

SEPTEMBER 2021 | J21 EDITION

WIL MAGAZINE

THE BACK TO SCHOOL EDITION

THINGS I WISH I KNEW BEFORE
STARTING MY MBA AT HEC
PAGE 4



INTERNSHIP STORIES, SPOTLIGHT ON THE PLIGHT OF AFGHAN WOMEN, WIL
RECOMMENDS, AND MUCH MORE INSIDE!

WIL MAGAZINE

Editor in Chief Folasade Owoeye

Managing Editor Yen Tran
Caroline Knudsen

Creative Directors Yen Tran
Folasade Owoeye

Guest Writers Katrina Lam
Annalie Jiang
Camila Da Souza
Piers Ward
Victor Cabrera

Proofreading Caroline Knudsen

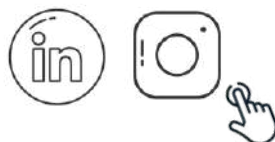


WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP



WIL is an official professional and social club within the HEC Paris MBA Program.

1 rue de la libération
Jouy-en-Josas, France 78350



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FROM THE EDITOR



Dear readers,

We are excited to share our "Back to School" edition to usher in the fall semester. In this issue, we feature MBA internship stories across different industries and spotlight Aghan women's plight in the wake of the Taliban regime. For the new MBA cohort, we have curated valuable tips and insight on making the most out of the HEC MBA from the class of 2022.

A big thank you to all our contributors for this month. Thank you for sharing your stories and inspiring others.

We hope you enjoy reading this magazine as much as we did creating it. Remain inspired!

Folasade
FOLASADE OWOEYE
EDITOR IN CHIEF



KATRINA'S DELIGHTFUL CULINARY INTERNSHIP

BY KATRINA LAM



Cohort: MBA S20
Company: Fonteyne the Kitchen
Role: Marketing Specialist
Duration: 4 months

Let's get to know you and tell us about your internship!

Hi! I'm Katrina, an S20 and former advisor to the WIL Club. I've been interning at Fonteyne the Kitchen, Brussels, since late April 2021. My internship will end just before my last term at HEC begins in September, so I'll be getting over four months of experience.

I'm currently in a marketing strategy role at Fonteyne, which is a family business engaged in catering, dine-in, takeout, and e-commerce all over Belgium. Due to the small scale of its operations, I get to perform all aspects of marketing, including both the analytical and creative elements. One day, I'm crunching numbers in Excel and creating presentations, and the next day I'm designing a poster for Fonteyne's shops. Sometimes I even take photos of food items and dishes for the website and digital marketing materials... and then I get to eat the items or take them home for dinner!



We are curious. How did you get the role?

Thanks to the HEC network, I secured this internship within the first two months of starting my MBA. A former HEC MIM had reached out via the HEC email network requesting a marketing intern, and despite having no prior experience in marketing, I decided to take a chance and respond with my CV. To my pleasant surprise, he responded as well, and after an interview and case discussion, I was hired.

What does your role entail, and what have you learned on the job?

As this is my first-ever foray into marketing, everything is extremely new to me, and I'm lapping it all up! It's nice to be able to link things I've learned in my HEC courses to what I'm doing at work. In addition, since all of Fonteyne's main activities, including its office, are in one place, I get a glimpse of its other operations (production, distribution, and so on). I also have a lot of free rein to execute initiatives that I think up - there isn't much approval needed before ideas can be implemented. As someone who's previously only worked for large companies with many layers, I appreciate the freedom and lack of bureaucracy!

What do you love the most about this job?

As Brussels is a francophone city, I'm getting to use my French on a daily basis. I'm even picking up a little Dutch because all our marketing materials have to be in French and Dutch, and sometimes English. Overall, I'm loving this opportunity to live in a new city, explore a new function and industry, as well as apply what I've learned.



7 THINGS I WISH I KNEW BEFORE STARTING MY MBA

The class of 2022's ultimate guide of making the best of your MBA program at HEC!

1. Prioritize ruthlessly and avoid FOMO!

- A lot of things will be gunning for your attention, so learn to prioritize early on. Only attend events, clubs, workshops that are aligned with your plans.
- Trust us, you are not missing out on much by skipping some of the campus parties and events.

