of Abacus

I can't really recall the time when I heard about Abacus, however for years I would see their sign post around Kiboko Enterprises, Nakawa, Kampala.

PSU-Abacus Scholarship

In 2010, I learnt of the PSU-Abacus scholarship scheme through reading a notice that was pinned at one of the notice boards at the University.

Application process

I would honestly say that the application process for the scholarship was free and fair. I had to pick the application forms and filled them as required, then later submitted them to PSU Offices, then in Wandegaya. After a while, I was called for an interview which excited me because I knew I was going to give it my very best. The ultimate excitement came in 2011 when I was awarded the scholarship.

Scholarship experience

During the scholarship time period, all my expectations were exceedingly met. The tuition was being paid on an annual basis and the accommodation fees were paid on time. This gave me room to concentrate and focus on my studies. Additionally, we would occasionally meet the CEO of Abacus who shared some words of wisdom with us.

Typical work day

Working in a hospital as a pharmacist is a rewarding experience that both challenges your scientific knowledge of medicine and allows you offer patient care on a daily basis. My day as a pharmacist involves attending ward rounds with a multidisciplinary team of health workers, evaluating appropriateness and effectiveness of patient's drug therapy, medication reconciliation, keeping track of medication inventory and advising patients on how to best take their medications.

Career passion

I am passionate about direct patient care and I have found attending ward rounds more rewarding. Seeing your patients come from their worst nightmare, and getting healthier and happier is a more fulfilling experience. This usually reassures me that medicines are the very hands of God if used appropriately. Additionally, this has helped me advocate for rationale drug use.

Career challenges

Even though I generally enjoy my work, working with patients that don't want to cooperate becomes emotionally draining. However, I am reminded that when I am having pain, either physical or emotional, I am not always pleasant either. This helps me to focus on being kind and improving their stay instead of being irritated.

Scholarship significance

The scholarship helped me attain one of my greatest dreams of becoming a Pharmacist and it has put me on a path of greatness. I am currently employed and I have attained a Master's degree of Pharmacy in Clinical Pharmacy.

Engaging scholars

Beneficiaries of the PSU-Abacus scholarship scheme can be mobilised to form a group/association with a goal of contributing a certain fee either monthly/quarterly/bi-annually to support needy pharmacy students.

Advice to future pharmacists

I would advise someone who wants to start a career in pharmacy to do so as soon as possible because pharmacy is a diverse and rewarding career, with opportunities for patient care, scientific research and innovation.

In not more than 5 words, if you got a chance to meet the CEO of Abacus or President of PSU, what would you tell them?

Thank you, God bless you.

Even though I generally enjoy my work, working with patients that don't want to cooperate becomes emotionally draining. However, I am reminded that when I am having pain, either physical or emotional, I am not always pleasant either. This helps me to focus on being kind and improving their stay instead of being irritated.

Dr. Gonsha Rehema, PSU- Abacus Scholar, Makerere University, 2011-2012



Dr. Gonsha Rehema is a Ugandan pharmacist and proprietor of Extra Care pharmacies. I was born and raised in Busia boarder town in Eastern Uganda. I started off my education journey at 2way primary school before enrolling at Nabumali High school in Mbale district for my O' levels and Kawempe Muslim SSS in Kampala district for my A' levels. Thereafter, I pursued a Bachelor of Pharmacy at Makerere University and a Postgraduate in Clinical Pharmacy at Wilkes University in Pennsylvania, USA. When I returned, I did a Master's in Business Administration at Uganda Management Institute (UMI). I currently practice community pharmacy with Extra Care pharmacies, at all its five branches spread across Kampala and Wakiso districts. I also serve as the Director, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and company pharmacist.

Inspiration

As mentioned above, I grew up from Busia but during that time, the entire district did not have a pharmacy. Health care was also in a dire state. This pushed residents to cross the border to Kenya to buy drugs and seek medical treatment as well. Surprisingly, Kenyan pharmacies were always fully stocked with drugs and neat in appearance as well. They piqued my attention over the years. Whenever I visited, I would spend hours gazing at the shelves all the while cramming the different drug names and brands. I am certain, that is how I got the passion for pharmacy. More to that, I also admired the doctors for being smart and clean in white coats. Besides, their medical interventions and the way they seemed to interpret every medical condition baffled me.

Early expectations

I had high but realistic expectations though not as broad and elaborate as they are today. It is obvious that I did not have the exposure I have today, so, I just dreamt and hoped perhaps, in abstract. For example, I expected to join a clinical medical facility after graduation. I envisioned treating, contributing to fighting diseases or healing patients. It never crossed my mind that I would become an investor in the sector instead. However, looking back, I have managed to achieve my aspirations with Extra Care Pharmacy because we are focusing on reviving clients' health to help them live longer. I also never imagined my business would grow into a large company that currently has five branches. I honestly state that I have achieved great milestones in this sector but I still hope for an opportunity to practice at a high clinical level.

First impression of PSU

I first heard about PSU during my first year at Makerere University. I remember, one day, on my way to the lecture room, I passed by the notice board and saw a scholarship announcement. I followed it up to PSU offices and applied.

First impression of Abacus

When I went to apply for the scholarship at PSU, the documents they gave me to fill had a sponsor named Abacus Pharma. To be honest, that was the first time I heard about the company. We later had an informative meeting with the Director.

PSU-Abacus scholarship

I had gone to attend a lecture at the pharmacy department in Mulago when I decided to pass by the notice board. I was excited to see a scholarship offer

being advertised. I immediately went for it because it was an excellent opportunity for me given the fact that I had been struggling to pay my tuition.



Words cannot express the joy that filled my heart. My family celebrated. I do testify that the process was fair.



Application process

To this day, I still believe the process was convenient and fair. We were given documents to fill from home with our parents. The local council chairperson also had a space to fill. After all was done, we were called for a meeting with our parents. The then PSU Secretary, Dr. Swaibu Mukiibi interviewed us. Later on, I received the life changing news that I had been considered for the scholarship. Words cannot express the joy that filled my heart. My family celebrated. I do testify that the process was fair. I desperately needed that scholarship to complete the course and it was given to me without any bribes.

Scholarship experience

My experience during the scholarship was memorable. The tuition came on time. My accommodation fees at Africa hall of residence were also cleared promptly. I was somewhat better than the students on government scholarship were. I never lacked and this helped me to concentrate

on my studies reason I excelled. In retrospect, I completed my course without being interrupted by tuition arrears.

Typical workday

I wake up at 5:30 am to pray, meditate and read the Bible. From 6:30 am to about 7:30 am, I read medical literature. At 9:00 am, I start assigning and following up on my employees. After, I take breakfast and prepare to go to work. On a typical day, I work in two branches of the pharmacy. I follow a schedule that stipulates where I am supposed to be and the tasks to execute.

Career passion

I feel gratified to attend to clients and provide solutions to their medical challenges. I also enjoy training my staff and seeing them perform their tasks better.

Career challenges

There is a time my staff and clientele grew drastically. I was overwhelmed. However, I refused to fold my hands and look on. Instead, I quickly pursued a master's in business management, which equipped me with managerial skills, which I still use to solve a myriad of challenges. I also got several trainings in that line.

Scholarship significance

This scholarship was life changing. I would not have completed the course if it were not for the tuition and accommodation fees I received promptly throughout my stay at the university.

