

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Alumni Story – Maria Zarraga (Class of 2008)

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Maria had worked in the field of Project and Change Management for organisations such as Nestlé, Swiss Television and the United Nations when she decided she needed to broaden her competencies. “I wanted to have a more **global vision of business** to complement my skills and experience”, she says.

Quickly, Maria recognised the importance of the **human aspect** of the programme. “I believed that contributing actively to the student and alumni network would enhance my EMBA experience”, she says. “Not only did I meet interesting and relevant business connections to grow my network, I also found people who **shared values and vision**”.

After obtaining her EMBA and holding a Licence in Psychology, Maria landed a higher position as Innovation & Human Capital Director in a company supporting SMEs and helping them face global challenges. Thanks to the hands-on aspect of the HEC Lausanne Executive MBA, she was able to **apply some recently-acquired skills** in her daily tasks. She even continues: “Being part of a company contributing to the local development gave me the desire to share these competencies and make the community benefit from them”.

Therefore, it was no surprise when Maria decided to take it one step further to an even greater purpose. “Although it was not my initial goal, the **entrepreneurship dimension** of the HEC Lausanne Executive MBA enabled me to launch my own company”, says Maria after having served as International Officer at the World Intellectual Property Organization. *ForWaves*, based in Gland, is a firm specialised in Change Management, promoting an environment respectful of **Innovation and Human Development**, active in both public and private sectors. “Working on project monitoring and evaluation, enterprise development, intellectual property and human capital development, different fields of expertise are needed and I capitalise on my **network** of experts based in 6 countries and 4 continents, the ForWaves Platform, which is partly built of alumni from the programme”, she explains,

pointing out the diverse and collaborative features of the HEC Lausanne Executive MBA community.

According to Maria, the HEC Lausanne Executive MBA adventure has given her the tools to turn her professional career around. She served as Vice President of the MBA Alumni Association and as expert in the Entrepreneurship module. She also managed to successfully guide other alumni in their career orientation in order to better match their talents and values. “Courses such as Business & Society taught me to **reflect** on how I could **contribute** to society and how society would impact on my work”. The importance of the human perspective enhanced by the programme is still at the centre of her vision and she and her team intend to continue contributing to the society at the country, corporate and individual levels following the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development set by the United Nations.

Maria Zarraga’s story inspired you? Contact her!