



Diane Chehab (MBA '05) has a professional architectural degree from the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, France, and an MBA from the Zicklin School of Business, Baruch College. She has lived and worked in the United States, Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

When she started working in fields other than architecture, she returned to school to obtain an MBA, while working full time at The New York City Department of Transportation. The MBA opened many more professional doors, although not quite those she had expected. “Lessons learned: it may be too late to find a position in finance, after a certain age; economics, finance, basic accounting should be taught to everybody; you could add to that basic information technology, marketing and statistics.”

She was not a typical student as she returned to school much later than most. Some of the professors were much younger than her, let alone the students. When she realized that the Zicklin program was nowhere to be found in the Wall Street Journal’s lists of MBA programs, she wrote to them, and was successful in obtaining a mention in one of their [lists](#).

A few years after completing the MBA, she left New York City Transit for the New York City Housing Authority where she worked as an IT Portfolio and Project Manager. One of the key projects was the Digital Van program, which was started in 2012, bringing laptops and wifi on wheels to low-income neighborhoods. The program's success received widespread media coverage, was recognized by the Mayor, and was a semi-finalist for a Harvard Kennedy School award.

Along with Epee Ellong, Diane published the French-language book, “De La Case A La Villa” (Riveneuve Editions) in 2014, on the evolution of African housing, with a focus on Cameroon, where she lived for over 12 years. The book is expected to be published in English soon by McFarland.

In 2015, she left New York first for Cameroon, working as a consultant for Cameroon’s first architecture school, ESSACA, and then on to San Francisco, while still consulting part-time for ESSACA, and researching new opportunities to work in the nonprofit sphere or to help businesses with their social media presence. There have been many chapters in her life, both professional and geographical: she’s on to the next one now.