2. Show up and be involved

- Prepare (at least read) every case before the related class. It will improve your overall performance.
- Whenever you feel a concept is not clear in class, ask the professor to explain it again. It is highly likely that you are not alone, and your classmates are probably just afraid to ask.
- Balance your effort on academics. Be responsible with your group assignments, and don't let your group members down.

3. Explore

- Go on as many trips as you can with your classmates. Visit the little villages around campus and in Chevreuse. It's gorgeous and well worth it.
- Don't spend your money on bad restaurants and fast food. Find the best bakery for your daily bread, and look up good restaurants from time to time.
- Your experience will be immensely better if you learn to be curious, open-minded, and kind.
- Don't stay on campus too much; real french life happens outside.

Quick Tip:

The first term is easier than the second in terms of workload. Wanna be on the dean's list? Get As in the first term.



4. On Careers

- Have a Plan A, B, or even C, but know when to focus (don't worry, you will know when to focus).
- Don't rely fully on Career Services to land you a job. Be proactive and leverage the HEC network.
- Begin practicing case cracking early; many companies in various industries use that for their interviews.
- **Get LinkedIn Premium!**

5. On Networking

- Talk a lot with people: at the canteen, after classes, challenge your perspectives, gather people's ideas from their own plans.
- Discuss early on internship strategies or opportunities with your classmates.

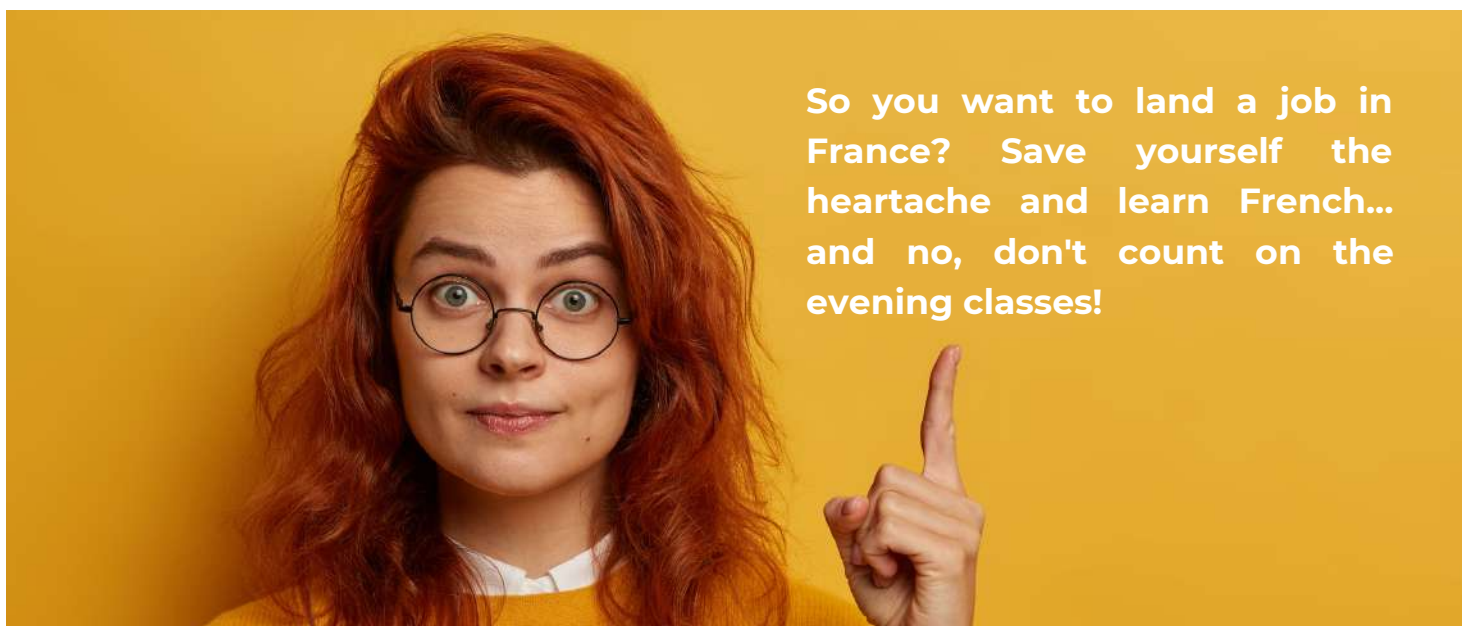
“There's a shortcut through building X to go to the exit revolving door behind building S!”

