

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

DOLORES PIGRETTI ÖHMAN ON NAVIGATING SWEDEN'S HIDDEN REGIONAL IDENTITIES —AND ITS WATER CRISES

“As an Argentine born and raised in Buenos Aires, I moved to Sweden as the wife of a local and was eager to learn everything about my husband’s homeland—its roots, culture, and history. Sweden is a vast country, one of the largest in Europe, and although there are shared values across the nation, the culture is also shaped by regional differences influenced by the environment, demographics, and historical context.”



HÄSSLEHOLM MILJÖ AB • SWEDEN • B7



MSCI INC. • SWITZERLAND • B26

MADELEINE HELMS ON HOW RESILIENCE, NOT PERFECTION, DRIVES SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

“The pandemic showed that when urgency demands it, rapid and collective action is possible. The same drive is needed for climate change and biodiversity loss. But current political uncertainty and competing priorities are slowing the momentum, that’s why it’s critical to focus on what can be done today to drive impact.”

MADISON WRIGHT ON BUILDING CIRCULAR SUPPLY CHAINS WHERE NONE EXIST

“I work for a climate tech startup, which requires a ‘hustle’ mentality...In my role, I help brands set up takeback and refill programs to manage their materials more sustainably. A lot of this work involves creating supply chains to collect, sort, clean, and redistribute materials—something that big brands haven’t really tried at scale yet, especially in instances where it is tricky to get customers to participate.”



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DOLORES PIGRETTI ÖHMAN

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST AND LEAST AT YOUR CURRENT JOB?

I am grateful and committed to working on water-related issues as management director at the Hässleholms Municipality here in Skåne. The industry is currently facing some very exciting challenges, such as **ageing infrastructure, climate change adaptation, and emergency preparedness**. These are issues I am deeply passionate about, and my education at IIEE provided the tools needed to navigate them effectively.

There is, of course, a lot to do but it is truly worth it! I appreciate the dynamics of the role, which requires strong relationship-building skills, technical- and industry-specific knowledge, collaboration, and decision-making. I took on this new position in December. Before this, I worked at the same municipally-owned company, but at a corporate level as the sustainability manager without direct reports.

WHAT'S THE MOST VALUABLE LEARNING FROM THE EMP?

On a more personal note, my batch (B7) had an unforgettable year together. Fun, intense, interesting, and truly educational. Every lesson, every workgroup, every party, and every study visit is a story worth telling.

During my time at the Institute (and yes, it feels like it was a thousand years ago), everyone received a computer and a bike. I remember biking to Lund's water treatment plant, where some of my colleagues were riding a bike for the very first time in their lives, wobbling all over the place, struggling to stay upright. **Learning, laughing, and figuring things out together, no matter how many bumps along the way.**

Or the combined study trip to a salmon production, a beer brewery (with beer tasting, of course!), and a power plant. That autumn day also included the quintessential Swedish experience of mushroom picking. Why settle for just a few activities when you can do it all? Tired and weighed down with mushrooms, we couldn't leave the place on schedule because one of our friends got lost. In the good old days before smartphones, we divided into groups as it got darker, calling out for our missing classmate!



EMP MASTER'S PROGRAM • B7 • 2002

MANAGING DIRECTOR, WATER SERVICES

HÄSSLEHOLM MILJÖ • AB HÄSSLEHOLM, SWEDEN

HOMELAND: ARGENTINA

ADVICE FOR GAINING DEEPER INSIGHTS INTO SWEDISH CULTURE?

My view on Swedish culture might be shaped by my own experience but I find it rich, multifaceted, and interesting. As an Argentine born and raised in Buenos Aires, I moved to Sweden as the wife of a local and was eager to learn everything about my husband's homeland—its roots, culture, and history. Sweden is a vast country, one of the largest in Europe, and although there are shared values across the nation, **the culture is also shaped by regional differences** influenced by the environment, demographics, and historical context.

If you're looking to get a taste of Sweden's different regional identities without leaving Skåne, consider traveling to **Båstad** during the Swedish Tennis Open to get a vibe of Stureplan in Stockholm. A bike trip to the **Island of Ven** offers a glimpse of the archipelago in Gothenburg. **Ales Stenar**, a megalithic site, offers a fascinating connection to Sweden's Viking past. Lastly, welcome to my beloved adoptive hometown of **Hässleholm**—still part of Skåne, but with a distinct Småland feel. Nestled among deep forests, Hässleholm holds the echoes of historical resistance movements. In the late 17th century a group of residents in this area called Snapphanar fought on the Danish side during the wars against Sweden through guerrilla warfare.

MADELEINE HELMS

ADVICE FOR GRADUATES PURSUING A CAREER IN SUSTAINABILITY?

First, make sure you have an **abundance of resilience and optimism**—you are going to need it. The pandemic showed that when urgency demands it, rapid and collective action is possible. The same drive is needed for climate change and biodiversity loss. But current political uncertainty and competing priorities are slowing the momentum, that's why it's **critical to focus on what can be done today to drive impact**.