Engaging scholars

I strongly believe that the former and current beneficiaries should be the first ambassadors of this scholarship. They should feel obliged to represent it well wherever they are. This means that they should have the aims of the scholarship at heart; read and excel and after, serve the targeted communities diligently. They should not front money or material gains but rather save lives. On the other hand, where possible, these beneficiaries should be supported or encouraged to start up pharmacies or drug shops in remote areas. This will help take services closer to the people and employ others as well. They should also be tasked to engage in philanthropy and charity.

Advice to future Pharmacists

Pharmacy is a broad discipline. It offers a variety of career options. So one can easily choose a career in the area of their strength. These include; community pharmacy, regulatory pharmacy, manufacturing, hospital pharmacy and drug discovery. They can also work in research, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and public health among others. I would advise them to apply and choose an area that matches their strength.

In not more than 5 words, if you got a chance to meet the CEO of Abacus or President of PSU, what would you tell them?

I would simply tell them; Thank you and God bless you.

Dr. John Kisembo, PSU- Abacus Scholar, Makerere University, 2014-2018



I am John Kisembo, a B.Pharm graduate from Makerere University, Kampala. I am from the mid-western district of Kibaale. I went to Kabalega secondary school, Masindi district, emerging best UCE candidate in the region (2003) before coming to Old Kampala S. S for my advanced level education. I am so passionate about pharmacy as a discipline that I have pursued every opportunity at my disposable to be the professional I am today!

Inspiration

During my advanced level studies, I came across an article on medical career guidance in one of the daily newspapers that was giving comparison of the various medical disciplines of medicine, pharmacy, laboratory to mention but a few. I was so much fascinated by the immense knowledge and capabilities of pharmacists despite their scarcity in numbers. Up to that time I had never physically met a pharmacist myself let alone heard about one! I therefore resolved from that time that I was to pursue becoming a Pharmacist and

made it clear to my teachers and colleagues at school who started nick-naming me a “Pharmacist John”

Early expectations

Yes, I have had my share of expectations of the pharmacy profession which include aspects like; pharmaceutical compounding, advanced drug research and pharmaceutical bio-technological innovation to mention but a few. Having had a pharmacy background at diploma school - Mulago before enrolling for the graduate programme at Makerere University, I will confidently say some aspects of my expectations like pharmaceutical compounding have been met despite the lack of advanced methods and facilities but at least the core compounding skills were picked up. As for drug research I feel there is still a lot that is lacking for us as pharmacists. The case of Professor Patrick Ogwang and his Covidex innovation and Dr Stephen Lutoti's Elocof are some good projects to borrow a leaf from. Concerning bio-technological innovation in pharmacy; this is still so virgin an area that needs to be approached right from identification of appropriate graduate trainings at local universities in order to build capacity of the pharmacy professionals.

First impression of PSU

I first heard about the Pharmaceutical Society of Uganda (PSU) in 2007 at the Annual MUPSA conference held at Equatorial Hotel where we were attendees from Mulago Paramedical schools. PSU was the main sponsor of the two-day event and most of the facilitators including Dr. Dan Kibuule, our own pharmacology lecturer then, were so fond and passionate about the PSU establishment.

First impression of Abacus

I first heard about Abacus in 2009 after completion of my Diploma studies at Mulago while seeking employment. At first I knew it just as a community retail/wholesale business enterprise which I later learnt had set up a local parenteral drugs' manufacturing facility along Mukono-Jinja highway under trade name of Abacus Parenteral Drugs Limited (APDL).

PSU-Abacus scholarship

I first heard about the PSU-Abacus scholarship scheme in 2012 while a colleague who had left for her undergraduate studies at Mbarara University of Science and Technology was going through the application and selection process. I later got the information for the same scholarship through an advert that was run in 2015 on social media circles when I had just enrolled for the undergraduate programme at Makerere University.

Application process

The application process was a little bit hectic due to the short deadlines and the bureaucracy of having to obtain letters of introduction right from local council chairperson of one's home area. Those of us from far up-country then had to work harder to meet the strict submission deadlines. The interviews were fair enough,

the format being more of a general aptitude test which is not so hard for someone who is abreast with current affairs and has done good preparation for the exam. The scholarship award was somewhat not easy for me. It created great anxiety on my side from the fact that some colleagues with whom we had sat for the interviews were informing me of how they had been contacted for feedback but I had not received any for up to more than two days. The suspense brought immense anxiety until I was overwhelmed and decided to seek for the number that had been used to contact the others I knew and called it for inquiry about my status. What a great relief upon being informed to collect my award letter the next day! I could hardly do anything else that afternoon other than go to the nearby church and give thanks to the Lord for being so kind to me. I had been facing a lot of dilemma on how I was going to get further funding for the course having depleted my savings by paying up tuition for the first 3 semesters at university.

Scholarship experience

The assurance of funding for the course brought great relief and comfort for me during the scholarship period. I now had to concentrate my efforts on working up my grades to be able to complete the course in normal time. Nonetheless, the scholarship award came with a few hardships like always being inconvenienced at examination time for proof of payment of the semester fees since funds were never disbursed in time to the university. Thank God we had a focal person that would always make errands to PSU and the university to secure sponsor letters for assurance that we were under sponsorship and funds would later be processed and credited to the university.

Typical workday

As a hospital pharmacist, my typical workday starts with attending a general assembly and prayers for all facility staff at the administration block. Thereafter I move to the place of work that is in proximity with the

hospital drug store. Here, I will attend to drug orders coming in from the various user units like the wards for verification and approval before being issued by the assistant stores officers. Later in the day, I move to the outpatient dispensing unit to offer support supervision and help out with any work where there might be a gap in pharmaceutical service delivery. On selected days of the week, I find myself attending hospital management meetings, section meetings, coordinating delivery of continuous medical education (CME's) to mention but a few.

Career passion

The aspect of coordination of continuous medical education is what I find most rewarding. I realise that there is a big knowledge gap among service providers from the updated/ current and approved scientific/ medical knowledge in rural health facilities. There are also vast un-tapped research opportunities to try and bridge the knowledge gap.

Career challenges

Getting the mandate to change the norm of drug orders having to go through the pharmacist's approval was most challenging probably due to the fact that the facility had never had a pharmacist thus the core roles of one were not well envisaged then.

“What a great relief upon being informed to collect my award letter the next day! I could hardly do anything else that afternoon other than go to the nearby church and give thanks to the Lord for being so kind to me. I had been facing a lot of dilemma on how I was going to get further funding for the course...”

Scholarship significance

The scholarship was of great impact in enabling me achieve my dream of being the professional I am and practicing the profession, I am so passionate about. After all the hardships encountered in the journey to become a pharmacist, the PSU/ ABACUS scholarship enabled this become a reality.

Engaging scholars

Blessed is the hand that giveth than the one that taketh; the beneficiaries of this scheme should be mobilised to contribute to some funds to the pool to enable gradual expansion of the scheme to sponsor more students amidst increasing numbers. The beneficiaries can also help identify underserved and disadvantaged areas where the graduates could serve upon completion of their studies and full registration. However, they should also be empowered and encouraged to specialise and take on better roles in the pharmacy sector to enable progress and advancement of the profession.

Advice to future Pharmacists

It is a great choice and turning point in life to choose to become a pharmacist. However, graduates by virtue of their selection should be aggressive and look out for meaningful occupation where they can challenge their minds with the immense skills and knowledge obtained from school so as to contribute to national development rather than fall back into their comfort zone and enjoy the petty monies that easily come with being a registered pharmacist thus putting the '*crème de la crème*' to waste.

In not more than 5 words, if you got a chance to meet the CEO of Abacus or President of PSU, what would you tell them?