6. On Internships

- Your summer internship provides you with an opportunity to try out new industries or companies, be sure to use it to test your fit with a company or industry.
- If you're seeking a career in finance, apply for a summer associate internship as early as possible.
- Prepare case cracking/ financial modeling before you start with classes. Don't wait until recruitment season starts.

7. Last Words

- While the MBA experience can be exhilarating, it can also be a period of extreme anxiety. Don't be anxious about not having everything figured out, don't worry about not making enough friends or connecting with enough people. (*your tribe will find you eventually*).
- Stay focused on your goals, stay open to learning, and most of all, stay true to yourself.
- **Enjoy as much as you can. The 16 months pass by very quickly.**



So you want to land a job in France? Save yourself the heartache and learn French... and no, don't count on the evening classes!

THE PATH TO A TRIPLE JUMP

BUILDING MY POST-MBA DREAM CAREER

CAMILLA PEREIRA DE SOUZA

As a member of the January 2020 MBA intake and a veteran of COVID quarantine on campus, I had a bumpier road than expected in pursuit of the already challenging “triple jump” change in **sector, function, and country**. From the beginning, I had a clear career objective; to work in luxury and beauty, in marketing, and in France. I followed the early HEC MBA lessons on the importance of acknowledging trade-offs and made conscious strategic choices throughout the course of the MBA to succeed. With a finance background, I had to strengthen my marketing knowledge and increase my exposure to a new sector, learning its culture and expanding my network.

One of the strengths of the HEC MBA program is that you can design your own unique path, and I placed emphasis on my extracurricular activities. Becoming the first Latino President of the HEC MBA Retail & Luxury Club was a very important step in my self-development. As the leadership mandate started at the height of the COVID pandemic, we had to reinvent the Club’s event strategy to find innovative ways to maintain student engagement with the Luxury sector.



Despite the challenge, I saw online events as an opportunity to expand our Club’s reach and connect with people from different geographies. We were able to learn from and network with 55 high-level speakers, including CEO’s and managers across different areas within the industry, making our Club the most active among all 25 MBA clubs during our tenure and one of the most active MBA Retail & Luxury Clubs in the history of the school. This approach offered the opportunity to learn firsthand from many top professionals how they were managing unprecedented change in their businesses. Moreover, the experience proved the strength of HEC’s alumni network and the Club’s community.

Despite the Club’s success and the lessons it provided, I still needed to get a foot in the door, an internship to transition to a post-MBA career. After renewed persistence, help, and advice, I secured an internship in Market Intelligence and Consumer Insights at Richemont Group.

Working at Richemont provided me exposure to the strategic and market intelligence decisions made in one of the largest worldwide luxury groups. Learning to understand the luxury consumer, manage brand equity, and recognize emerging industry trends not only widened my professional repertoire but also provided me a better understanding of the sector’s culture and values. It was a start in a marketing role, and in the industry I wanted to join.



Today I am doing a second internship in Global Product Marketing at L'Oréal, an ideal role I envisioned at the beginning of the MBA. It has been an amazing learning experience to work in a global position and to be involved in developing international product and marketing strategy. I can also appreciate the complementary value of my previous internship at Richemont and how it helped me develop the skills to better apply consumer insights to further design brand strategy.

I am still finalizing the path to achieve my triple jump, an effort which has required a lot of grit and a great dose of humility. I am comforted by the best advice I received while networking. An HEC Paris MBA alumnus shared, "you must build multiple blocks to link your past professional experience with the future job you want." Personally, I would also add that in the end, the triple jump is not the single giant leap one may imagine but a series of small bounces and hurdles interrupted by the occasional stumble. The road can be rough, but it is also filled with personal growth and discovery, making the journey that much more valuable.



CAMILLA'S 5 TIPS FOR PAVING THE ROAD TO YOUR TRIPLE JUMP

1. Know your Goals. The earlier you know what you want, the better. Don't fall into the trap of being an "explorer" for too long. 16 months go by quickly.

2. Network, Network, Network. Social media is a useful tool, but individual interactions are the foundation of relationships. To successfully sell yourself, you need to leverage real achievements. People see through the BS. Oh, and don't forget to use the MBA to network with your classmates as well!

