

An aerial photograph of a dense, lush green forest with various shades of green foliage, serving as the background for the entire page.

Sustainability

Internship

Round Ups

Summer 2018

MIT
MANAGEMENT

Sustainability
Initiative

An aerial photograph of a dense, lush green forest serves as the background for the entire page. The trees are tightly packed, creating a textured canopy of various shades of green.

Sustainability Initiative Internship Program

The Sustainability Initiative, in partnership with the Career Development Office, identifies high-caliber sustainability-oriented internships and provides financial support to enable students to take sustainability-focused roles.

Past internships include the National Hockey League, the Environmental Defense Fund and Toyota.

Positions are listed for 1st year MBA students in early March.

If you are interested in hosting an intern for Summer 2019, contact us!



John Huang, MBA '19



Internship Description

I completed a two-month internship in the sustainable development division of SCG in Bangkok. SCG is one of the largest Thai conglomerates and operates three business units in three major cement and building materials, chemicals and packaging. SCG has a vision to be the regional business leader with emphasis on innovation and sustainability.

How did you find and land your internship?

I found my internship posted by the Career Development Office. A Sloan graduate at the company played a key role in creating this position (which was not in the company's annual budget).



Did any MIT Sloan classes, experiences or faculty mentor help you prepare for this internship? What were they and how did they help?

In addition to general management courses (operations, strategy, finance, etc.), the *Strategies for Sustainable Business Lab* (S-Lab, 15.915) was very helpful. I also participated in the MIT Impact Investing Initiative, the Sustainability Lunch Series, and the Net Impact Conference.

Through these, I made connections with students with experiences in different industries and learned about latest trends. Both the courses and activities were great for a career-changer to explore a new path in the field of sustainability.





What impact do you think you are having at your organization? What actions are you taking that are making a difference?

I worked with SCG's Materiality Integration team. My two main projects were: (1) Internal Carbon Price and (2) business model analysis on transformation to social enterprise. I also did research on waste management models, potential plastic waste solutions, and gender diversity.

Did this experience meet your expectations? What's the most important thing you learned or what surprised you?

Yes. The most important thing I learned was that culture and organizational structure should be taken into consideration for the implementation of sustainability strategies and initiatives.

Do you think the internship will help with your career?

Yes.



“ The most important thing I learned was that culture and organizational structure should be taken into consideration for the implementation of sustainability strategies and initiatives.





Amy Meyer, MCP '19



WORLD
RESOURCES
INSTITUTE

Internship Description

I interned at the World Resources Institute (WRI) in D.C., working with their Business Center. As a global research organization, WRI seeks to sustain the world's natural resources. My department specifically looked at the intersection between the private and public sector. I contributed to a working paper that highlighted areas where business and government climate ambition intersect, demonstrating how this ambition can be mutually reinforcing.

Additionally, I managed a project to develop a how-to guide on responsible climate policy engagement for United Nations business members across the globe. This work is being carried out in partnership with the U.N. Global Compact and We Mean Business coalition, and launched at Climate Week in New York in September.

How did you find and land your internship?

I worked with my organization through the Strategies for Sustainable Business Lab (S-Lab, 15.915). Because I was very interested in the project and had a good rapport with my contacts at the organization, I asked if I could come on for the summer and continue working on both the existing project as well as additional work products. They agreed that it would be a good fit and worked with their own human resources department and the Sloan Sustainability Initiative to figure out how to fund me for the summer.

Did any MIT Sloan classes, experiences or faculty mentor help you prepare for this internship? What were they and how did they help?

My internship was a direct result of my project in *S-Lab*. The class was helpful not only in introducing me to the team I eventually worked with, but also in teaching me some core concepts around the role and challenges of the private sector in advancing sustainability, which was the central theme of my internship.



What impact do you think you are having at your organization? What actions are you taking that are making a difference?



Because of my professional background and experience, I was able to contribute a degree of subject-matter expertise on my team's projects. I was also able to take over management and project development of one of their work streams, freeing up staff resources for other tasks. I had a drive to connect with a lot of different people in my organization to learn about the projects they were working on, and share with them my own work and the work of my team. This kind of informal interaction proved to be very helpful in exploring ways that different departments could collaborate with one another on similar projects, and my positioning and networking helped raise some of those possibilities amongst different staff members.

