

weWILL

Issue 01.30 | November 2020



weWIL

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WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP CLUB

HEC Paris MBA



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STAND TALL AGAINST GENDER BIAS

She talks about her experience in investment banking, the gender gap within the industry and pioneering corporate sponsorship for women leadership on a national platform.

AN INTERVIEW WITH **SOLAPE OGUNTAYO** BY MONICA YUSUF

Hello Solape! I remember talking with you before about your work experience in Nigeria. Could you describe your previous job function and role?

Prior to joining HEC Paris, I was the Assistant Vice President of Origination & Client Coverage at InfraCredit, a specialized guarantor set up to support the development and investment in infrastructure assets and projects in Nigeria. Prior to that I worked 7 years in Investment Banking which was largely male-dominated. My role involved raising funds for clients through debt capital markets.

Sounds like you had challenging jobs! Can you share, in your opinion, what are the three main barriers for gender equality based on those experiences?

In my experience I'd say there are a number of barriers to gender equality but three that resonate with me are firstly, the limited female leaders in my field, the unconscious bias and lastly, stereotyping based on gender.

Which actions do you think we can do together to remove these barriers?

While I acknowledge there have been actionable steps towards removing these types of barriers, it should be a constant collective effort and not just





Solape at the Bond Signing Ceremony of North South Power Company's N8.5 billion Green Infrastructure Bond

Business Day Nigeria

that of women alone. After all, if we are going to change the status quo, we need the help of those perpetuating the status quo, we need allyship from men

I cannot agree more! Have you had any chances to make a difference towards gender equality in your professional life?

At my previous role, I noticed women in the firm were often not included to attend networking conferences. With the help of a senior colleague, I was able to secure sponsorship approvals for all women in the firm to attend the Women in Business and Finance (WimBiz) conference. This group is the largest community of professional working women in Nigeria that inspire, empower and advocate for greater

representation of women in leadership positions in the public and private sector. I am told that sponsorship for all women at the firm is ongoing with plans to continue in the future.

"Never tried to act like a man, I acknowledged my strengths and abilities as a woman"

That was such a great initiative! Women empower women! Last question from us. Do you have any tips and tricks for our strong women out there that want to join a similar industry?

Investment banking is very client-centric and requiring a lot of people skills combined with technical skills. One tip that helped me, quickly recognising the power of my network and leveraging it. I also never tried to act like a man, I acknowledged my strengths and abilities as a woman and made the most of my time prioritizing because everything is super urgent!

Finally, a strong support system is crucial especially for those looking to start a young family, I had the support of my husband and family every step of the way which helped me grow in that industry.



WE CAN ALL WORK TOGETHER TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY

She talks about her experience being one of the only female field engineers. How she overcame unequal treatments and how she empowered other female engineers.

AN INTERVIEW WITH **ROSEMARY ABELLA**
BY BEATRIZ FLORES

Hello Rosemary! You were the first one who came to my mind when we were selecting interviewees. Could you describe your previous job function and role?

After graduating, I worked for PETRONAS Energy Canada as a Field and Reliability Engineer. In this role, I managed risks that could adversely effect equipment and business performance. I focused on asset management and implementing preventative maintenance strategies for achieving operational excellence. Women represent roughly 22% of employees in the oil and gas industry. I not only made up a part of that number, but for nearly 3 years I also made up a part of the ~2% of women that worked in some of the most remote areas of northern Canada – an eye opening experience to say the least.

Could you describe the types of situations that you faced in a male dominated field?

I was always thought of as "one of the boys"; I played on an all-male hockey team, played football and rugby. I saw myself as this tenacious little fiery woman that could conquer anything.

But upon stepping off that plane in Fort St. John (northern Canada) as a young female field engineer, entering a room of 40 robust men, and realizing I was the only woman, I felt vulnerable. The operator who was my trainer consistently made sexual comments and used crude language. I felt extremely uncomfortable and defenseless.

It was my first week, I knew no one, and I was afraid of over sensitivity accusations or having my all-male coworkers isolate me more if I made a formal complaint. When the situation did not improve, I finally informed the lead and the operator did eventually get fired. It was then that I realized I should have spoken up immediately. I learned that it's not easy to be in a minority position, and although people know they should speak up when they are experiencing harassment, they don't because of how it could be perceived or they feel a lack of support. This is one situation of many that I am sure countless women have faced in male-dominated environments.