Thank you, sponsor more pharmacists.

Dr. Prossy Nakiwunga, PSU Abacus Scholar, Makerere University, 2015 - 2019



Dr. Prossy Nakiwunga is a registered pharmacist in Uganda. She earned a Bachelor of Pharmacy degree from Makerere University and has since helped to better the lives of Ugandans in south central Uganda by managing medications, making them more accessible, and contributing to digitising the country's pharmaceutical supply chain management system. Dr. Nakiwunga, from a humble background raised in Kasubi and born in the Sembabule district, is committed to expanding the pharmaceutical industry in Uganda. She is willing to advance her education to have a greater impact in the pharmaceutical field.

Inspiration

Growing up I used to see my mother use herbs to treat family members because of the constrained resources. This instilled in me a caring desire and I knew that pharmacy would enable me to continue touching those around me, improving their health through medicine; hence, pursuing a career in pharmacy. After finishing my Advanced level, I went back to school for a pharmacy diploma. To increase my abilities and the quality of the services I provided, I understood that I would need to

pursue higher education. Since pharmacy is a noble career, it perfectly complemented my desire to improve the lives of others. This would enable me to contribute to patient outcomes directly and indirectly.

Early expectations

Yes, I did have some expectations for my decision to pursue a profession in pharmacy when I first started out. My aspirations were centred on the chance to improve the lives of patients, contribute to Uganda's healthcare system, and continue to develop my professional knowledge and abilities. I also anticipated that working in a pharmacy would eventually bring stability and employment security. I'd say that overall; my expectations have been mostly met. I've had the honour of caring for patients and seeing first-hand the beneficial effects that pharmaceutical treatment has on their well-being. Through my work, I've been able to support the healthcare system and have had chances for professional growth and lifelong learning. I've had stability in pharmacy in terms of job possibilities and professional development. Despite some obstacles along the way, my work in pharmacy has been satisfying

and valuable thanks to the achievement of these aspirations. Yes, despite the fact that it is still work in progress, my expectations have been met.

First impression of PSU

Before joining university through friends.

First impression of Abacus

I knew about Abacus through friends who used to invite me for workshops and pharmaceutical medicine launches

PSU-Abacus scholarship

I was looking for sponsorship in my first year in medical school when a friend of mine told me about the PSU-Abacus scholarship scheme. I looked it up and applied.

Application process

The application process was very conducive and fair. I liked it. I just put my application, provided the required documentation and was invited for written interview. Later, I was awarded the scholarship.

Growing up I used to see my mother use herbs to treat family members because of the constrained resources. This instilled in me a caring desire and I knew that pharmacy would enable me to continue touching those around me, improving their health through medicine

Scholarship experience

My expectations were met during the scholarship as the burden of paying tuition was lifted and this allowed me to concentrate on my education gladly. I can't take this for granted.

Typical workday

My typical day included a variety of tasks such as visiting medicine stores to ensure proper organization and inventory management, updating stock cards and inventory records, reviewing and processing issue vouchers and requisition vouchers, organizing medicines on shelves, conducting training sessions for colleagues to enhance their skills in using electronic systems for logistics and pharmaceutical management, and assisting with data visibility and decision-making. Each day presented new challenges and opportunities to improve the pharmaceutical systems and provide better healthcare services to the underserved community in south central Uganda.

Career passion

Training more than 100 colleagues and seeing them managing their medicines stores more efficiently and using data for decision-making for the facilities was rewarding. Transferring technological skills to colleagues. That meant more Ugandans receiving an excellent pharmaceutical service, hence improving their lives.

Career challenges

Working in underserved communities and health facilities taught me the challenges of limited resources and outdated systems. I had to find innovative solutions and collaborate with others to acquire necessary supplies. I improved my skills in managing limited resources through training programmes and

technology. Adaptability, creativity, and collaboration were essential in overcoming challenges in underserved settings. I advocate for improved infrastructure and resources to provide better healthcare services to underserved communities.

Scholarship significance

Receiving the scholarship was a pivotal moment for me. It enabled me to pursue a degree in pharmacy without the burden of tuition fees. This opportunity has opened doors for me in terms of education and professional growth and has greatly influenced my career path. It has ultimately helped me achieve my personal and career aspirations, providing me with financial assistance, educational opportunities, and a solid foundation for success. I am genuinely appreciative of the opportunities it afforded me.

Engaging the scholars

Former scholarship recipients can be valuable resources for the scholarship programme. They can serve as mentors, organizers, and advocates to support current and future scholarship holders. Creating a network or alumni association can foster connections and knowledge sharing. Contribute to the pharmacy profession through research and professional contributions. Overall, leveraging their experiences and skills can help ensure the continued success of the programme.

Advice to future Pharmacists

Take the first step, Research the field, meet educational requirements, and seek guidance from professionals. Gain practical experience, stay updated with technological advancements, and develop communication skills. Uphold



professionalism and ethics, consider specialization, and build a strong network. Pharmacy offers diverse career options, stay passionate and committed to lifelong learning. Pharmacy is a rewarding career with too many branches that you cannot fail to get a direction to whether you want to work in a hospital, community, Industry, management, Supply chain, it is a big cake.

In not more than 5 words, if you got a chance to meet the CEO of Abacus or President of PSU, what would you tell them?

Profound gratitude for a life-changing opportunity.

Dr. Moses Walijjo, PSU Abacus Scholar, Makerere University, 2015 - 2019



Dr. Moses Walijjo is a registered Pharmacist working with Kalisizo Hospital, Kyotera District Local Government. He is also the District Medicines Management Supervisor as well as District Drugs Inspector for Kyotera District. He holds a Bachelor of Pharmacy degree from Makerere University. He is currently pursuing a Master of Public Health at Makerere University and a Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS). However, all these would not have been possible had it not been for the PSU-Abacus scholarship I secured at my undergraduate pharmacy programme.

Inspiration

Rakai and Kyotera districts being two of the most affected with HIV/AIDS in which patients were subjected to a cocktail of medicines for life, this inspired me to pursue a career in pharmacy so as to serve the underserved rural communities since most of the pharmacy professionals were concentrated in urban areas.

Early expectations

Yes, I did have expectations. To provide health workers in my community with knowledge on the proper use of medicines. I have achieved this using the positions and responsibilities I do.

First impression of PSU

That was around 2008 while I was pursuing a Diploma in Pharmacy at then Mulago Paramedical Training School.

First impression of Abacus

In 2009 through newspaper as one of the pharmaceutical manufacturers and leading supplier of pharmaceuticals in Uganda.

PSU-Abacus scholarship

In 2014 through a colleague, former DHO-Kalungu District who informed about an advert about the PSU-Abacus Scholarship scheme he had seen in the New Vision a few days back.

Application process

Using a prescribed application form obtained from PSU, it required going to both the home and residence districts for LC One Chairpersons to append their signatures. Somehow tedious especially if the two are different and distant but the truth is it deserves it. On receiving a call from PSU to prepare for the written aptitude exam the following day amidst a tight schedule at medical school. After like a month I received a call from PSU informing me that I had been awarded PSU-Abacus scholarship, this was indeed a great milestone in pursuing my career as a Pharmacist. The application process, interviews and receipt of the award were transparent and free of charge.

Scholarship experience

All the expectations as indicated on the letter of offer were met. The only issue is that sometimes there used to be some bit of delay to clear with the University and at times we could be tossed around especially during exams but later on they could still be cleared.