Did this experience meet your expectations? What's the most important thing you learned or what surprised you?

I had a great experience with my internship, but it did require me to carve my own path to get what I wanted from the role. My team was very flexible in letting me to choose/create my own projects, and to manage certain work streams with partner organizations. One of my biggest takeaways is the understanding that because of the limited resources that nonprofits are working with, it is important to not only bring creative ideas to the table but also a practical plan for execution. There are a lot of competing demands on resources so ideas must be efficient to be truly effective.

Do you think the internship will help with your career?

This internship was a great opportunity for me to work at a premier organization in the environmental nonprofit space, making essential connections and gaining credibility as a professional in this space. I will be listed as an author [on one of the reports](#) I worked on during my internship, and having another publication to my name is helpful for my specific career aspirations.



“My internship was a direct result of my project in S-Lab. The class was helpful not only in introducing me to the team I eventually worked with, but also in teaching me some core concepts around the role and challenges of the private sector in advancing sustainability

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MIT Sloan Social Impact Fellowship

Sponsored by the Net Impact Club, and supported by the Sustainability Initiative at MIT Sloan, Sloan Social Impact Fellows get the opportunity to apply the skills they are learning in the classroom to local, national, and international social impact organizations.

Funding is provided to assist students with salary requirements.



Van-anh Su, MBA '20



Internship Description

I interned at the Rwanda Development Board (RDB), a cabinet-level federal agency in Rwanda responsible for attracting domestic and international investment in the economy.

As part of this effort, I, along with two other graduate interns, informed RDB's position on how to improve the current investment incentives system (i.e. tax and non-tax incentives Rwanda offers to companies to encourage them to invest).

How did you find and land your internship?

I heard about RDB from former interns, including Alina Xu (another Sloan MBA). Alina introduced me to her point of contact at RDB who helped me secure my internship.

“The most significant learning for me was how both the private and public sectors play important, complementary roles in building a sustainable economy.”

Did any MIT Sloan classes, experiences or faculty mentor help you prepare for this internship?

What were they and how did they help?

Connecting with Alina was critical to me getting introduced to RDB and ultimately landing my internship.



What impact do you think you are having at your organization? What actions are you taking that are making a difference?



Project 1) I developed proposals on how RDB can improve investment incentives by conducting stakeholder interviews, reviewing existing research, and analyzing the incentive strategies of other countries. These proposals will inform RDB's thinking on how to approach revising its investment incentive strategy going forward.

Project 2): I analyzed the market dynamics of one of Rwanda's industry verticals, evaluated the impact of different policy measures on reducing the trade deficit and creating jobs in that industry (via stakeholder interviews and data analysis), and recommended a specific policy proposal approved for implementation.

Did this experience meet your expectations? What's the most important thing you learned or what surprised you?

This experience exceeded my expectations! The most significant learning for me was how both the private and public sectors play important, complementary roles in building a sustainable economy. For example, the public sector can create the enabling business environment for the private sector to grow and flourish. In turn, the private sector can create the jobs contribute to improving the country's balance of payments, which drive economic development. This is critical for Rwanda, and other developing countries, aiming to transition from a low-income to middle-income economy.

Do you think the internship will help with your career?

This internship definitely will help me with my career. My long-term goal is to foster sustainable economic development in developing countries.

My internship at RDB was particularly informative at showing me how the government can play a concrete and influential role in this process.





Emily Guo, MBA '20



Internship Description

I was as a strategy projects intern at Kudo, an early-stage tech company in Indonesia that has been acquired by Grab, the largest ride-hailing company in Southeast Asia. Kudo's area of focus is on underserved communities: using a network of agents to help offline customers access online services and products (for example, buy airtime, pay bills, take out loans, etc.) and provide additional income opportunities (for example, onboarding Grab drivers or becoming a Kudo agent).



How did you find and land your internship?

I found my internship through a personal connection. I reached out to my network of people working in a similar space. Through that, I was connected to the COO/co-founder of Kudo.

Did any MIT Sloan classes, experiences or faculty mentor help you prepare for this internship? What were they and how did they help?

The wide exposure to MIT conferences and extracurriculars were very helpful in preparing for the internship. For example, the work of the Emerging Tech and Government club helped me think about how the work of Kudo could interact with government policy. I also spoke to Sloan Lecturer Kamal Bhattacharya about his innovation work in Nairobi with iHub and Safaricom—this helped me think about alternate perspectives to innovation in emerging economies.