Please tell us, in your opinion based on your experience, what are the three main barriers for gender equality.

I. Social stigma and lack of confidence working in a male-dominated environment

II. Difficult working conditions for mothers, such as long working hours and being away from home for weeks at a time

III. Feeling marginalized and being excluded in decision making

IV. Physically demanding working environment

Please tell us moments when you feel that you made a difference towards gender equality.

After my experience in the field, I reached out to the upcoming female field engineers and created a mentorship group to act as informal support: a place for open safe discussion for young women in similar circumstances. I feel that this helped encourage these women to continue to push, even through the most difficult of circumstances. We are stronger when we stand together! On a personal level, I feel I continue to break the status quo by participating in male dominated sports, for example, which I believe has encouraged other women to participate as well.

Which actions you think we can do together to remove these barriers?

a. Support and encourage young females to fight against the status quo, through buddy/mentorship programs

b. Identify and report harassment as soon as you see it

c. Employees must put an effort into creating an inclusive gender-diverse workplace

d. Make work life balance a priority in the workplace

A black and white close-up portrait of Shirley Chisholm. She is wearing glasses and a striped shirt. The image is partially obscured by a large light blue circle containing text and a solid purple rectangle in the upper right corner.

**Tremendous
amounts of talent
are being lost to our
society just because
that talent wears a
skirt.**

—Shirley Chisholm



ANDREA GHEZ

is the 2020 Nobel Prize Recipient in Physics for her pioneering research that helped reveal a supermassive black hole lurking at the center of the Milky Way galaxy.

By Akanksha Rashmi

"Einstein's right, at least for now" is what Andrea Ghez said after her research of 25 years. Ghez, at the University of California, Los Angeles, is just the fourth woman after Marie Skłodowska Curie, Maria Goeppert Mayer, and Donna Strickland to win the physics prize — the Nobel award with the fewest female winners.

In 1998, Ghez answered one of astronomy's most important questions. Earlier, scientists had theorized that all galaxies have black holes at their centers. A black hole is a region of space with gravity so intense that no matter or radiation—not even light—can escape which made it impossible to see a black hole. After completing her bachelor's degree at MIT in 1987 and her PhD at the California Institute of Technology in 1992, she helped develop an advanced technology called adaptive optics to better study the behavior of distant objects in the universe. By comparing images taken months, and even years, apart with this new technology she succeeded in showing that the stars were spiraling at blinding speed around an incredibly dense object. This was a pathbreaking discovery and the best evidence yet of a supermassive black hole at the center of the Milky Way galaxy.

Along the way, Ghez became a leader in the world of astrophysics, winning dozens of honors and prizes, including a MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship, election to the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. She was the first woman to receive the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences' Crafoord Prize.

"I like to show students that this field is a possibility—and a possibility without sacrificing your personal life. I make a point of sharing that I have kids."

With great works come great responsibilities. Andrea has been very particular about her status as a role model. Female students of her college always seek her out and she has welcomed every chance to encourage them. She has been an accomplished and animated speaker, which, as she has continuously mentioned in her Ted talks, was a triumphant achievement she attained by translating her nervousness into excitement. Talking about how she overcame stage fright to become a strong science communicator is just one more way that Ghez hopes to inspire young scientists: "I think that's a useful message for young girls about not pigeonholing who they are or what they are capable of." We hope that her win will be another example that encourages girls and women to enter STEM fields — particularly her area of expertise, which she calls "extreme astrophysics," that is full of mysteries to be explored.



Jennifer A. Doudna (L) & Emmanuelle Charpentier (R)

Jennifer A. Doudna & Emmanuelle Charpentier

are the microbiologists who received the 2020 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for their groundbreaking discovery of the genome modification technique called Crispr-Cas9

By Akanksha Rashmi

The French woman Emmanuelle Charpentier and American Jennifer Doudna are the sixth and seventh woman to win a Nobel Prize in Chemistry. With their breakthrough discovery of Crispr-Cas9, which the scientists consider as 're-writing of the code of life', they have become the first women-only team to win a Nobel science prize.