Typical workday

A typical work day for me includes managing the pharmacy team of 9 people at the hospital as well as handling regulatory and supply chain issues for the district. Normally each of the above roles is handled on specific days unless there are some emergencies. For instance, the hospital was allocated Monday and Thursdays since they are the busiest days. While at the hospital, I oversee all the pharmaceutical services at the pharmacies and the stores. Tuesdays and Wednesdays are for supply chain activities at the district. This involves overseeing supply chain activities in the district with a team of four medicines management supervisors. Friday and Saturday are for regulatory activities. This involves supervision of the drug shops and pharmacies as well as pre-inspecting new drug shops in the district.

Career passion

Hospital pharmacist is most rewarding in terms of privileges and also application of the pharmacy knowledge and skills though it's challenging since there is only one pharmacist working with over 100 health workers who could be having conflicts of interests on the lifesaving commodities hence making it difficult to implement some of the pharmacy practices and policies.

Career challenges

Over decentralisation of medicines dispensing at the facility and this contributed to misuse of the medicines and health supplies. At OPD there were over 5 user points despite the presence of an OPD Pharmacy and in-patient each ward would receive medicines directly from the store. Some of the dispensaries at the OPD were reverted back to OPD pharmacy and in-patient pharmacy was created to provide pharmaceutical care for those in the wards. There are processes in place to create hospital medicines therapeutics committee so as to oversee all pharmaceutical services at the facility.

Scholarship significance

Meeting University tuition alongside other pressing issues at home was an impediment to concentrate on my studies hence PSU-Abacus scholarship was a big relief. Engaging scholars Former beneficiaries would contribute a small fee like on annual basis so as to support needy pharmacy students.

Advice to future Pharmacists

There is no short cut in pharmacy hence hard work is a prerequisite.

In not more than 5 words, if you got a chance to meet the CEO of Abacus or President of PSU, what would you tell them?

It was my turning point.

Dr. Amos Ndaabe, PSU- Abacus Scholar, KIU, 2013- 2017



Who is Dr. Amos Ndaabe?

I was born in 1977, in Kamuli district, Namwendwa sub county, in a family of 33 children. My father had 4 wives. My own mother produced 12 children and I was the 9th child. My father was a retired primary teacher and my mother was a house wife and a peasant. Due to financial problems at home, I decided to join Uganda Martyrs minor seminary due to free education at secondary level. I was there, being sponsored by the catholic priest, during my ordinary and advanced level education. We did not have our own classes in the seminary, we were attached to Jinja college in Jinja district. Lucky enough I scored 16 aggregates in O-Level and 11 points at A-Level in PCB/Sub Maths combination in 1999. These scores could only earn a government scholarship for a diploma in nursing. I however postponed my career dream of being a pharmacist at that time. I became a nurse in 2006. In 2011, while working as nurse in Makerere University on a TB project, I heard about the KIU pharmacy program from one of my friends who was doing medicine by then. I contacted my Woman MP (Kamuli District), Rt. Hon. Alitwala Kadaga who contacted PSU and Abacus for a possibility of a scholarship. Fortunately, after the application and interview process, I went through.

Source of inspiration

From career guidance at A-level, we used to be told that the brightest people in PCB do pharmacy and they used to tell us that pharmacists do not look for jobs. I was bright.

I thought I would become rich in a few years through supervising people's pharmacies. Unfortunately, the money was not enough until I started my own pharmacy.

Early expectations

I thought I would become rich in a few years through supervising people's pharmacies. Unfortunately, the money was not enough until I started my own pharmacy.

First impression of PSU

It was in 2011 through the Office of the Speaker of Parliament.

First impression of Abacus

It was 2011, through the same office as stated above.

PSU Abacus scholarship

It was 2011, through the same office as stated above.

Application process

I did not pay anything to earn. Questions were fair. I did the same interview with some students who were already in their second year of study but I won them.

Scholarship experience

All the money was paid in time and I did not have to miss any examinations due to delayed payment.

Typical workday

I work from 8 am to 8 pm from Monday to Monday.

Career passion

I feel happy when patients call me or sometimes come back to testify that they have improved.

Career challenges

A patient claimed that he slept with a prostitute who was HIV positive and yet he claimed to have bought an expired condom from my pharmacy. He, therefore, wanted to be compensated. I contacted my friend who is a lawyer and told the patient to produce a receipt which shows that he bought that condom from my pharmacy. It's over 3 years we are still waiting for him.

Scholarship significance

I managed to become a Pharmacist which was my dream. Financially, I can manage to pay the basics. The degree enabled me to do a masters in pharmaceuticals.

Engaging the scholars

We can set an affordable fee like 100,000 shillings per month contribution per person.

Advice to future Pharmacists

To be focused but also look for jobs beyond Uganda.

In not more than 5 words, if you got a chance to meet the CEO of Abacus or President of PSU, what would you tell them?

Thank You. You Are Master Seed.



Dr. Alex Ahimbisibwe, PSU- Abacus Scholar, MUST, 2013-2017



Dr. Alex Ahimbisibwe is a pharmacist who first acquired a diploma in pharmacy from Uganda Institute of Allied Health and Management Sciences (UIAHMS-Mulago) and attained a Bpharm from Mbarara University of Science and Technology in 2021.

Inspiration

My passion for healthcare, a desire to help others, and the potential to make a positive impact on patients' lives inspired me to pursue a career in pharmacy.

Early expectations

Like many others, I had expectations of a stable profession, opportunities for growth, and the ability to contribute to patient care. These expectations have largely been met, but the journey has also presented its unique communication challenges about the timelines for registration and learning opportunities in the registration process.

First encounter with PSU


I first heard about the Pharmaceutical Society of Uganda (PSU) during my pharmacy education at UIAHMS-Mulago by a colleague who was benefiting from the PSU-Abacus scholarship at MUK. PSU was introduced to me as the professional organization representing pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists in Uganda. The colleague encouraged me to apply for a BPharm after the diploma and then apply for the PSU- Abacus scholarship from which he was also a beneficiary.

First encounter with Abacus

I became aware of Abacus during my diploma pharmacy education or through a beneficiary of the PSU-Abacus scholarship. The scholarship had helped my colleague to upgrade from his diploma to the BPharm and he inspired me to take a long shot on the course.

PSU-Abacus scholarship

I learned about the PSU-Abacus scholarship scheme through the same colleague who had informed me of the opportunity to upgrade from the diploma to a Bachelor of Pharmacy.



The most rewarding part of working in an underserved health facility is witnessing the impact of my services on patients who lacked access to adequate healthcare especially in the times when there aren't interns deployed at the facility.

Application process

The application process for the scholarship scheme was generally conducive, providing clear instructions and requirements. The interviews, were fair, focusing on assessing the candidates' general suitability for the scholarship using an aptitude test that had only objectives. The induction to the scholarship at the Abacus office was the hardest part because of the time taken and lack of facilities around for someone to grab a snack coupled with the fear of the repercussions of missing the induction.

Scholarship experience

During the scholarship period, my experience was fulfilling. The scholarship provided financial support,

networking opportunities, and exposure to the field. It helped me meet my expectations of pursuing my education without financial constraints.

Typical workday

In my experience serving or working in an underserved health facility as a pharmacist, my typical working day involved tasks such as medication dispensing, patient counselling, collaborating with healthcare professionals, logistics/supply chain management and addressing healthcare needs specific to the underserved population.

Career passion

The most rewarding part of working in an underserved health facility is witnessing the impact of my services on patients who lacked access to adequate healthcare especially in the times when there aren't interns deployed at the facility. This experience has reinforced my commitment to serving marginalized populations and has influenced my professional career choices.