“ I saw the disruptive potential for tech in emerging markets, but also how important a role business and government must play in these environments.

What impact do you think you are having at your organization?

What actions are you taking that are making a difference?

My main project was to launch Grab Financial's e-wallet product with small and medium enterprises—these are smaller food stalls and grocery stores that might not own a bank account. However, as a registered Grab Financial merchant, they can serve as a cash in/cash out point for e-wallet customers and have a QR code for offline payment acceptance. Grab, Kudo, and another partner organization called OVO, are building an ecosystem around this product— customers can pay for Grab rides, and services and products at stores.

Most of the design and ideation happened before the summer—during my internship, I worked with the COO on the operational launch of the project. I analyzed and negotiated commercial terms with OVO, worked with the Product team on the merchant acquisition app and merchant app backend database, and coordinated with the Sales team on field team training, incentive schemes, and deployment strategy. Although I wasn't able to oversee the full rollout of the program, the operational foundation I created allowed Kudo to exceed its Q3 target of 12,000 merchants onboarded. By the end of Q4, Kudo aims to have over 60,000 merchants onboarded. I'm excited to go back to visit Indonesia and see how my work helped push forward the vision of a cashless Indonesian economy!

Did this experience meet your expectations? What's the most important thing you learned or what surprised you?

Yes! This internship far exceeded my expectations. My primary goal for the summer was to learn more about private sector solutions to social impact—my internship gave me a taste of this, and it's something I will continue exploring in graduate school. The most important area I learned about was how business, policy, and social impact can intersect at a young tech company. I saw the disruptive potential for tech in emerging markets, but also how important a role business and government must play in these environments.



Do you think the internship will help with your career?

Definitely. My internship gave me a lot of direction into what I want to do next. I'm now pursuing a career related to tech in emerging markets, and am open to working in Southeast Asia after I graduate.





Alberto Rincon, MBA '19

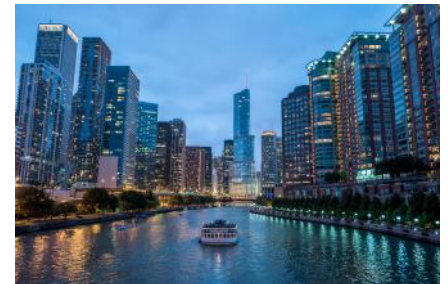


Internship Description

I was part of the first class of public interns at the Obama Foundation. I worked on the Finance team, though my work covered the Executive Director's office and spanned to Public Engagement. My primary responsibilities consisted of financial analysis and reporting, research, workforce and community development support, and operational and strategic analysis. The internship included plenty of volunteering opportunities for several of the citywide community engagement events the organization hosts. We also engaged with senior staff during both internship-specific and Foundation-wide speaker series.

How did you find and land your internship?

Initially, a friend alerted me to the internship. Subsequently, I saw it posted on Harvard Kennedy School's email distribution.



Did any MIT Sloan classes, experiences or faculty mentor help you prepare for this internship? What were they and how did they help?

I found operations, financial accounting, strategy, and communication classes particularly helpful for my internship. The Obama Foundation was still a relatively young organization, so having had the three-lens framework from *Organizational Processes* (15.311) in mind helped me traverse a quickly growing and evolving organization. A solid grounding in *Financial Accounting* (15.515) was vitally important given that I worked most closely with the Finance team on several distinct forms of financial reports and analyses. Furthermore, *Communication for Leaders* (15.280) helped instill in me the importance of persuasive and effective communication in both written and verbal contexts. Personally, I find that understanding strategy can help anyone in most business contexts focus limited resources on value-creating efforts that effectively support overall organizational goals.

What impact do you think you are having at your organization? What actions are you taking that are making a difference?

I was particularly excited about the impact of my work helping to develop the Foundation's community development strategy. Given that the Foundation and the forthcoming Presidential Center will be a boon the local economy, we focused our efforts on creating short, medium, and long-term work opportunities for historically disadvantaged communities through the Center's construction and operations.

Additionally, with the Finance team, I helped operationalize new systems and processes that will streamline financial reporting, projections, and analysis for the organization moving forward. Lastly, I was happy to have supported the executive director and the Real Estate team with research and recommendations that helped inform the construction and operations management for the Presidential campus.

