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A Note From an Enthusiastic Mentee

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In 2016, I learned about the pilot program of the Actuaries Without Borders® (AWB®) Global Mentorship Program (GMP) through the Actuarial Association of Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka is an Asian country where actuarial resources are scarce. AWB® focused on actuarially developing countries for the inaugural GMP. I applied to be a mentee by filling out an application specifying my interests and my expectations of a mentor. My intention was to gain knowledge about different markets. AWB® sent me the profiles of a few mentors who matched my interests and gave me the opportunity to select one. I was impressed with the choices provided. Today, as an enthusiastic mentee of the Global Mentorship Program, I strongly agree that AWB® is promoting the actuarial profession in areas of the world in which it is not present or is not fully developed.



I am thankful to my mentor, John Robinson, FSA, FCA, MAAA, for allocating his valuable time to me. This relationship, which has lasted almost three years, has been beneficial for me in many ways. If I were to describe my mentor, I would say he is:

- an *exam motivator*, who frequently follows up on my upcoming exam plans and provides exam tips;
- an *actuarial directory*, who is always directing me to the right contact if I need more information about a specific topic; and
- a *search engine*, who provides links to different research papers, articles, websites and books after every discussion of an interesting topic.

The time difference between our two regions is one of the major challenges for our discussions. However, we have agreed upon a convenient time to meet every week and we have meetings when both parties can make it. Some of the topics that we have discussed are valuation regimes, valuation manual, new trends in actuarial practices, nontraditional practice areas, risk management and data science. Through these discussions I have been able to gain an understanding of procedures and concepts of other markets and how they differ from our market. Moreover, I believe that my communication skills improved as I learned how an experienced actuary communicates, and I must answer his questions as well. My mentor participates in a lot of seminars, workshops and conferences each year, and it is very interesting to listen to his experiences and learnings after each event. This is not limited to actuarial knowledge but expands to landscapes and cultures of different areas of the world.

Prior to 2016, I knew in my mind that I'm in a global profession, but with the Global Mentorship Program I have felt it too. I highly recommend the mentorship program for any student actuary who is passionate about the actuarial profession, but feels isolated in a market with scarce actuarial resources, to enroll and to become a part of this highly prestigious profession. ■



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