

## **Scholarship report for the German HBS Association**

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Supported by a generous scholarship from the German HBS Association, I started my MBA as part of the Class of 2012 in September last year. Having come to Harvard by way of J.P. Morgan and Muhammad Yunus' Grameen Foundation, my experience here so far has been exhilarating. Starting off with a return to rowing in the form of a fun (yet only mildly successful) race with the school's mens' eight at the Head of the Charles, term continued at a fast pace.

In the winter break, I joined an HBS contingent on a trip to South Africa, working with social entrepreneurs and technology start-ups to refine their business models. Sometimes we felt we could add real value, at other times it was simply helpful to act as sounding boards and ask critical questions. Brainstorming with members of the Mandela family on how to market high value-add South African projects abroad rounded off the trip. It was good to see a capable group of friends from HBS in action, blending skills from work life with new insights gained from the first term in Boston. The second term's focus was largely on building the business model for [www.vinamea.com](http://www.vinamea.com) together with a friend and classmate. It will serve as a direct platform between vineyards and consumers, allowing the latter to rent their own vines, follow production online, and ultimately receive their own customized bottles. Winning a grant from the School's MVP Entrepreneurship Competition allowed us to explore the idea further and highlights the schools growing ambition to grow a first-class ecosystem for students' entrepreneurial pursuits.

For the summer between my two years here, I decided to build further on my interest in sustainable commercial opportunities on the African continent. In a significant number of countries, there is a rapidly growing class of entrepreneurs who build businesses and create wealth, opportunity and integration, fuelling growth and progress. Based out of Lagos, Nigeria, I was part of consulting teams working with a business bank and an upstream oil producer. The sheer wealth of talent and entrepreneurial acumen in the whole West African region is palpable. Following graduation, I plan to seek a role that will let me help develop further both my own insight locally, and the understanding of this region's sustainable opportunities back home in Europe or the US.

Before that, I look forward to returning to HBS for a second year, building further my friendships and academic learning, involvement with the Africa Business and Boat Clubs, and travelling as much as I can fit in between. I am very grateful for the German MBA Association's generosity in supporting this endeavor. It reminds me on a constant basis of not just my opportunities here, but also of my responsibilities to make a difference and actively assume the leadership role that the school seeks to help us carve out.