Career challenges

The most challenging part of working in an underserved community was dealing with limited resources, high patient volumes, and complex health issues. I overcame these challenges by fostering collaborations with other health professionals, finding innovative solutions like bulk issuing of drugs per patient's number to cater for a daily dose, and continuously learning from the experiences to improve my skills and patient care.

Scholarship significance

This scholarship has had a significant impact on fulfilling my personal and career dreams by providing financial support and enabling me to pursue my



education and contribute to underserved communities. It has opened doors to opportunities that may have otherwise been inaccessible.

Engaging the scholars

Former beneficiaries of the scholarship scheme can be empowered to support the cause by becoming mentors for current students, participating in outreach programmes, sharing their experiences to inspire others, and contributing to scholarship funds to help future pharmacy students. The former beneficiaries who serve the underserved communities for the prescribed time can be supported to further their academia to be of a greater use to the scholarship fund.

Advice to future Pharmacists

My advice for someone starting a career in pharmacy would be to develop a strong foundation in sciences, seek practical experiences through internships or volunteering, stay updated with advancements in the field, and cultivate effective communication and patient care skills.

In not more than 5 words, if you got a chance to meet the CEO of Abacus or President of PSU, what would you tell them?

"Thank you for the opportunity."

Dr. Milton Buleni, PSU- Abacus Scholar, Makerere University, 2014-2018



Who is Dr. Milton Buleni?

I am Dr Buleni Milton. I completed my Bachelor of Pharmacy Degree from Makerere University in the year 2018, did internship in 2019 and started gainful employment on 9th January 2020 with Super Medic Limited as a regulatory Pharmacist where I could apply for verification certificates, review and submit dossiers, do Pharmacovigilance, submit and follow up variations and GMP applications plus many other assignments.

Inspiration

When I was young probably about 8-10 years old, my mum got very sick and I didn't know what the sickness was at the time. I later got to know that it was dysentery. She was admitted to the local government health center but was not given treatment. I could see many medicines on the shelves but the nurses were telling us that there was no medicine for my mum. My dad had to sell our only cow to buy medicines for my mum who later got well after approximately a month in the

hospital. Then I said to myself, if I ever got chance to study, I want to work with medicines so that I can help my family members in future.

Early expectations

I can say yes and no. First I expected Pharmacy to only be about dispensing medicines in the Hospital and treating sick people. I didn't expect Pharmacy professionals to be working in public health, in manufacturing, in regulatory etc. My expectations are met, but many other unexpected things were discovered and appreciated.

First impression of PSU

I got to know about PSU after I had already joined campus. I first joined campus under the government student loan scheme which was launched the same year I joined campus. I started looking for scholarship opportunities and a friend told me about the PSU scholarship scheme, which I applied for.

First impression of Abacus

I got to know about Abacus Pharmaceuticals long before joining campus. I even bought some medicines in Abacus Pharmacy Arua branch when I was in senior five. What I didn't know was that they do manufacturing in Uganda and that they offer scholarships. Even when I got to know about PSU scholarships, I didn't know that the scholarships are offered by Abacus. I knew this later when filling the application forms.

PSU-Abacus scholarship

I got to know about PSU-Abacus scholarship in my first year, first semester through a friend. The friend was not on the scholarship scheme but in my efforts to search for scholarship opportunities, I was guided by this friend to know and even apply for the PSU-Abacus scholarship.

Application process

The application process was conducive in that it asked for details of my village local councils, financial need, written interviews and many more. However, I think it doesn't go deep enough in confirming financial need. Also I think the written interview should also include more questions about personal background of the interested applicants. The interview questions are more of IQ and general knowledge questions only.

Scholarship experience

I expected the accommodation funds not to be remitted to the university together with the tuition fees as not all students get accommodation in the halls of residence. Those of us who got to hostels outside the University struggled to get accommodation funds to support our hostel fees. I would request that PSU signs a memorandum of understanding with the universities to that effect.

Typical workday

I am working in the regulatory field of a pharmaceutical company that deals in importation and wholesale distribution of pharmaceuticals all over Uganda. My work involves communication to all our suppliers most of whom are from India and linking them to the NDA. All their dossiers, variations, GMP, and import permits are applied for by me plus all the pharmacovigilance of their products in Uganda. Our company is the LTR of so many manufacturing companies from India, China and Kenya.

Career passion

I have actually enjoyed the whole regulatory work and I am in the process of enrolling for masters in regulatory pharmacy. I would like to develop my career more in regulatory field.

Career challenges

The challenging part of my experience was traveling often to many of our branches which are located upcountry in different regions of Uganda. The travelling part is always tiresome. I can't say that I've overcome it yet. I am just trying to get used to it.

I pray that many people like me could continue to be supported in this scheme. If in case I am asked to contribute to this pool, I sincerely won't hesitate to do so.

Scholarship significance

The scholarship was very timely and by far life-changing for me personally and career wise. Had it not been because of the scholarship, I would be paying lots of loans to the student loan scheme project. I only got the government student loan for one semester which I finished paying in my first year of employment. Thank you very very much PSU and Abacus for helping me reach this far in my career, God richly richly bless PSU and Abacus and all those involved in this scholarship scheme. I pray that many people like me could continue to be supported in this scheme. If in case I am asked to contribute to this pool, I sincerely won't hesitate to do so.

Engaging the scholars

PSU needs to institute a committee of persons to devise best ways of mobilising former beneficiaries to support the scheme. This committee could include PSU staff, former and current beneficiaries' representatives, and Abacus staff representatives. This committee could open a platform like WhatsApp group for all former and current beneficiaries for effective communication. The committee could also devise modalities to ensure service in underserved regions and follow up on those offering such services.

Advice to future Pharmacists

Pharmacy profession is an honourable profession of distinguished service providers to the health and well-being of families, communities, our nation and the whole world. I will not hesitate to point to them some of the wrong-doings of the profession such as

supervising a pharmacy without appearing in the pharmacy, collecting money without doing work and resigning without informing employers; these are some of the weevils eating up the profession. I will actually tell them that there are some passionate professionals who are carrying the profession high and as they join, they should aspire to be one of them too.

In not more than 5 words, if you got a chance to meet the CEO of Abacus or President of PSU, what would you tell them?

Thank you very much.



Dr. Rhona Curthereen Bulya Muyise, PSU-Abacus Scholar, MUST, 2012-2015



Rhona Curthereen is a research pharmacist at the Infectious Diseases Institute (IDI), Makerere University. I have been in this position for six years. I am the last born out of ten children and lost my father at the age of 16 years. I was a very talented student right from primary school which gave me an opportunity to acquire a scholarship from primary three up to senior four. When I lost my father, I found a lot of challenges with my education because my mother was a housewife. However, she tried her best to ensure I continue with my education which I greatly appreciate. After senior six, my mother could not afford the university fees so I branched to paramedical training schools where I undertook a diploma in pharmacy.

Inspiration

I got inspired by a friend of mine who was a pharmacist and their family was neighbouring my uncle's home. She usually advised me to read very hard because she had lost one of her parents due to lack of a particular

medicine. She actually told me that pharmacy is one field where you can find solutions to existing problems.

Early expectations


My expectations were; (1) To be a pharmacist that a patient can confide in. This expectation has been met; (2) To be able to make a treatment plan for the patients and this has been met; and (3) To be involved in making treatment guidelines, this has been met.

First impression of PSU


I learnt about PSU through a friend who was a pharmacist while I was in my secondary.

