

## **BETWEEN TWO WORLDS: EPISODE 2: PURSUING SOCIAL JUSTICE GLOBALLY**

Hosted by Nora Nemeth

[INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC]

**NORA NEMETH:** Hi, I'm Nora Nemeth—your host for this second episode of *Between Two Worlds*, a new, 4-part podcast that explores the lives of social justice leaders who participated in the Ford Foundation's International Fellowships Program (or IFP) to pursue graduate or post-graduate degrees between 2001 and 2013. Here we focus specifically on the journeys, experiences, and impact of the roughly 13% of alumni who have chosen to live outside of their home country.

What's significant in what you're about to hear is the range of global social influence the IFP alumni are continuing to wield in their adopted countries, long after their fellowships ended—and regardless of which country they're living in now.

[0:59] **HADIJAH KISEMBO MBABAZI:** I am an IFP alumna from Uganda. I studied at the University of Essex, in Colchester in the UK. And I pursued a master's in theory and practice of human rights.

[1:19] **RAUL CHOQUE LARRAURI:** I am from Peru in South America. I studied my master's degree with the Ford Scholarship Program in Spain, in Barcelona. My background is in education. I studied my master's degree in communication and education in the Autonomous University of Barcelona in Spain.

[1:50] **KEMI CHUKWUMA-NWUBA:** I'm Nigerian. I had my master's degree at University of Manchester, the Alliance Manchester Business School in innovation management and entrepreneurship.

[2:00] **NUREYAN ZUNONG:** I am from a northwest part of China, an area called the Xinjiang, and I did my master's degree in Tulane from 2005 to '07.

[2:13] **NORA NEMETH:** Just as IFP alumni living in their home countries, those who have settled abroad continue to seek out ways to demonstrate their commitment to social justice, regardless of location.

We will explore this commitment through three geographic layers. First we will hear from those who use their experience from home to impact similar or new communities in their current countries. Then, we will explore those who continue to work on issues of social justice that directly target their home communities or regions, from abroad. And finally, we will conclude with the work of alumni in international social justice organizations – work that crosses all borders.

[INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC STARTS, THEN STOPS]

[3:06] **NORA NEMETH:** A key finding for us is that ninety percent of IFP alumni abroad are working in their original field of study from their IFP Fellowship, from public health, to women's rights, environmental sustainability, and youth outreach, among others. Originally selected for their local social justice initiatives and potential to remain committed to these causes, IFP alumni have further strengthened their knowledge in their fields and their passion for social justice grew as a result of their IFP opportunity. The IFP Alumni you are about to hear from: John Denanyoh, Raul Choque Larrauri, and Randy Magdaluyo continue to have a significant impact in their respective fields.

[3:57] **JOHN DENANYOH:** I decided to pursue a PhD program, so I applied to the University of the West Indies and succeeded in getting a scholarship to be here...Before I came here, I used to do films. I do films on our culture. ....I'm in the PhD program right doing cultural studies and researching into new technology with television.

[4:29] **RAUL CHOQUE LARRAURI:** I am working right now at the Pan American Health Organization in the administrative areas helping today to the Americas in this COVID-19 outbreak. I am working, helping to my colleagues in buying vaccines to provide to all countries of Latin America.

[4:58] **RANDY MAGDALUYO:** Now I'm in Oman for, this is now my third year in Oman. I'm working with the Ministry of Manpower and Ministry of Higher Education." ... I am working at Salalah College of Technology...For me, it's a big validation that they must have seen something on my background or with my background and with my experiences. And largely, I would have to say it has something to do with what I studied and with what I learned with the Ford Foundation.

[5:28] **Nora Nemeth:** The first takeaway? IFP Alumni are using their knowledge, unique perspectives, and experiences from IFP to help similar communities abroad. Many alumni originally from the Global South studied in Global North countries, such as the United States or the United Kingdom, where they have remained to work and live. These alumni enrich their current communities with their particular perspectives and experience.

IFP Alumna, **Rashmi Sharma** from India, obtained a master's degree at Ohio State University in Communications and Development. She has remained in the United States to pursue a PhD in Education, which included a dissertation in women's empowerment in education in the United States. She too connects her social justice experience from her home country with her work with U.S. elementary school students in Florida, many of whom live in public housing, within a single-parent household, or with foster parents.

[6:33] **RASHMI SHARMA:** It's elementary school, so Title I school, and they just loved what I did back in India. ...so, that's how I've been working here for the last four years, just trying to make a connection with what I did in India, learning and using that experience over here and making that connection.

[6:53] **NORA NEMETH:** Before her Fellowship, Rashmi had been involved in communication education for people living in mountain communities in the northwest region of India dealing with geographic isolation. She has applied some of that knowledge and

experience in her work with disadvantaged elementary school students through an after-school program offering global learning opportunities.

[7:15] **RASHMI SHARMA:** But it's still in a way it's like crossing that bridge and making that connection... because, again, there's a mismatch between who is teaching in the school classes and who is being taught. We have predominantly African American students, and the teachers are not, and that creates a lot of social problems. So, for me, it's looking at the same issue and trying to make that connection and helping in the best way that I can, and making that bridge possible.