3. Secure an Internship. An internship provides invaluable experience and exposure if you are looking to change country, sector, or role but especially if you are attempting to change all three. More than just enhancing your CV, it gives you an opportunity to learn and make mistakes in a safer environment.

4. Work hard, show Resilience and be Humble. Changing countries, sectors, and functions is not an easy task, and you need to convince a company to make a bet on you. Hard work, a willingness to learn, and humility are valuable traits.

5. Be Authentic. In a new country and culture, your unconventional experience can be a strength and a positive differentiator. Lean in to what makes you unique.

Bonus Tip: APRENDS LE FRANÇAIS! I cannot stress this enough. If you want to stay in France, LEARN FRENCH. Your future self will be thankful.





THE PLIGHT OF AFGHAN WOMEN IN THE NEW TALIBAN REGIME

BY ANNALING JIANG



As an uncertain future looms, we can still help Afghan women and girls.

This month marks the official end of two decades of international military presence in Afghanistan. Since the Taliban's resurgent takeover in early August, the soul-crushing images and footage of trapped civilians continue to fill broadcasts around the world. Women and girls are in a particularly devastating situation, caught between the threats of violence and brutal treatment and limited options for escape.

According to the United Nations refugee agency, women and children comprise 80% of the nearly 250,000 people in Afghanistan who have been forced to flee their homes since the end of May [1], while the number of women and children killed and injured increased in May and June, coinciding with the accelerated withdrawal of international troops from Afghanistan.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that Afghan women and girls are also agents of change in their communities, both within and outside of the country. Shabana Basij-Rasikh, co-founder of a boarding school for girls in Afghanistan, and Khalida Popal, former captain of the Afghan national women's football team, have elevated the urgency of the current situation in Afghanistan; the latter recently coordinated the evacuation of players and their families from the country. These activists, along with doctors, journalists, politicians, and females from diverse walks of life, still seek to uphold the increased social, political, and economic freedoms of the past two decades - against all the odds.

SPOTLIGHT ON

The opportunity to reinforce these developments is rapidly shrinking, as illustrated in the increasingly chaotic scenes from the airport in Kabul. While the plight of Afghan collaborators who worked with international forces and organizations - the interpreters, contractors, and allies who lead the news headlines - should never be minimized, there are structured processes (subject to bureaucratic machinations) to prioritize their safety and relocation. Meanwhile, millions in Afghanistan remain in need and face an uncertain future under Taliban rule.

Lending a hand

As the operating environment for official foreign assistance continues to deteriorate, the international community can take immediate action by contributing to organizations on the ground, such as the International Rescue Committee and Afghan Aid, who provide humanitarian and emergency assistance and basic services to vulnerable populations in Afghanistan. Groups raising donations directly for Afghan women's issues include Women for Women International and Women for Afghan Women. Many local communities worldwide are also arranging their own efforts to welcome Afghan refugees and assist with their resettlement; closer to HEC, donations to **La Fondation de Lille** and **Utopia 56** will go to recent arrivals in France.

What does the future hold?

After four decades of continuous conflict, Afghanistan's outlook is decidedly bleak. Among the main justifications for continued international intervention in Afghanistan is the protection of women's rights, and the ramifications of the troop withdrawal only reinforce that urgency; in a country where women and girls' access to basic services largely depends on the availability of female health and educational professionals, the restrictions on women's employment outside of their homes signal disaster for half of the population.

Development efforts reiterate the importance of "sustaining the gains" made in Afghanistan (spanning the nation's improvements in agriculture, democracy and governance, economic growth, education, energy and infrastructure, gender empowerment, and health), but everything is at stake now - to aim for that possibility, the Afghan people need help in the present day to build for a better future.



These views are the author's own and she has no direct relationship with the cited organizations.



Formerly based in Washington DC, **Annalie Jiang** coordinated civilian assistance programming and policy for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), with a focus on economic growth, energy, and infrastructure projects in Afghanistan and Pakistan - two of the Agency's largest country portfolios, at the nexus of development and national security.

A member of the S21 MBA cohort, she also enjoys boxing and savory foods.



The Afghan Girl is a 1984 portrait of Sharbat Gula taken by photojournalist Steve McCurry. It appeared on the June 1985 cover of National Geographic. The image is of an adolescent girl with green eyes in a red headscarf looking intensely at the camera. The identity of the photo's subject was not initially known, but in early 2002, she was identified as Sharbat Gula, a Pashtun child living in the Nasir Bagh refugee camp in Pakistan.

