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## **UCT GSB graduate brings new born baby to class after surviving eclampsia four days earlier**

Rejoice Gorni began her postgraduate studies at the University of Cape Town (UCT) while she was 16 weeks pregnant. She has now graduated with a postgraduate diploma in management from UCT's Graduate School of Business this December.

A few months after starting her studies, she survived eclampsia to give birth to her son and returned to lectures barely four days later. "I had to bring my baby with me to school because I had him two days before the beginning of the next block of lectures," said Gorni.

Gorni, who grew up in Tema, a coastal town in Ghana, said her decision was because she didn't want to defer her course and she wanted to introduce her family to the new baby as soon as possible.

"Deferring my course would mean . . . stay[ing] in South Africa longer than initially planned. The associated costs and the extended stay from the family business that I run with my husband here at home just weren't feasible. I also had a whole village anticipating our new family addition and I could not deny them that."

But the challenges were only just beginning: "My milk flow was really low and I could not express. Baby formula also did not work because my baby was reacting to it."

Gorni's mother flew to Cape Town to look after the baby while she attended classes and used her tea breaks to breastfeed in one of the breakout rooms.

"When I ran out of tea breaks, I excused myself from the class and left my phone on recorder to capture the class discussions. One time I think I joined a group discussion over WhatsApp video and I was just rooms away!"

Although she already held a bachelor's degree in business administration and a marketing diploma, Gorni wanted to continue her studies in Cape Town.

"I realised quickly in my field of work as a business analyst how different we are as a continent in the way we live, work, interact and even socialise in Africa," she said.

"So I started embracing Africa as my context and economy. When I decided to [further my] education, it wasn't difficult to choose South Africa because UCT was touted as the number one university in Africa and it was just [a six-hour] flight from home."

Gorni studied management practice, which, she said, is anchored by values-based leadership. "It has really helped me understand who I am, why I act the way I do and why my management style is the way it is. I have also become really conscious of doing business with an impact perspective."

For now, Gorni is back at the grindstone in Ghana working at ITRUS, a family-managed IT service provider, and has recently been engaged by anSpoken Ghana, a mental health advocacy group, as director of operations.

She is appreciative of those who have helped her on her path towards graduation, "I am grateful to my partner, Delali, my mother and siblings. I am also grateful to Kamila Saban for arranging the breastfeeding room during contact hours."

***ENDS***



Rejoice Gorni

**Credit:** Supplied

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