

student sup- port pro- gram

Impact Report
2022-2023

Dear Reader, It is my honour to share with you how the Student Support Program has grown from strength to strength over the last four years. The success of this program is built around three pillars: **Ignite**, **Attract** and **Equip**.

The first pillar, Ignite, seeks to inspire curiosity and passion for science in children. Through the Attract pillar, we recognise and enable talented individuals to study at EPFL by providing Bachelor and Master Excellence Fellowships. Finally, we launched Equip, where we support young people to broaden their skillset, helping them thrive in their future studies and careers.

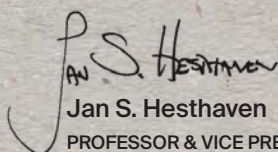
For the first time, this Impact Report includes a broader selection of testimonies from students to reflect the breadth of this program. You will discover a range of students, each of whom is embarking on an incredible and unique journey. Discover how Excellence Fellowships offered Lucie and Maxime much more than just financial support ([pages 12 and 13](#)). Or, read about Horia, on [page 19](#), a young woman from Afghanistan participating in the PhD Excellence Program and who shares her future dream with us. Go to [pages 14 and 15](#) to learn how Rayan and Charlotte's Summer in the Lab experience helped them further define their interests and offered valuable insight into their future career paths. To see the students speak first-hand about their experiences, flip through the Impact Report and find their videos.

It's my great pleasure to share with you that Hardship Fellowships have been included through a new fourth pillar entitled "**Maintain**". These fellowships enable students who face financial difficulties to fully dedicate themselves to their studies with peace of mind. I look forward to updating you on the impact of this new pillar on student lives in the next report.

Finally, I'd like to end this letter by personally thanking our many engaged and loyal donors, our Student Support Program ambassadors, and the students, staff, and professors for their incredible dedication. Without each of you, this program wouldn't be the great success that it is today.

Happy reading!

