

INTERVIEW WITH ROWAN-JOHN MARTINA

Master student Tax Law at Tilburg University, The Netherlands

Rowan-John is a 28-year-old working student of tax law at the University of Tilburg. He is employed at the Dutch tax office within the gift and inheritance tax department in Eindhoven. He shares his view and experiences with regard to adapting to the Dutch culture.

In 2017 Rowan-John moved from Curaçao to the Netherlands to further his academic career after getting his bachelor's degree in tax law at the University of Curaçao. At first, he faced the shock of adjusting to the Dutch language. Having a multicultural background, he was already used to communicating in Spanish, Dutch, English, and his native language Papiamentu. However, limitations in being able to express himself in Dutch slowed down his adaptation to the Dutch culture.

“Here it’s more serious”

When asked about what differences he experiences between Curaçao, and the Netherlands Rowan-John gives interesting remarks from both a student and employee perspective. He describes a difference in work culture “Here it’s more serious, I think they take things more seriously”. This quote applying to both professional and academic settings indicates the very clear difference in work culture between the two countries. Rowan-John emphasizes the importance of good planning. He also describes his experience as a working student in Curaçao and says that it was easier to

Interviewers:

- Genesis Maduro
 - Saviany Noten
 - Nicole Alexander Tejada
- Students Tax Law, University of Curaçao.

combine school and work on the island because of a larger support system; most students who emigrate to the Netherlands share this experience.

Rowan-John talks about the shortage of tax professionals that his home country is experiencing, saying that it was one of the reasons he chose to study tax law. He believes that educating people about tax law and its versatility is a good way to generate more interest in the study. Rowan-John ends the interview with some encouraging words to tax law students “Don’t give up and don’t doubt yourself



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because you are smarter than you think, you are stronger than you think you are. Don’t give up, just keep going. If this is what you wanted in the first place, if this is your dream, go for it, you can do it.”