The scientist duo met while attending a scientific conference and started collaborating on the functioning of Crispr and, within a year, they were able to discover a bacterial immune system called CRISPR that can be repurposed to edit DNA, the molecule of heredity. This pioneering technology is yielding a revolutionary impact in the field of life sciences. Using this technique, the DNA of plants and animals could be changed with extremely high precision and this could contribute to new cancer therapies and may make the dream of curing the inherited diseases come true. It has not only revolutionized basic science, but also resulted in innovative crops and will lead to ground-breaking

"My wish is that this will provide a positive message to the young girls who would like to follow the path of science, and to show them that women in science can also have an impact through the research that they are performing."

-Emmanuelle Charpentier

new medical treatments. More than 100 clinical trials are currently underway on the use of CRISPR to treat inherited diseases.

The two researchers have already received several awards, such as the Breakthrough Prize (2015), the Science Prize of the Princess of Asturias (2015), and the Kavli Prize for Nano-Sciences in Norway (2018).

For two women to share the Nobel Prize in chemistry is unusual. Between 1901 and 2020, it has been awarded to 185 individuals, and only seven of them have been women. While this paves the way for many women in academia and science, there are so many unconsidered female researchers whose work go unrecognized or is "overshadowed by a male peer".

Perhaps, just as Curie inspired the 2020 winners – Charpentier studied at the Curie Institute – let's hope Charpentier and Doudna will draw young women into various scientific fields of study. This is important because Unesco estimates that less than 30 per cent of scientific researchers worldwide are women!

"I'm proud of my gender. I think it's great, especially for younger women, to see this and to see that women's work can be recognized as much as men's."