[7:50] **NORA NEMETH:** A second takeaway for us during this study affirmed that many of the IFP alumni living abroad remain focused on their social justice work with communities back in their home countries or regions. The two main fields that benefited here were human rights and education.

One such alumna is **Farida Badr**, an IFP alumna from Egypt. She received a master's in teaching in Egypt, but now lives and works in the United States teaching Arabic at the University of South Carolina. She still regularly visits Egypt, collaborating with colleagues there to support local disadvantaged students. She has helped them set up a school for girls, teaching them how to read, write, and help their communities. Farida has helped secure donations to cover the teachers' salaries and provide material support to the students.

Another example is **Ibrahim Musa Yola**, who is from Nigeria. He studied Epidemiology at Tulane University and is now based in the United States. He writes research grants in collaboration with other healthcare professionals in Africa to improve the healthcare system in his home region. Areas of research collaboration include reducing the burden of chronic diseases, and infectious diseases on local healthcare systems, further brought to the forefront during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Theo Ressa**, from Kenya, is another former fellow who has maintained strong ties with communities back home. Theo completed his master's degree in special education at Ohio State University and then went on to earn a PhD in teaching and learning in the field of disability and special education. Theo is now a Professor of Special Education, inclusive education, and disability studies based at Wayne State University in Detroit, yet remains actively involved in conducting research with his colleagues back in Kenya. He also is an activist in Kenya's disability rights movement. Theo, who himself has a physical disability, works to bring people with disabilities together to advocate for legal rights in Kenya, and occasionally goes back home to keep his connections strong.

[10:10] **THEO RESSA:** I'm using the same knowledge that I have acquired here. I did help my students, whom I am still working with them right now, telling them to write about their disability experiences, and championing for the transition of students with disabilities to universities, just because I believe with education, we are more informed, and therefore, we are in a better position to change policies, to institute cultural changes, and also to engage in community-wide progressive programs.

[10:43] **NORA NEMETH:** A third key takeaway we found is that many alumni living outside their home countries are based at international organizations – either largescale organizations such as the United Nations, or smaller NGOs with a regional or national focus. Some IFP alumni working for global organizations abroad also work at international media companies or global universities. Whether working at NGOs, the media, or academia, their

activities remain concentrated on social justice issues. Through the kind of international work such as capacity building, advocacy, and directing funding, alumni have been able to apply their learnings in various locations outside of their home countries and beyond their host and current communities.

IFP alumna **Florence Apuri Auma** is from Uganda, and is currently based in Nigeria. She received her master's in Public Administration from Harvard University in the United States. She has served as program specialist on gender and human rights at the United Nations Population Fund and currently works as a child protection specialist for UNICEF in Nigeria. She has also worked in South Africa on issues related to sexual reproductive health and human rights and practices concerning gender-based violence, and in Iraq addressing the needs of vulnerable women and children. She brings to her work the deeply rooted knowledge of her own lived experience.

[12:12] **FLORENCE APURI AUMA:** Just a bit of background, that I'm a formerly abducted child. I mean, a survivor... I lived in captivity with the Lord's Resistance Army rebellion in northern Uganda, and it's from that experience that I do the passion to address the needs of women and girls affected by eventualities including conflict, child marriages, all those kinds of vulnerabilities of women and girls. And that's what motivates me. It's part of what has brought me even up to where I am.

[12:46] **NORA NEMETH:** As you heard throughout today's episode, whether in connecting with others in their current communities, collaborating with people in their home communities or through wider international collaborations in their respective fields, IFP alumni continue to build bridges and bring a unique value to their communities with their expertise and dedication to implement social change regardless of where those communities are located. Place has not affected the lasting passion and commitment to social justice that IFP alumni continue to demonstrate professionally and personally. Their social justice work is truly borderless.

[INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC]

[13:32] **NORA NEMETH:** Join us again for our third segment in our series, *Between Two Worlds*, to hear more from IFP alumni as they elaborate on what life is like in their new home, and how they make efforts to remain connected to their home country through personal and professional connections. We hope to tell the stories of those living *Between Two Worlds*.

I'm Nora Nemeth. Thank you for listening.

[INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC CONTINUES]

[13:59] **KYLE COX:** Our program was produced by Bridget Barry, Nora Nemeth, and Mirka Martel. Today's episode was edited by the Brooklyn Podcasting Studio and Brand Stories Studios in Manhattan. Music featured throughout was composed and performed by IFP alumnus, Camilo Pajuelo.

Special thanks to the IFP alumni featured in this episode: Hadijah Kisembo Mbabazi, Raul Choque Larrauri, Kemi Chukwuma-Nwuba, Nureyan Zunong, Randy Magdaluyo, John Denanyoh, Rashmi Sharma, Farida Badr, Ibrahim Musa Yola, Theo Ressa, and Florence Apuri Auma.

*Between Two Worlds* is part of the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program Alumni Tracking Study, led by a team of research and evaluation experts at the Institute of International Education. Our website is [iie.org/BetweenTwoWorlds](http://iie.org/BetweenTwoWorlds), where you can listen to each episode of this series, and access past research conducted within the study.

[INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC FADES OUT]