Did this experience meet your expectations? What's the most important thing you learned or what surprised you?

“As I move forward in search of post-grad job opportunities, I have already begun to leverage the connections I made at the Obama Foundation

I did not have any expectations going into the internship, other than hoping to have a level of responsibility that allowed me to make a lasting impact. I believe that was accomplished, although the youth of the organization did come with quirks. Overall, it was a fun, supportive, and incredibly productive nonprofit/startup environment to be in. Perhaps the most surprising thing I learned was the immense amount of detail that goes into these sorts of development projects (the Presidential museum campus).

Do you think the internship will help with your career?

Yes. The caliber of people I was lucky to work with was incredibly valuable to me and has already supported me in expanding my network. As I move forward in search of post-grad job opportunities, I have already begun to leverage the connections I made at the Obama Foundation to support my search.





Emily Hsiao, MBA '20



Internship Description

I interned with IMAGO Global Grassroots, a nonprofit based in D.C. focused on scaling up promising grassroots initiatives. I worked with our partner organization, Fundacion Paraguaya, and their Poverty Stoplight program. As such, I worked on the ground with Fundacion Paraguaya in Asuncion, Paraguay, to scale up their Poverty Stoplight model to other countries.

How did you find and land your internship?

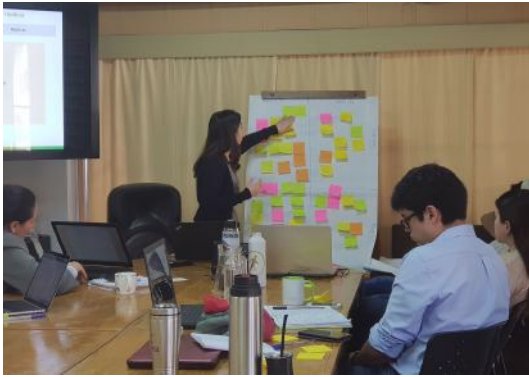
It was a faculty connection—IMAGO was co-founded by Isabel Guerrero, an MIT senior lecturer on scaling up.



Did any MIT Sloan classes, experiences or faculty mentor help you prepare for this internship? What were they and how did they help?

Isabel and her husband Michael Walton, who was my professor at the Harvard Kennedy School (HKS), helped me prepare for this internship. Isabel did a guest lecture in Michael Walton's class at HKS, and Michael Walton's class was on applications of development theory, which we utilized fully during the internship. Additionally, both Isabel and Michael, as well as another member of the IMAGO team, Sandy Naranjo, conducted a full orientation which helped us prepare for the internship.





What impact do you think you are having at your organization? What actions are you taking that are making a difference?

I was employed by IMAGO, but worked as a representative for IMAGO at their client site, Fundacion Paraguaya, in Asuncion, Paraguay, on their Poverty Stoplight initiative.

With respect to the Poverty Stoplight, I think I had the following impact: I created a sustainable pricing model, worked on a strategic focus (and thereby sustainable development), did an impact evaluation, and helped with day-to-day back-office operations.

Did this experience meet your expectations? What's the most important thing you learned or what surprised you?

It definitely exceeded my expectations in being able to apply business skills to a field office or field business model. I worked with C-levels daily, and their mentors in the incubators. It did not meet my expectations in being able to do field work or have field experience.

What surprised me was the applicability of my prior skills built in consulting to the work they were doing. I also learned the tension in scaling up between operations/growth and monitoring and evaluation (making sure that each product is being delivered with the same level of care and rigor, which is imperative for the effectiveness of the product).

Do you think the internship will help with your career?



Yes. I think the internship allowed me to see the inside of a social enterprise as it was growing. As someone who wants to work in the field as a social entrepreneur, this was extremely helpful. It was also extremely helpful to be under the mentorship of IMAGO, especially Isabel Guerrero, MIT/HKS senior lecturer, and Michael Walton, HKS senior lecturer.





William Le, MBA '19



Internship Description

I interned with IDEO.org, an organization that designs products, services, and experiences to improve the lives of people in low-income and vulnerable communities. Each IDEO.org project team is comprised of designers from different disciplines and crafts. I served as the business designer on my team, along with a graphic designer, an interaction designer, and a software engineer. We worked on two projects during the summer. The first focused on helping IDEO.org explore alternative sources of income. For the second project, my team worked closely with a financial inclusion nonprofit that works to assist low-income women in Dallas, Texas.