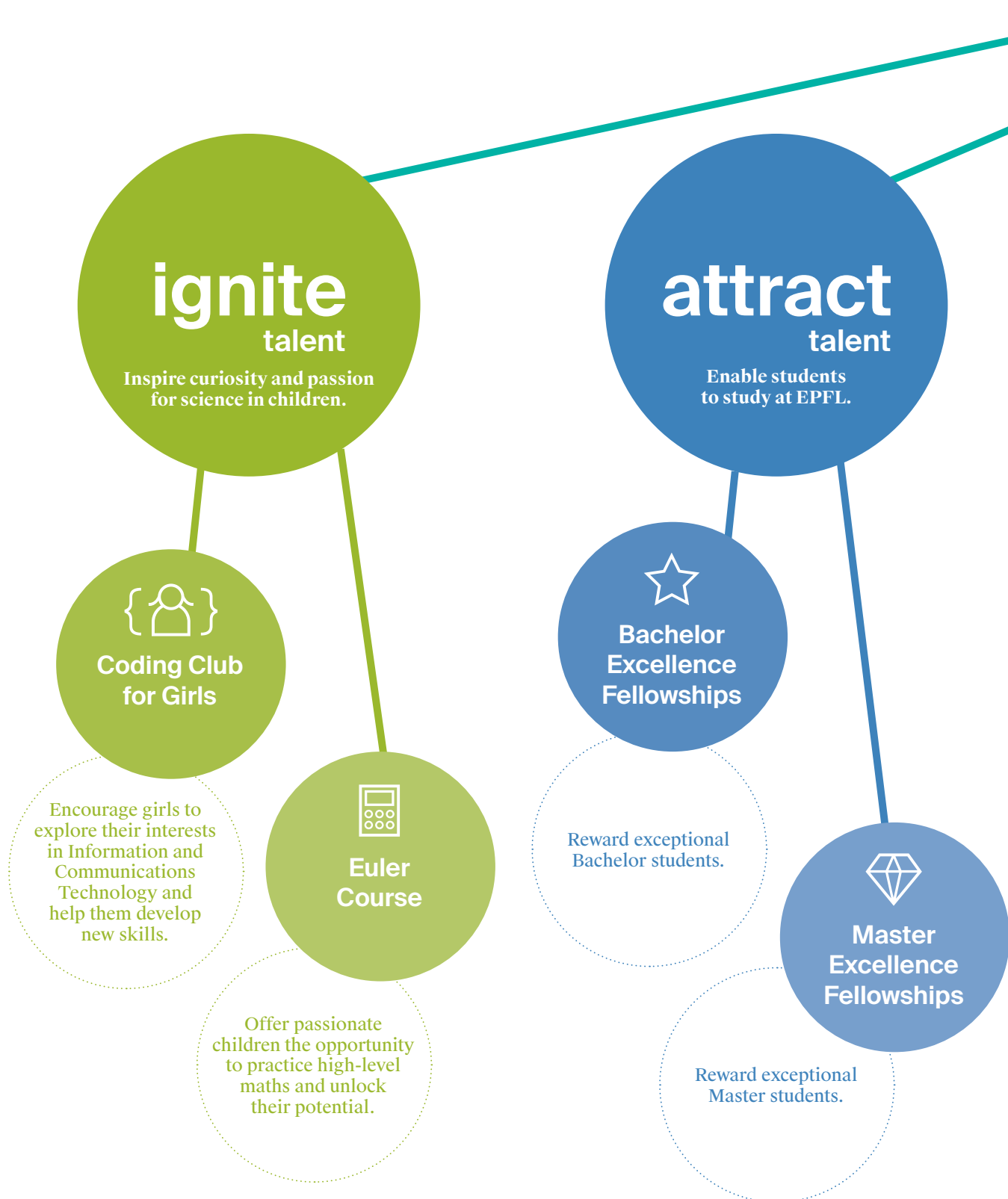
With warm regards,

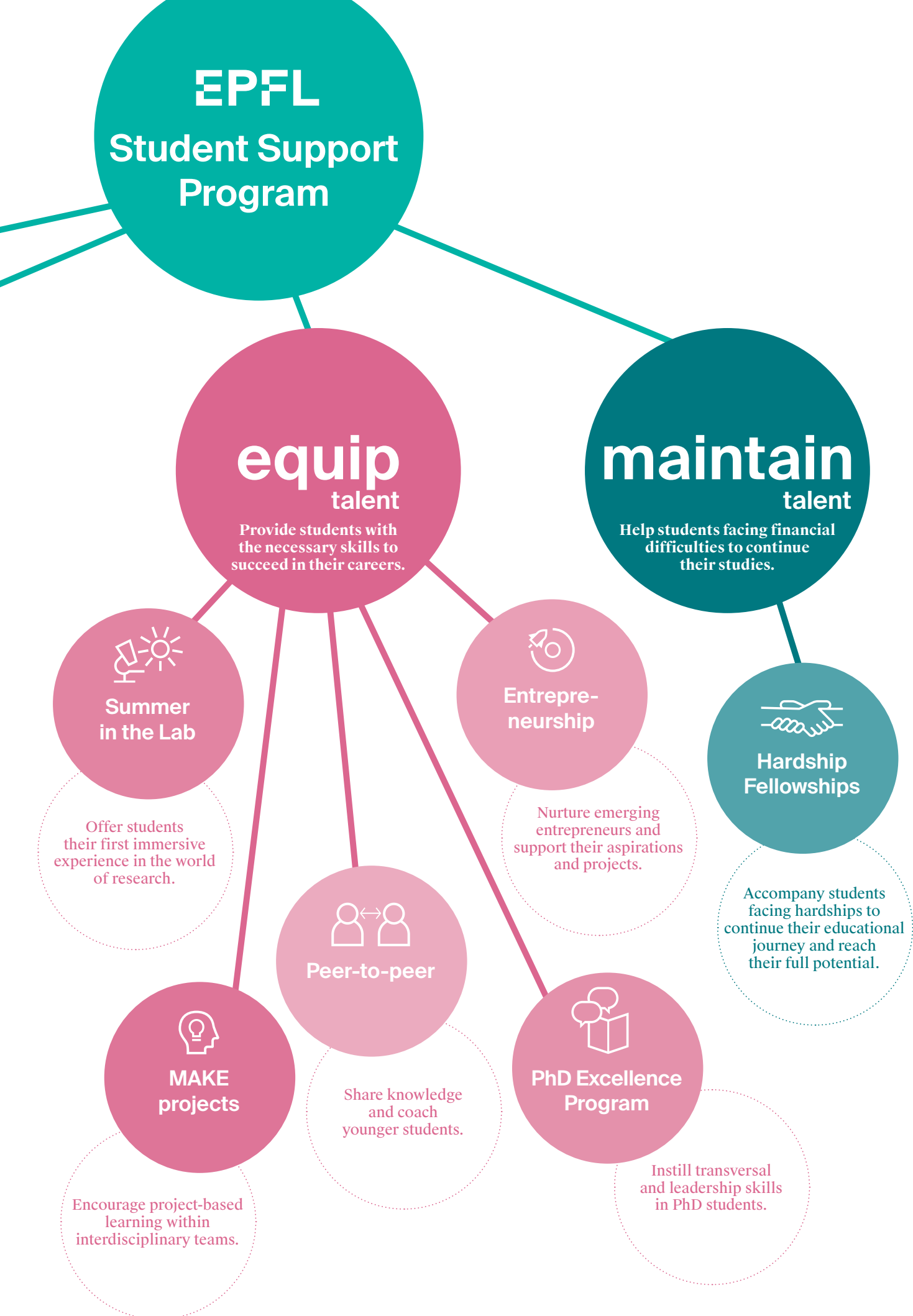


Jan S. Hesthaven

PROFESSOR & VICE PRESIDENT OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