Setbacks are part of the process, which is rarely linear and so every step in the right direction matters. To sustain momentum, **your solutions must be practical and backed by a strong business case**. Aligning sustainability goals with financial and strategic priorities makes them harder to dispute, turning ideas into action.

Above all, remember that change takes time, but it does happen. History has shown that persistence pays off, and every effort contributes to the momentum needed for transformation. The world needs people who can adapt, push forward, and inspire others. Stay committed—progress is built by those who refuse to give up.

COURSES YOU ENJOYED THE MOST?

During a group project, our team got to work with the Swedish Ministry of the Environment on Stockholm+50, a landmark 2022 conference on global sustainability cooperation. Our task was to explore how to better integrate SDG 8 (decent work & economic growth), SDG 12 (sustainable consumption & production), and youth engagement into the event. Given the scope, we developed a research question: **What needs to happen to facilitate youth access to green jobs worldwide?**

To answer this, we conducted **an expert roundtable and interviewed over 30 experts and youth representatives** from organizations such as UN Youth Australia, the ILO, UNICEF, the US Business Council for Sustainable Development, and the Stockholm Environment Institute. This project stood out because it gave us the freedom to shape our research, collaborate creatively, and contribute to something meaningful. The final report remains one of my proudest achievements, and I still look back at it fondly when reminiscing about the EMP.



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CLIMATE & NATURE PRODUCT MANAGER

MSCI INC. • ZURICH, SWITZERLAND

HOMELAND: AUSTRALIA & GERMANY

ADVICE FOR NON-EU STUDENTS SEEKING JOBS IN THE EU/SWEDEN?

Build a strong network while you're here—your classmates, professors, visiting lecturers, and alumni can be key to finding job opportunities. The EMP alumni network is a valuable resource, so use it. Many jobs are filled through connections rather than applications. That's how I started out at MSCI. Sean Martin, an EMP graduate a few years before me, connected me to someone at MSCI who later became my boss. A strong network can help you move forward much faster. Be proactive, reach out, and don't hesitate to ask for advice—connections can make all the difference.

CONNECTION BUILDING

MSCI is always looking for talented individuals passionate about sustainability and finance. If you're interested in **opportunities in climate, ESG analytics, or sustainable finance**, I encourage you to check our careers page. If you find a role that interests you, feel free to reach out.

And if you don't have a finance background, don't worry—I didn't either when I joined, and so far, I've built a successful career here. What matters most is a strong interest and a willingness to learn.

MADISON WRIGHT

WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL SKILLS + TRAITS FOR YOUR CURRENT JOB?

I work for a **climate tech startup**, which requires a **'hustle' mentality**. It gives me the opportunity to be accountable for large accounts like Lego, L'Oreal, and Diageo, which is exciting because I get to create solutions they haven't seen before and share in the excitement. Seeing your work directly impact a client is incredibly rewarding. This experience has made me realize the importance of continuously growing my knowledge in this field. I **actively seek out conferences and learning opportunities to stay up to date**, especially as the space is constantly evolving in terms of regulations and technology. The sustainability field requires resilience, as budgets are often cut, and it's a challenge to consistently convince clients to focus on the end-of-life stage of their products.

HOW DOES YOUR WORK RELATE TO THE EMP PROGRAM?

My current work is very aligned with the topics we covered during the EMP program. I work with an international team made up of engineers, product designers, marketing, business development and finance experts. In my role, I help brands set up takeback and refill programs to manage their materials more sustainably. **A lot of this work involves creating supply chains to collect, sort, clean, and redistribute materials**—something that big brands haven't really tried at scale yet, especially in instances where it is tricky to get customers to participate. **Project management** is key in this role, and the topics we covered at the IIIIEE really match with my experience and what I'm doing now.

ANY ADVICE FOR NON-EU STUDENTS SEEKING JOBS IN THE EU/SWEDEN?

If you're a non-EU student looking for jobs in the EU or Sweden, I'd say start by **networking in the city where you want to live**. It makes a huge difference to know people locally (use the IIIIEE network!). If you're considering the UK, **the UK Government has a list of all the companies**



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PROJECT LEAD

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HOMELAND: UNITED STATES

that offer visas, which saves a lot of time!

While you're still a student, **consider applying to programs like UNLEASH and Climate KIC to build a strong network across the EU**. I would also use LinkedIn to look up people who have jobs you find interesting—and don't be afraid to send them a friendly message and ask if they'd be up for a quick coffee chat or call. It's an easy way to get insights and make some useful connections later down the line. It is a challenging process that takes a lot of time but know that you bring a lot to the table as an international worker!

RECOMMENDATIONS

CIRCULAR ONLINE

Daily news for sustainability professionals

JOB OPPORTUNITIES AT PENTATONIC

We are always hiring at Pentatonic, so check out our LinkedIn page for updates.