First impression of Abacus

I first learnt about abacus through a friend and she was talking about their products.



This was the first time I saw fairness in a process. The interviews were tight but the award made the end so bright.



PSU-Abacus scholarship

I first heard about the scholarship at the university through a student who was on this scheme.

Application process

This was the first time I saw fairness in a process. The interviews were tight but the award made the end so bright.

Scholarship experience

My dream came true through this scholarship and I am forever grateful.

Typical workday

Working in an undeserved community is very challenging because you fail to assist the patients in a way you would desire for their maximum benefit due to lack of drugs in such communities.

Career passion

While working in an undeserving community, I found a 20-year-old female on the ward with necrotizing fasciitis who had been neglected by the medical

team because there was no treatment option for this patient and she was at the verge of death. I managed to get in touch with the pharmacist in charge of the stores in Mulago hospital and got drugs that revived the life of this patient. I later involved the public media and she got plastic surgery much as she had already lost one ear.

Career challenges

Lack of drugs in such centres was the most challenging. With intensive reading and consultations with seniors helped me to overcome these challenges but also find other treatment options.

Scholarship significance

This was a dream come true for me as an orphan and without this scholarship, my dream would have been lost completely.

Engaging the scholars

I suggest that former beneficiaries be assisted to get jobs by the coordinators of the programme so that they can serve in underserved communities. In such communities are students that can be identified by the beneficiaries who can refer them to the scholarship scheme.

Advice to future Pharmacists

I would advise the person that they have made the right choice and not regrettable.

In not more than 5 words, if you got a chance to meet the CEO of Abacus or President of PSU, what would you tell them?

I am, because of you.

Dr. Mark Juba, PSU- Abacus Scholar, Makerere University, 2016-2020



Dr. Juba Mark is a registered pharmacist who graduated from Makerere University and currently working at Cipla Quality Chemical Industries Ltd as an Assistant Production Manager. I started primary school in 2001 from Rehaboth Primary School but in 2003, my father passed on and I thought it was the end of my academics but managed to push up to primary seven and scored fourteen aggregates. Then I joined secondary school in 2009 at St. Florence Secondary School. After senior four, I was taken to Kiira College Butiki for my A' level from 2013 to 2014 and scored 18 points out of 20 in BCM/GP/ICT. In 2015, I was meant to join university but failed due to lack of money and had missed out on government sponsorship. I had to wait for another academic year and applied for Bachelor of Pharmacy at Makerere University on private. I had a plan of studying in phases as I look for my tuition with the support of my mother but in that very academic year I heard of the PSU-Abacus scholarship, I did not look back, I applied immediately and after a few weeks, got a call to go sit for the aptitude test which I managed to pass and I was awarded the scholarship.

Inspiration

From my child hood, I loved being a dentist, then when I reached A' level, interest changed to medicine. But after missing out on government in the first attempt, I chose to pursue a degree of pharmacy because it was for a shorter period compared to bachelor of medicine.

Early expectations

At first, I never knew much about pharmacy but I joined because it was a medical course, competitive, and for a shorter period compared to medicine. I am now happy and enjoying the profession as I continue to discover more new things.

First impression of PSU

My first time to hear about Pharmaceutical Society of Uganda was when we were having our orientation at the department of pharmacy in the first week of the first academic year.

First impression of Abacus

I got to know about Abacus when one of our pharmaceuticals lecturers was organising a tour for our class in various pharmaceutical companies.

PSU-Abacus scholarship

My first time was when we were having a pharmacy department meeting and in the closing remarks of the MUPSA president talked about it and it was only three days to close submission of application.

Application process

The selection process was good, no money was requested, the selection team had even to move to our places to confirm and also make phone calls for clarity.

Scholarship experience

The scholarship is very good, may the Lord bless PSU and Abacus.

Typical workday

My day is fixed, I have to assess the children's needs, make follow ups and further recommendations where necessary.

The scholarship helped me finish in time (four academic years) and also saved us from selling land to fulfil my tuition

Career passion

I came to know that many people are using medicines without instructions or even follow ups because of the big gap and the high costs involved in meeting or having a healthcare professional at a bachelor's level making a daily follow up.

Career challenges

The most challenging part is that most people lack knowledge on the roles of various health professionals so they believe you have to do everything from diagnosing, lab work, to dispensing.

Scholarship significance

The scholarship helped me finish in time (four academic years) and also saved us from selling land to fulfil my tuition.

Engaging the scholars

This can be done by creating a common social media link/channel where we can be meeting as former beneficiaries and periodically monitor the progress of the current beneficiaries

Advice to future Pharmacists

Not to give up, to first acquire the admission with or without money

In not more than 5 words, if you got a chance to meet the CEO of Abacus or President of PSU, what would you tell them?

"God bless you abundantly."

Dr. Gloria Atimango Muno, PSU-Abacus Scholar, KIU, 2014-2018



This is Dr. Gloria Atimango Muno, born in Anaka District in a family of 9. I lost my dad at the age of 4 years, thus I and my 8 siblings were raised by a single mum. I completed my primary education in a UPE school called Bweyale PS in Kiryandongo District. I joined secondary school at Bishop Cipriano Kihangire SSS Luzira through an orphanage called Emaus Foundation that offered to pay my school fees until completion, after which I joined KIU for a degree in Pharmacy in 2012 through the PSU-Abacus scholarship. I am now the Company Pharmacist of Elsmmed Healthcare Solutions Uganda.

Inspiration

I was inspired by a close friend of my brother who was studying his degree in Pharmacy from MUST in 2009. He was so proud of the profession and every time I met him, he was always speaking things that were so motivational. I thus decided I MUST pursue this course no matter what.

Early expectations

My expectations at the beginning were that Pharmacists are required only in clinical settings to handle everything related to drugs and most especially in every consultation rooms in clinical settings, a doctor must discuss every drug with the pharmacist before prescription to avoid any form of negative drug effect. My expectations were met though not exactly as I expected and more than I expected. Every day in my practice, I get to learn more amazing things in this field that just amazes me. I am fully satisfied with my profession and there is too much out there in practice that may not be taught in class. We can only discover and share with colleagues through experience and make this profession better.

First impression of PSU


In 2011, during my S6 vacation when I was worried about University tuition and my brother's friend told me about this scholarship scheme.

Early Abacus encounter

In 2014 when I was informed that the official funders of the scholarship scheme that was sponsoring me was Abacus Kiboko Group through PSU.

PSU-Abacus scholarship

At the same time when I first knew about Abacus as mentioned above.



I was inspired by a close friend of my brother who was studying his degree in Pharmacy from MUST in 2009. He was so proud of the profession and every time I met him, he was always speaking things that were so motivational. I thus decided I MUST pursue this course no matter what.

Application process

The process was very fair and free according to me. I met so many people at PSU waiting for the interview. We were offered a general paper exam to sit for and after await to be called if successful. "Only 5 successful students would receive calls out of the multitude", we were informed. I didn't have much hope since I was told from the beginning that the scholarship wasn't for KIU students since the university is private. I was thus very shocked when I received a call that I was the only KIU student in my year to receive that scholarship.

Scholarship experience

My expectations were well met, tuition and basic allowances were always on time right into the university account. The only challenge I met was the university didn't have accommodation for their students and yet they could not refund any money that enters the university account. Thus it was always a struggle to find money for outside accommodation and upkeep and thus I never benefited from the upkeep money.