How did you find and land your internship?

I was specifically looking for internships in the social impact space, with a focus on financial inclusion and emerging markets. I don't remember exactly how I first heard about my internship at IDEO.org, but I think it was through a job board that focuses on social impact jobs.

Did any MIT Sloan classes, experiences or faculty mentor help you prepare for this internship? What were they and how did they help?

Yes! I took a class called *Listening to the Customer* (15.821), taught by Drazen Prelec, which is how I first learned about user research. It turned out to be very helpful. IDEO.org follows a human-centered design approach to problem solving, which involves elements like deep qualitative user research and rapid prototyping. The course exposed me to a lot of the research methods I ended up using during my internship, and also gave me the broader context for why we were approaching problems in that way.

“I now recognize that human-centered design is an important tool to have in your toolkit.”

What impact do you think you are having at your organization? What actions are you taking that are making a difference?

IDEO.org is dependent on grant income, which can be unpredictable and unreliable. I spent three weeks interviewing members of the IDEO team, speaking with experts, and conducting secondary research in order to determine the highest impact new business opportunities for the organization. But I did more than make recommendations—I wanted to make sure these suggestions lived on well after I left.

Therefore, after getting buy-in from leadership, I created implementation plans and organized a task force around each of the suggestions. As the only business designer on a team working to assist low-income women in Dallas, Texas, I brought to the project a unique perspective and skillset involving data analysis, competitive landscaping, and project management.



Did this experience meet your expectations? What's the most important thing you learned or what surprised you?

I expected to learn a great deal about human-centered design, and I did. The most important thing I learned was about the design process, which is a very different from how I would traditionally approach problem solving. For example, as part of the IDEO process there is an emphasis on rapid prototyping. At the beginning of the project, you try ten different things with the expectation that eight out of ten might not work. Then you tweak and iterate. This went very much against my nature of going more slowly and methodically (e.g. lots of analysis and planning). I learned that there are pros and cons with each approach, but I do feel that the rapid prototyping model generally encourages more creativity and out-of-the box thinking.

Do you think the internship will help with your career?

I do. I fundamentally believe user research is crucial for any company, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to learn how to do it properly. There's an art to it that I didn't appreciate until this summer. Secondly, I now recognize that human-centered design is an important tool to have in your toolkit. I understand the process well enough now that I can identify when certain problems are better solved through a design thinking approach, and when to use other methods more common to business school students. I think this flexibility will really help me maintain an edge in my career.





Angele Law, MBA '19



Internship Description

“I didn’t expect to have such great autonomy to initiate and implement recommendations that I felt critical to the organization’s long-term sustainability.

As an Education Pioneers (EP) Summer Fellow, I was connected to the Boston Public Schools (BPS), where I worked as a Strategic Projects Summer Fellow. Reporting directly to the BPS chief of operations, I lead an initiative to improve customer experience.

How did you find and land your internship?

Via the MIT Sloan Career Development Office, I met EP at an on-campus information session in the fall of 2017. EP’s mission—to identify, train, connect and inspire a new generation of leaders dedicated to transforming the education system so that all students receive a quality education—strongly resonated with me.

Did any MIT Sloan classes, experiences or faculty mentor help you prepare for this internship? What were they and how did they help?

Born and raised in Hong Kong, I didn’t have much understanding about the K-12 school system in the United States prior to doing my MBA. Via Sloan Net Impact Club’s Board Fellowship Program, I was able to become a Board Fellow at Fenway High School, a pilot school in Boston, to help with the challenges they were having, and to better understand the BPS. This experience solidified my interest in working in the U.S. public school system for the summer.

Apart from that, I found Paul Osterman’s *Being Effective: Power & Influence* (15.304) class to be very helpful. The course helped me better understand that all organizations are fundamentally political, and that all players have different self-interests, perspectives and objectives. It helped me improve my strategic, tactical, and persuasion skills, which were very much needed during my internship, especially as I introduced new initiatives that required buy-in from multiple departments.



What impact do you think you are having at your organization? What actions are you taking that are making a difference?

During my 10-week internship, I focused my efforts on improving families' relationships with the three most frequently contacted departments within the central office, i.e. Transportation, Welcome Center, and Special Education department.