- Sharbat unknowingly became a symbol for the plight of thousands of Afghan refugees over 30 years ago, yet the very cause for which the picture was used to promote still stands today.



MY TRACK INTO STRATEGY CONSULTING

BY PIERS WARD



Hello Piers, let's get straight to it. Tell us how you landed the role.

I applied back in January and received an invitation to an interview around two weeks later. My first interview round consisted of two case interviews with a senior manager and an associate partner. After my first round, I received a call a couple of days later informing me that I'd made it through to the second round and schedule a short feedback session. For my final interview round, I did two more cases, each with a partner, and a behavioral interview to find out if Bain was the right fit for both Bain and me.

Cohort: MBA J21

Company: Bain & Company

Role: Summer Associate Intern

Office: Oslo - Norway

What are your key learnings on the job?

Where to begin? I've been lucky enough to experience two cases and various internal work. The staffing team has ensured that I've been able to experience many of the areas I'm interested in, including sustainability, e-commerce, mining & materials, and software.

I've learned how to apply my analytical process to a wide array of problems, how to communicate complex information in a powerful, succinct way and how to support a team of smart people to crack tough questions, among many other things.

I've collected and analyzed data, created slides that deliver insights, and worked with the team to find out what's important for our clients. I've also got to experience some great events over the summer and even a cooking class.

Did you encounter any difficulties during your internship?

Everyone has been so proactively supportive, and I'm sure they pre-empted any difficulty that I might have encountered. I've been given all the tools, encouragement, and support to ensure I've constantly been learning and moving forward.

What do you love the most about this internship experience?

It's been amazing to work with such bright, personable, and down-to-earth people who are genuinely passionate about the work they do. I've felt privileged to have been taken under their wings and to have felt genuinely valued as part of the team - which is unusual when you count your tenure in months, not years. On top of that, the canteen is just incredible!

“ Take all the opportunities that are handed to you from day one and never feel scared to ask any questions ”

PIERS WARD, J21

What are your biggest takeaways to share with other students to make the most of the internship?

Take all the opportunities that are handed to you from day one and never feel scared to ask any questions.

Now that the internship will be soon over, what are you most looking forward to?

I can't wait to move to Oslo with my girlfriend Tamsin and our dog Cookie to join Bain full-time (after a post-MBA holiday).





FOR THE LOVE OF MUSIC & TECHNOLOGY

BY VICTOR CABRERA

Hi everyone, I'm Victor, an MBA candidate from the J21 cohort and current president of the Tech Club. I'm happy to share with you my experience working at Deezer in Paris over the summer break.

Deezer provides music streaming, podcasts, and audiobooks in more than 180 countries and has a catalog of 73 million songs. It is headquartered in Paris, has 25 offices around the world, has leading positions in markets such as France, Germany, Brazil, and the UK, and is managed by Access Industries, which in turn owns Warner Music.

Working at Deezer was particularly exciting for me, as I was able to work closely in two areas that I am passionate about: technology and music.

Cohort: MBAJ21

Company: Deezer

Role: Corporate Strategy Intern

Office: Paris

As a music fan, I loved getting to know the behind-the-scenes of the music streaming industry. I worked as an intern in the Corporate Strategy area, which belongs to the Content department. I started in July in the Paris office, and my project focused on analyzing the future trends of the music industry. It was the first time I've worked in the entertainment industry, so I had to do a lot of research. ***I'm not a fan of business cases, but when I had to read a business case about Dua Lipa, I changed my mind.***

How was your application process in Deezer?

The application process was quite straightforward. I had the first screening with my area manager, then two interviews, including a case study.

During the development of my project, I had to examine different business areas from **Artificial Intelligence to Label Relationships**, identify possible trends, measure the impact, and propose recommendations. My main deliverable was a whitepaper and a final presentation to the Chief Content and Strategy Officer, together with other Chief Experience Officers.

Towards the end of the internship, I learned to speak in Deezer using jargon such as **UCPS, DSP, UGC, or Majors** (the latter refers to the big three record labels, do you know which ones they are?)



What was the office environment and work culture like?

The offices are located in the 9th arrondissement in Paris, a lively area full of all kinds of services and restaurants. The property is a 7-story building that features a product-filled cafeteria, a music lounge, a recording studio, meeting spaces, indoor gardens, and a beautiful rooftop terrace with a panoramic view from Sacre Coeur to the Eiffel Tower.