In brief	4
Facts & figures	6
Donors	8
Ambassadors	9
 Coding Club for Girls	10
 Euler Course	11
 Bachelor Excellence Fellowships	12
 Master Excellence Fellowships	13
 Summer in the Lab	14
 MAKE projects	16
 Peer-to-peer	18
 PhD Excellence Program	19
Thank you	22
A word from the President	23

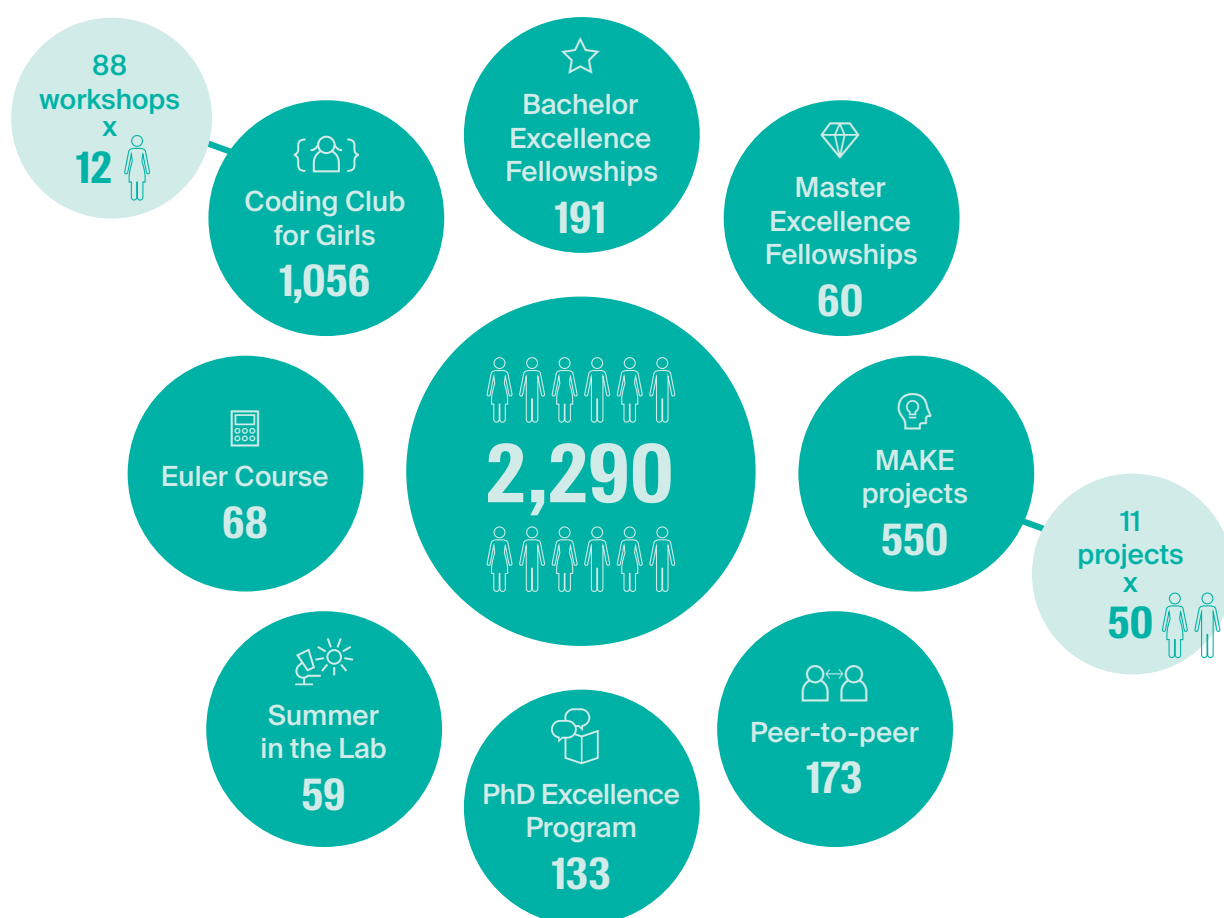




Facts & figures*

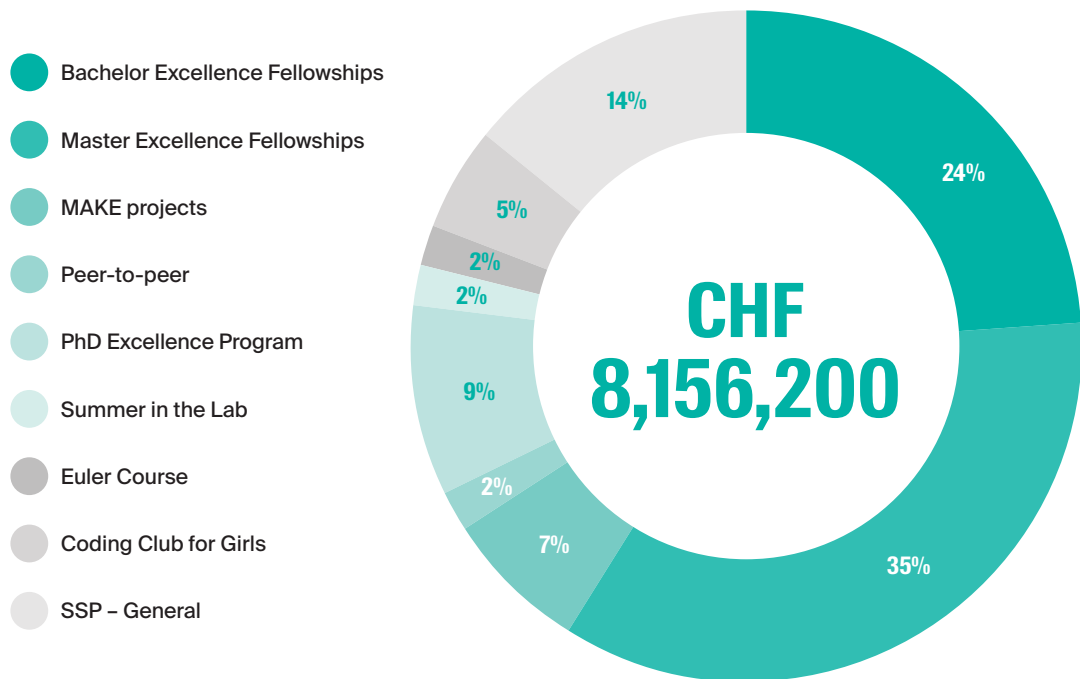
Our donors and partners support more than **2,200 beneficiaries** through the Student Support Program initiatives.

Beneficiaries



* as of August 2023

Donations received to date



Donations



Alumni



> 1/3 of the donations are linked to alumni and account for 47% of the total amount raised to date.

Do- nors

The generosity of our loyal donors continues to make a great difference in our students' lives. We are truly grateful to the following patrons and partners, as well as those who wish to remain anonymous, for their ongoing support.

Alan Howard

André P. Buchel

ALUMNUS DR. H.C MECHANICAL ENGINEERING '62

Anne-Sylvie Visseur Vauclair

Basil Panzer Trust

FAMSA Foundation

FEE - Fondation pour les étudiant-es de l'EPFL

Fondation du Domaine de Villette

Fondation Léonard Gianadda Mécénat

Fondation Novandi,
jeunesse & éducation

George Popescu

*ALUMNUS PHD COMPUTER
AND COMMUNICATION SCIENCES '16*

HOLDIGAZ SA

Incyte

LEISTER Foundation

Dr. Liu Shaoming

ALUMNUS PHD MICROENGINEERING '90

Luc & Irène Bauer Foundation

PPG

Schindler Holding Ltd

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We are delighted to announce that in our first year of offering online donations, we have received 35 in total, and we extend our heartfelt thanks to each donor for their generous support of the Student Support Program.

Am- bassa- dors

Damien Tappy

BOARD MEMBER OF FONDATION
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ENGINEERING '89*

Thierry Lombard

CO-PRESIDENT OF FONDATION
DU DOMAINE DE VILLETTE



{👤} Coding Club for Girls

1,196
beneficiaries

Through in-person and online workshops, the Coding Club for Girls offers girls the opportunity to familiarise themselves with a scientific mindset, benefit from mentoring, and practice coding in an environment that strengthens their confidence.