Within a three-week timeframe, I helped the Transportation Department design and implement a ticketing system, so that the department could better track incoming questions and complaints, more efficiently work together to solve issues, and more effectively evaluate its performance. Using my prior management consulting experience and skillset acquired at MIT Sloan, I was able to formulate sustainable recommendations and gain ongoing support from different stakeholders.



Did this experience meet your expectations? What's the most important thing you learned or what surprised you?

The experience definitely exceeded my expectations. The wide exposure to different departments in BPS was something I had expected, but I didn't expect to have such great autonomy to initiate and implement recommendations that I felt critical to the organization's long-term sustainability. On top of that, being an EP Fellow allowed me to connect with like-minded individuals passionate about improving the education space. My most important lesson was the realization that an effective leader must know how to map the different interests, perspectives, and objectives within an organization, and learn how to strategically operate in the environment.

Do you think the internship will help with your career?

I do believe the internship will help with my career. Regardless of what role I ultimately take up in the education space moving forward, I do believe the network, exposure and skillset I acquired will be transferable in any context and situation.





Alina Xu, MBA '19



Internship Description

Dalberg is a strategic advisory firm focused on international development. For the first five weeks of my internship, I worked on a project supporting a multinational company interested in exploring opportunities in poultry, animal feed, and grain production in a number of countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Our task was to conduct a market scoping in the sectors and countries of interest. Activities included collecting and analyzing data through desk research, expert interviews, and field visits to understand different aspects of the market. In a second project, my team evaluated the impact and commercial viability of a range of business models and financial instruments for provision of clean energy.

How did you find and land your internship?

I had known about Dalberg prior to coming to MIT Sloan, and had always been interested in the firm. I applied through their website.

Did any MIT Sloan classes, experiences or faculty mentor help you prepare for this internship? What were they and how did they help?

On one of my projects, I analyzed the financial viability of an energy trading platform in southern Africa, using their business plan documents. Concepts and intuition from the *Managerial Finance* course (15.401) were very helpful in assessing whether the business model made sense. Going through the Management Consulting Club's case preparation process was helpful in preparing for Dalberg's case interviews.



“There is an active dialogue around whether what we are doing is truly impactful, and how we can do better.”

What impact do you think you are having at your organization? What actions are you taking that are making a difference?

One of my projects involved conducting a market scoping for a large multinational that sought to enter the poultry and animal feed market in sub-Saharan Africa. Our recommendations helped the client better understand the landscape in a range of African countries, and where they would be best positioned to invest. Greater private investment in developing countries is critical for industrialization, growth, and job creation, and ultimately for reducing poverty. With respect to agriculture specifically, the sector tends to be highly disaggregated and dominated by smallholder farming in many developing countries, with few commercial players. Investment in commercial enterprises, if well-executed, can bring much-needed expertise, access to farming inputs, vertical integration, and jobs to these sectors. Down the line, this is what our work would ultimately achieve.

My second project was with an organization that supports and incubates innovative partnerships for climate action. We worked closely with them to evaluate their shortlisted candidates, providing input into their thought process and assessing the candidates for financial viability and environmental impact. The client provides an important platform and network for organizations that are positioned to have a major impact in areas around climate change such as climate adaptation, financing mechanisms, and others. So, Dalberg played an important role in helping them choose the most high-potential candidates.

Did this experience meet your expectations? What's the most important thing you learned or what surprised you?



Dalberg was a great learning experience—the work and environment were incredibly stimulating, supportive, and collaborative. There is an active dialogue around whether what we are doing is truly impactful, and how we can do better. One thing that was surprising—I had previously assumed that some percentage of consulting engagements was simply a validation exercise and that hiring a consulting firm wouldn't materially change the client's course of action. I was pleasantly surprised by my second project, in which our team worked side-by-side with the client in discussing and shaping the process of assessing potential organizations that the client had shortlisted for funding. They saw us as real partners, and valued and incorporated our input.

Do you think the internship will help with your career?

The internship provided great exposure to what a consulting role would be like, particularly in a mission-driven setting. I'm glad that I tested my hypothesis that consulting-type work—working in a fast-paced, client-oriented, analytical setting, in small, close-knit teams—could be a good fit for me. Having worked with Dalberg could be helpful in the future from a networking perspective as well.





Sustainability Initiative

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