Typical workday

Currently I work with an NGO company that serves several government contracts mainly to supply, install, service, train government staffs and maintain several ICU machineries, equipment, MRI machinery, 32 slice CT, X-Rays, UCI linear accelerator, Mulago dialysis unit consumables, laboratory machineries for Mulago and Butabika and also other private hospitals. Thus, in summary, I always have a busy but beautiful day since as a team in the company, we always work cooperatively and deliver in time.

Career passion

The most rewarding and yet challenging time was during COVID time. Our Company was still at the beginner stage thus we were very few. We worked on a COVID tender where we supplied, installed, serviced over 19 regional referral hospitals with ICU medical equipment and consumables and had to train all those staffs and how to appropriately use them to save lives. In this era, I got to learn a lot, right from importation and clearance process, use of the NDAMIS portal for verification certification application, storage, handling and use of medical devices, the value of life itself, what happens in ICU and many more. With this experience, I thus decided to pursue a course in pharmaceutical procurement and supply chain, clearance and



research and respond as fast as possible. It was frustrating but so satisfying at the end when I got to look back on my work.

Scholarship significance

Through this scholarship, I have managed to give my mum and siblings a better life which she is proud of, my financial status has greatly changed thus I am also supporting 2 of my relatives (niece and nephew) who are in high school with school fees. I am also starting my master's programme this October alongside many other certification programmes as described earlier and all these would have never been possible without the scholarship.

Engaging the scholars

Our great performances out there can actually motivate many companies that wish to give back to the community to gladly contribute for such a cause if we get to tell our stories.

Advice to future Pharmacists

Is it your dream career? Go make it happen, have faith and nothing will limit you. Out here in practice field, we can never discover and finish. I would choose pharmacy again and again.

forwarding,
and also still
under the process of
several trainings and certifications
to become the only distributor of the equipment and
consumables of the manufacturers we work with.

Career challenges

It was such a risky period yet I was expected to deliver at utmost speed and save lives. I didn't have any experience in what I was handling but I was forced to

*If you got a chance to meet the CEO of Abacus or President of PSU, what would you tell them?
Your sacrifice was never in vain.*

Femiwash

Maintain Your pH balance



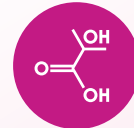
To prevent
Itching and burning
Irritation and Discomfort
Dryness
Bad Odor



Gentle Enough
for daily use
In Menstrual Periods
In Puberty
In Menopause



Contains ingredients
conductive to
intimate care



Lactic Acids
1.2% w/v



Sea Buckthorn Oil



Tea Tree Oil

#WhatThepH

Maintain 3.5 pH balance

Available in leading
Supermarkets and Pharmacies

 **ABACUS**
Lifecare

Dr. Pamela Asiimwe, PSU- Abacus Scholar, MUST, 2014-2018



I am a 33-year old wife, mother, passionate supply chain pharmacist, and I love Jesus. I was born and raised in the Western part of Uganda, in Mbarara to be precise. I am the second-born in a family of 6. My father is a retired civil servant, while my mother who passed on a few months ago was a business woman. I went to Kabateraine Memorial School for most of my primary education. However, I completed primary seven from Mbarara Preparatory School. I then joined Maryhill High School for O' level, and then went to Bweranyangi Girls' Secondary School for A' level. After secondary school, I joined Mbarara University of Science and Technology where I first studied Bachelor of Education- Biology/ Chemistry since this is the course I had been offered on government scholarship. However, after one year of studying Education, I decided to apply for my dream course under private sponsorship and thankfully, I was offered Pharmacy. I completed the course in 2014, and graduated in 2015. I did my internship training in Mengo Hospital. In 2018, I enrolled for a Master's degree in Pharmaceuticals and Health Supplies Management at Makerere University. Due to the COVID pandemic that affected academic institutions on a whole, I was only able to graduate in

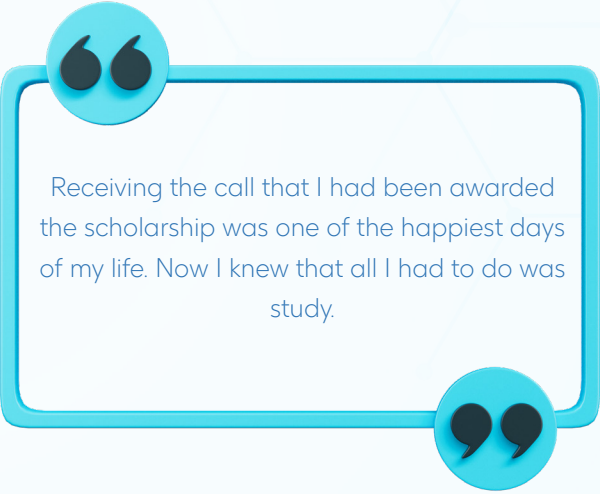
May 2022, after which I was retained as an assistant lecturer for the same programme. I have worked with a few community pharmacies, Nakasero hospital, to mention but a few. I am currently working with EMERGENCY Children's Surgical Hospital as a senior pharmacist and team leader, and I also lecture at Makerere University, Pharmacy department.

Inspiration

Honestly speaking, pharmacy was not my first choice when I was joining university back in 2009. I had always wanted to become a doctor right from childhood. But as fate could have it, one thing led to another and I ended up being admitted to study pharmacy at Mbarara University, a year later than my contemporaries. Even after graduating at the end of the 4-year course, I was still not sure what my career was going to look like. It is until I decided to enroll for a Master's programme in pharmaceuticals and health supplies management at MUK that I knew that my career journey had been divinely orchestrated. I had found my purpose, passion and I knew that health supply chain was why I was born. Pharmacy was the stepping stone that led me to discover this.

Early expectations

Like most young graduates, one of the biggest expectations that beginning of a career journey is to make lots and lots of money, buy a car, live in a nice house with a 60-inch flat screen hanging on the wall of your living room. And yes, this was true for me as well. And I wasn't disappointed I must say. I started out in community pharmacy practice like most of us do, but it did not take me long to realise that I was not fulfilled. I knew I needed to do more. Something more fulfilling but also something that would give me the atmosphere and opportunity to put to use all my amazing skills and talents. And today, all I can say is that I am on a journey to being the best supply chain pharmacist in Uganda.



Receiving the call that I had been awarded the scholarship was one of the happiest days of my life. Now I knew that all I had to do was study.

First impression of PSU

I first heard of PSU when I was applying for the PSU-Abacus scholarship back in 2010 while in my first year at campus.

First impression of Abacus

I knew Abacus as one of the biggest retail pharmacies in Mbarara town. That was it.

PSU-Abacus scholarship

I was walking out of a lecture from the microbiology laboratory one day, and just on the noticeboard outside the entrance, I saw something titled PSU-Abacus scholarship highlighted in neon green. I moved closer and read the details of the advert. This was the first time hearing of it and it was in the second semester of my first year as a pharmacy student.

Application process

It's been 13 years but I remember this so vividly. The application process was so intense, and the application form was like a small booklet. I remember seeing it and all the attachments and information that was required, and thinking to myself "you probably won't go through but just try anyway". I couldn't believe it when I received the call inviting me for the written interview at YMCA. I was elated. The written interview was well conducted and fair in my opinion. Receiving the call that I had been awarded the scholarship was one of the happiest days of my life. Now I knew that all I had to do was study.

Scholarship experience

The experience was generally good. Apart from covering the tuition and functional fees, the scholarship also provided accommodation allowance and upkeep. This was much more than what the majority of the other common scholarships were offering. This was a plus for the PSU-Abacus scholarship scheme.