-Jennifer Doudna

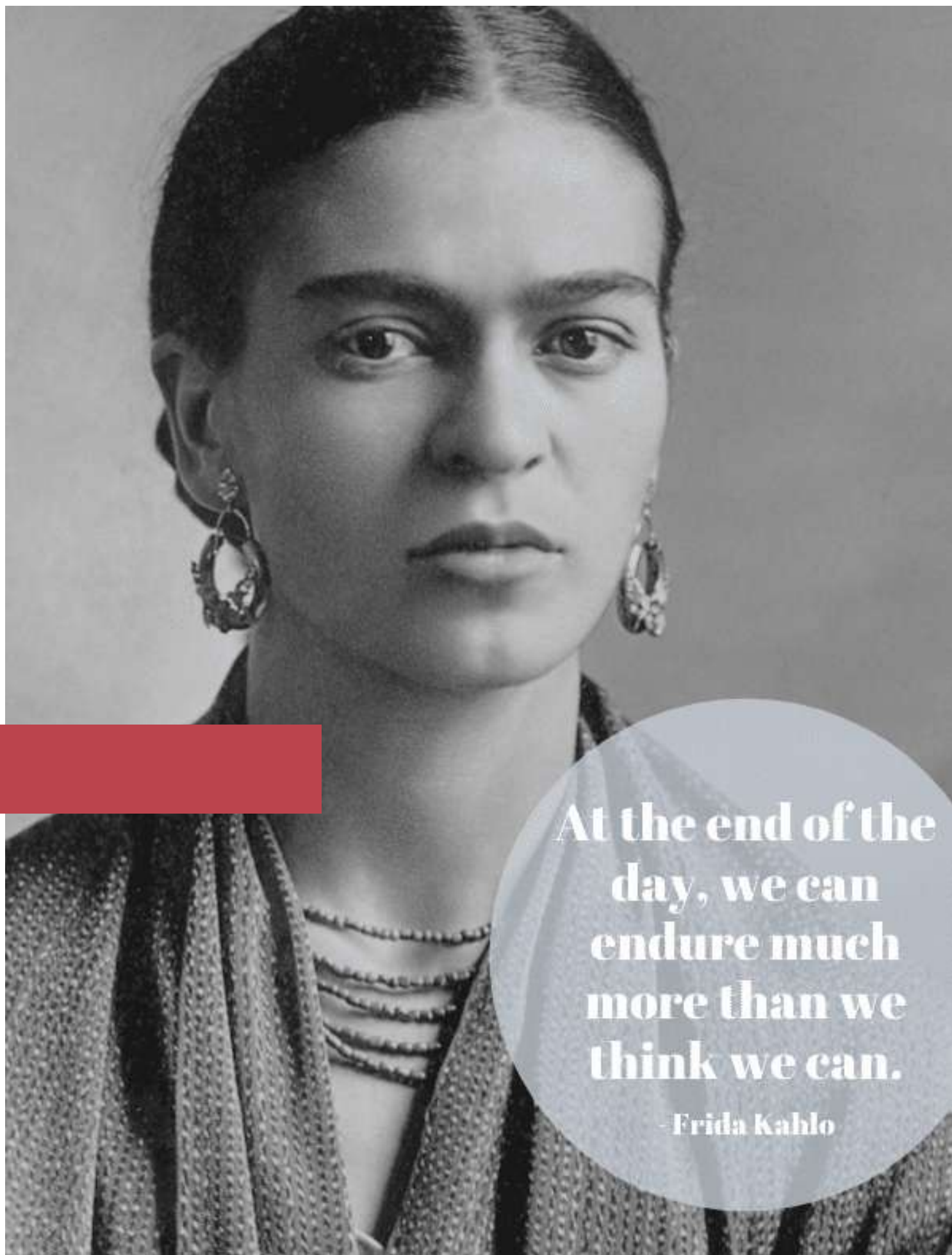
UPCOMING WIL EVENTS & EXTERNAL EVENTS

| November 2020 | | | | | | |
|---------------|--------|---------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|----------|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 Paris Women's Forum Day1 | 19 Paris Women's Forum Day2 | 20 WIL&APAC& Consulting Collab event | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 HILTI & WIL Club Career event | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

WIL.Calendar

*Paris women's forum - limited to volunteers

*Event date might change

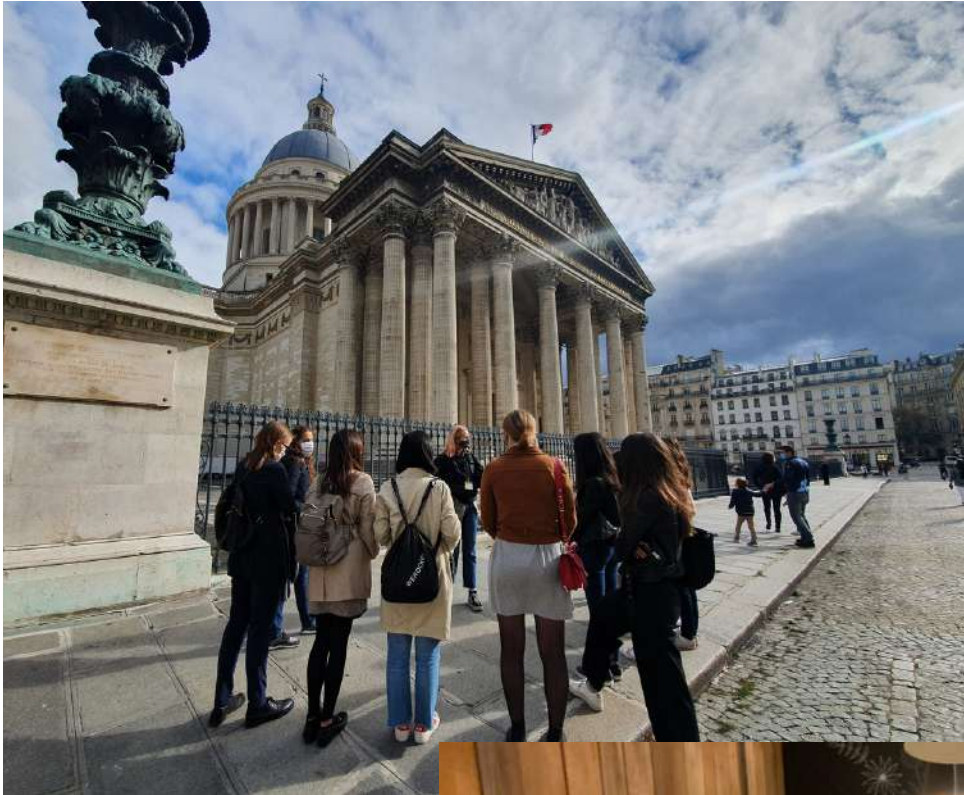


**At the end of the
day, we can
endure much
more than we
think we can.**

-Frida Kahlo

WIL Photo Gallery

"October weDID"



The time when we were free to roam around the city! Exploring Paris and learning its female stories.