As a pure tech company, Deezer has extraordinary workspace designs and promotes collaborative work, which means you can work anywhere in the office. I mostly worked on the 1st and 6th floor, giving me a break to the terrace on the few but hot summer days. All the meeting rooms are named after artists, and I had meetings in "Rihanna," "Aretha Franklin," and "Nirvana," although my favorite place is definitely "Daft Punk."

The working environment is friendly, relaxed, and super international. In just my workspace, there are people from Turkey, India, the UK, Australia, Bolivia (me), and, of course, France. The working language is English and French. I would place the average age of the employees at 32 or 33, which injects an air of youth and dynamism to the day-to-day.

Last words

Altogether, I am very grateful for this experience, as I had the opportunity to work in an international company and get to know the French labor market first hand. Soon you will be able to learn more about Deezer along with the Tech and Arts & Media clubs.

Feel free to contact me if you are interested in the company or similar roles. I would be more than happy to help you with your application.



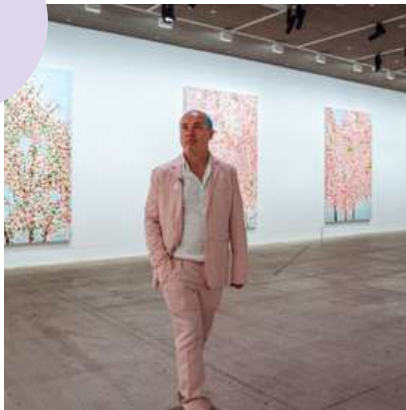
Victor Cabrera



WIL Recommends

THOUGHT-PROVOKING AND WORTH THE BINGE.

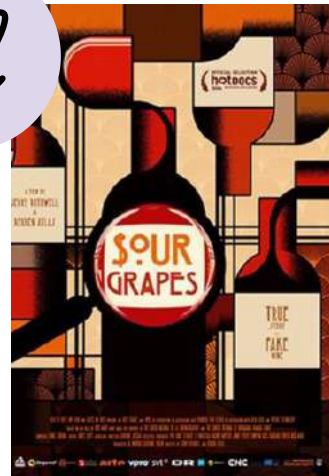
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Contemporary Art: Damien Hirst, Cherry Blossoms - July 6, 2021 - January 2, 2022
<https://fondation-cartier.tickeasy.com/en-US/exhibition>

Review: Damien Hirst is one of the Young British Artists (YBAs) who dominated the art scene in the UK during the 1990s. The "Cherry Blossom" exhibit is entirely covered in dense, bright colors. The viewers will live in a vast floral landscape moving between figuration and abstraction.

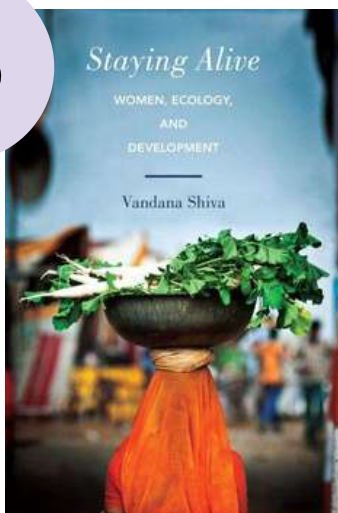
02



Documentary: Bir Baskadir (International Title: Ethos)

Review: Documentary about the fine and rare wine auction market centering around a counterfeiter who befriended the rich and powerful and sold millions of dollars of fraudulent wine through the top auction houses.

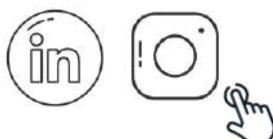
03



Book: Staying alive

Review: Vandana Shiva, an Indian scholar, environmental activist, food sovereignty advocate & ecofeminist. In this book, She combines expertise in agro-science, ecology, and the amazing complexity of local Indian farming traditions, which have been very sustainable over centuries. She reinforces the wisdom of village farmers against the forces for industrialized maximized-extraction agriculture that would destroy the environment beneath the villagers' feet.

[Have some ideas? Send them our way here.](#)





CONTACT US:
1 Rue de la Libération, 78350
Jouy-en-Josas
mbaclub.wil@hec.edu
01 39 67 70 00