However, we faced a challenge of delayed disbursement and receipt of the money which sometimes created anxiety when it came to examination period, and clearing of hostel fees.

Typical workday

I have to be at work by 8.00 am every day, Monday to Friday, and I leave at 5.00pm. As much as it is a hospital, my main role is mainly to ensure the timely availability of all health supplies (medicines, consumables, laboratory items, and sterilization reagents) that are required in the hospital. This involves supplying items to the different hospital departments, update of the inventory management system, quantification, forecasting and ordering of

supplies from local suppliers and abroad. I do all this alongside an amazing team of 7 that I lead.

Career passion

Being able to provide the right product, of the right quality, in the required quantities at all times to those who need it.

Career challenges

The technicalities involved in importing health supplies sometimes cause delays in delivery of the items to the facility which hinders efficient provision of health services and clinical activity.

Scholarship significance

This scholarship provided the financial support that I so badly needed to pursue my career dreams. I wouldn't be what I am today if it wasn't for this. The scholarship also allowed me to have a peace of mind and concentrate on my studies without the constant worry of where my tuition would come from.

Engaging the scholars

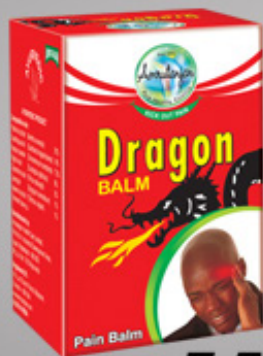
This depends on what kind of support you need, whether financial or otherwise, I believe that beneficiaries would be more than willing to support this cause.

Advice to future Pharmacists

Don't chase money, follow your passion and money will follow you.

In not more than 5 words, if you got a chance to meet the CEO of Abacus or President of PSU, what would you tell them?

Forever grateful. Thank you!



Dragon Balm

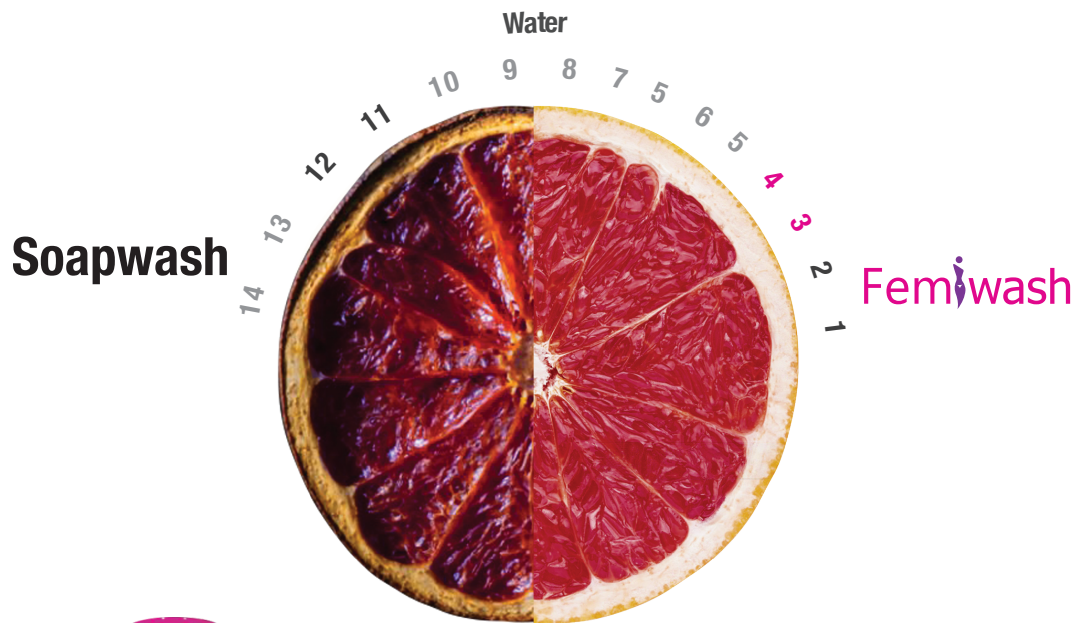
FASTER THAN PAIN



List of all PSU-Abacus Scholars

SN	Name	Uni	From	To
1	Gonsha Rehema	MUK	2011	2012
2	Uchackon Wilson Gad	MUK	2011	2012
3	Arinaitwe Brian	MUK	2011	2012
4	Nyombi Joseph	MUK	2011	2013
5	Musimbago Robert	MUK	2011	2013
6	Nkambo Willy	MUK	2011	2013
7	Padde Musa	MUST	2011	2014
8	Opiecabo Ronald	MUK	2012	2014
9	Asiimwe Pamela	MUST	2012	2014
10	Matovu Frank	MUK	2012	2014
11	Madile Alex	MUK	2012	2014
12	Muyise Rona	MUST	2012	2015
13	Bbosa Rodgers	MUK	2012	2015
14	Otim Lawrence	MUK	2012	2015
15	Babirye Merab	MUST	2012	2015
16	Frank Sentamu	MUST	2012	2016
17	Irogo Simon	MUST	2012	2016
18	Kaye Ivan	MUK	2013	2016
19	Nassuna Jacqueline	MUST	2012	2016
20	Nyamusana Gilda	MUK	2012	2016
21	Taita Towett Lee	MUST	2012	2016
22	Ndaabe Amos	KIU	2013	2017
23	Odokonyero Kennedy	MUK	2012	2017
24	Isirika Ismael	MUST	2013	2017
25	Kajekye Robinson	MUK	2013	2017
26	Kizito Ismail Musoke	MUK	2013	2015
27	Kiwanuka Rose Mary	MUST	2014	2017
28	Kisembo John	MUK	2014	2018
29	Atimango Gloria Muno	KIU	2014	2018
30	Nanseera Joseph	MUK	2014	2018

SN	Name	Uni	From	To
31	Buleni Milton	MUK	2014	2018
32	Walijjo Moses	MUK	2015	2019
33	Ssebaketta Julius	MUST	2015	2019
34	Mayoka John Wilberforce	MUST	2015	2019
35	Nakiwunga Prossy	MUK	2015	2019
36	Aepe Gabriel	MUK	2015	2020
37	Katate David	MUK	2015	2020
38	Kagimu Patrick	MUK	2015	2020
39	Adome Timothy	MUST	2015	2020
40	Nadiopie Wilber	MUK	2015	2020
41	Juba Mark	MUK	2016	2020
42	Musudo Enock	MUK	2016	2020
43	Iswezi Richard	MUK	2016	2020
44	Kalule Ignatius	MUST	2016	2020
45	Ouma Kenneth	MUST	2017	2022
46	Kutesa John	MUK	2017	2022
47	Kapanga Muhamed	MUK	2016	2022
48	Ahimbisibwe Alex	MUK	2018	2022
49	Akankunda Bridget	MUK	2018	2022
50	Arinda Samuel	MUST	2019	N/A
51	Katongole Lawrence	MUST	2019	N/A
52	Nakaye Annet	MUK	2019	N/A
53	Kirembwka Muhammad	MUK	2019	N/A
54	Muhwezi Ashraf	MUK	2019	N/A
55	Akello Ritah Emily	MUST	2019	N/A
56	Batte Ibrahim Ssekimpi	MUST	2021	N/A
57	Lusagala Abubaker	MUK	2021	N/A
58	Nakimera Mary Ann	MUK	2021	N/A
59	Danger Boniface	MUK	2021	N/A



#WhatThepH

Maintain 3.5 pH balance

To prevent itching and burning, Irritation and Discomfort, Dryness and Bad Odor



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