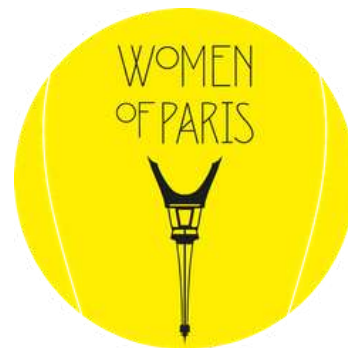
1st WIL
Herstory
Tour



...and the
2nd one

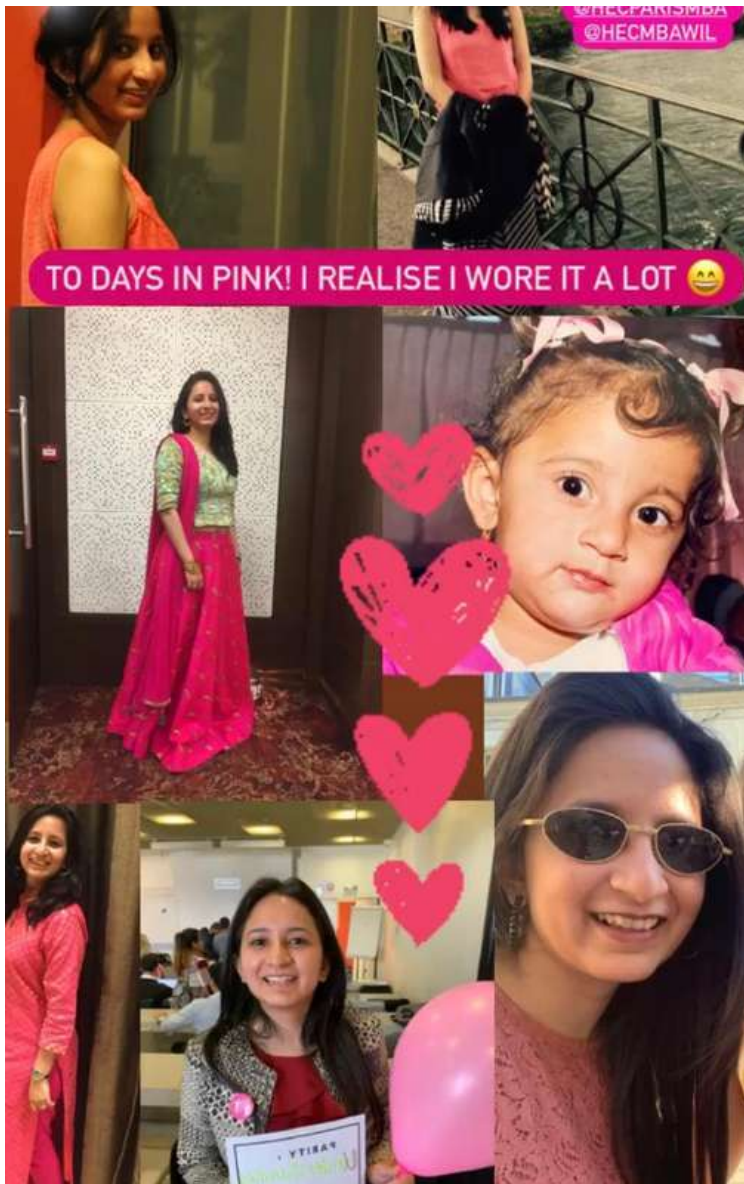


**For the 2nd tour, though a smaller group, we had 5:5 female and male ratio!
Very proud of all the participants!**



**Our appreciation to
Women of Paris!**





**Most dedicated Award:
Suhani Jain J20**



**Most Viewed Award:
S20 Pink Group photo**

**#PINKWEDNESDAY
#OCTOBERISBREASTC
ANCERAWARENESSM
ONTH**



Most creative Award:
Linse Kelbe S20



Just pink-cause 💕



Thanks to those who have used the special filter we created for @hecmbawil !!



"Thank you Volunteer!" Award:
Lalaine Inumerables S20

"EMBRACE SOLIDARITY CELEBRATE EQUALITY"



Thank you for reading

