

Since initiation of the Fellowships programme in 1982

More than 5,000 students and researchers have received a fellowship from "la Caixa" Foundation to expand their training of excellence

- **A total of 5,213 students and researchers have had the opportunity to train in the world's best universities and research centres thanks to the exemplary fellowships awarded by "la Caixa" Foundation.**
- **Overall, the institution has invested 304.8 million euros since initiation of the Fellowships programme in 1982 to enhance the talent of young students across all disciplines and drive cutting-edge research.**
- **Isidro Fainé, president of "la Caixa" Foundation, explains: "This is a truly transformative programme, capable of completely changing the lives of those who are awarded a fellowship, but also able to improve our society, since scientific advance, research, and education are without doubt the motor of progress."**

Barcelona, 6 November 2020. "la Caixa" Foundation has awarded more than 5,000 fellowships to expand the training of young talents and Spanish and foreign researchers since initiation of the Fellowships programme in 1982. Specifically, 5,213 people have had the opportunity to undertake postgraduate, doctoral or postdoctoral research studies at the world's best universities and research centres, thanks to the impetus of these highly acclaimed grants.

Notable among the disciplines chosen by fellows are Life Sciences (682 fellowships), Engineering and Technology (647), Medicine and Health (445), Business (340), and Philology and Linguistics (300).

"This is a truly transformative programme, capable of completely changing the lives of those who are awarded a fellowship by enabling them to pursue their training at the best institutions. We are convinced that supporting these

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extraordinary talents is also fostering change and improvement in society as a whole, since scientific advance, research, and education are without doubt the motor of progress," said Isidro Fainé, president of "la Caixa" Foundation.

"la Caixa" Foundation's Fellowships programme has a proven track record and is a point of reference among the university and scientific community. It is the most important programme promoted by a private entity in Spain, both for the number of fellowships granted and the rigour of the selection process, the variety of disciplines and the amount of funding given for each scholarship. The programme also stands out for the special attention and personal support paid to each fellow before, during and after their period of study.

Moreover, those benefitting from a fellowship form part of the "la Caixa" Fellows' Association, a community which has become a cluster of excellence made up of professionals from all areas who are true references in their fields. Such is the case with the computer engineer and philosopher Sergio Boixo (University of New Mexico, 2003), who has led Google to a historic milestone of technology by designing a quantum computer capable of doing calculations in a few minutes that would take a conventional machine years. Or the economist Mar Reguant (MIT, 2005), who has been chosen by the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, to advise his government on the subject of climate change in the framework of a new committee of experts who will address what the world will look like after coronavirus.

The Fellowships programme has also demonstrated that promoting mobility simply establishes bridges between Spain and other countries. By way of example, the chemical engineer Mercè Balcells (Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule Aachen, 1996) has been working for some two decades at MIT. Balcells is co-director of the MIT-Spain "la Caixa" Foundation Seed Fund programme, which promotes collaboration between MIT scientists and students and Spanish research centres, hospitals and companies.

And building bridges with Spain is not the only benefit; countless synergies and collaborations are also formed among the same community of fellows. Take the case of David Martín Porrás (University of California-Los Angeles, 2005), Pablo Gómez-Castro (New York Film Academy, 2008), Elisa Lleras (Columbia University, 2007), Elia Urquiza (California Institute of the Arts, 2006) and Carlos Marqués Marcet (University of California-Los Angeles, 2007). They are co-founders of the La Panda film, television and advertising production company,

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spearheaded by Spanish filmmakers based in Los Angeles whose goal is to bring together like-minded experts in this field and help other Spanish producers break into Hollywood.

These are just a few examples of the more than 5,000 lives that have been changed by these scholarships which, year after year, have demonstrated to be something more than financial assistance. The institution's Fellowships programme remains true to its founding philosophy: provide opportunities to young talents so they can develop and give the best of themselves for the benefit of society as a whole.

In 1982, the Fellowships programme for postgraduate studies outside Spain was set up with the aim of providing mobility at a time when going to study in other countries was a privilege reserved solely for the few. Today, these scholarships continue driving the mobility of talent and enabling brilliant young students to enrol in master or doctoral degree programmes at universities in Europe, North America (USA or Canada) and the Asia-Pacific area (Australia, South Korea, India, Japan, Singapore and China).

We have also been able to adapt to the new necessities. In recent years, the Fellowships programme has sought to strengthen frontier research in Spain and Portugal. To this end, two new initiatives were launched in the shape of the INPhINIT doctoral and, more recently, the postdoctoral Junior Leader fellowships programmes. Their aim is to attract and retain the best Spanish and international research talent and further high-quality, innovative research in Spain and Portugal. By means of a complementary training programme of excellence, these fellowships are intended to consolidate research skills and to foster an independent scientific career as an option for fellows' professional future.

Since the Fellowships programme was established in 1982, "la Caixa" Foundation has allocated a cumulative investment of 304.8 million euros to the training of students and support for researchers. In its first year, the programme was assigned a budget of 368,000 euros. Investment by "la Caixa" Foundation in the 2020 call was 29.7 million euros.

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