"I've had the pleasure of taking part in many workshops. My participation has helped me gain confidence in my own abilities and guided my choice of studies and career. When I turned 16, it meant a lot to me to continue my involvement with the club as a coach. This club enables young girls to see all the possibilities available in the fields of computing and science. It helps them to picture themselves in these fields, feel legitimate, and just like me, do what interests them without gender limitations." STELLA, CODING CLUB FOR GIRLS COACH AND FORMER PARTICIPANT

40
women
role models

FREE
for everyone

"I joined the club whilst studying at EPFL and continued to participate as a science mediator after my Master's. This experience helped me realize the importance of my role as a woman who has chosen to carve out her own path in the field of computer science. The Coding Club for Girls gives me the feeling that I'm doing something worthwhile that has a positive impact on people's attitudes. As a mentor and role model for the girls, my self-confidence has grown." TIM, CODING CLUB FOR GIRLS SCIENTIFIC MEDIATOR AND MENTOR

from **11 to 16** years old



VIDEO-INTERVIEW
OF STELLA
AND TIM

go.epfl.ch/CodingClubforGirls

"I've been a member of the club for 2 years. It's not just a course to learn computer languages, but also an opportunity to meet girls, share knowledge and, thanks to the online platform, communicate regularly. Thank you to all of those who have made this possible." MAXINE, CODING CLUB FOR GIRLS PARTICIPANT

100
workshops
per year in
15
cantons



Euler Course

Euler course
15th
anniversary

Established in 2008, the Euler course offers a distinctive math program tailored for talented young people, providing them with the chance to pursue their passion beyond the standard school curriculum.

“Thanks to the Euler course, I had the chance to connect with many peers who share an interest in mathematics. The course fueled my desire to further my studies in this field, where I discovered a passion for mathematical analysis—the very subject I’m now researching for my PhD. In parallel, I have the privilege of teaching the Euler course, which brings me joy as I share my passion for math to eager young minds. It’s incredibly fulfilling to contribute to a program that has profoundly influenced my academic journey.”

CARL, FORMER EULER COURSE STUDENT
AND CURRENTLY TEACHER OF THE COURSE



VIDEO-INTERVIEW
OF CARL
AND HÉLÈNE

go.epfl.ch/EulerCourse

from 11 to 18 years old

10 to 35
students per class

“It’s very complicated, but it’s ok because I enjoy being here and I have made friends.”

ANONYMOUS

~ 90%
of participants
come to study
at EPFL

“I discovered the art of demonstration and learned to express mathematical concepts rigorously. This exciting and rewarding course constantly pushes my limits and has given me greater organizational skills. It also fosters friendships by bringing together students who share the same passion, creating a unique environment and an exceptional atmosphere.”

HÉLÈNE, EULER COURSE STUDENT

“Everyone talks to everyone else, there is nobody left alone.”

ANONYMOUS

Program lasts
5 or 6 years

☆ Bachelor Excellence Fellowships

attract
talent



Lucie Gobat

Incyte Bachelor Excellence Fellowship

Lucie is an aspiring physicist as well as an accomplished artist with a passion for popularitizing science. The Bachelor Excellence Fellowship not only made her dream of studying physics at EPFL a reality, it provided invaluable support that helped make her first year a success.

AGE
19

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
France

BACHELOR'S
Physics

INSPIRED BY
Christophe Galfard
(physicist and writer)

While growing up near Nîmes (France) with her twin sister, Lucie wanted to become an Egyptologist. She went to the local library and devoured every book she could find. At the age of 13, she discovered the physicist and writer Christophe Galfard, and decided to turn toward science. "He has this incredible talent of being able to convey his passion for science through writing, even with children's books." She goes on to explain that Galfard's "Le prince des nuages" trilogy changed her life forever, turning her towards physics, a path she is absolutely certain of today. After working 50-hour weeks last year, Lucie is looking forward to summer vacation, which will allow her to devote time to her other passion: realistic drawing. "Drawing allows me to clear my mind. I don't think about anything else when I'm drawing. I'm totally in the moment." A single drawing takes her around 15 hours.



**VIDEO-INTERVIEW
OF LUCIE**

[go.epfl.ch/
BachelorExcellenceFellowship](https://go.epfl.ch/BachelorExcellenceFellowship)

Lucie chose EPFL partly because of its reputation and partly because the planets seemed to align to bring her here. "My sister was also coming to study in Lausanne (UNIL), so we could be roommates, and then I got the fellowship. It all worked out perfectly." Lucie is impressed by the size and scope of her physics courses, as well as by the caliber of her professors. "Not only are they excellent in terms of their knowledge of the subject matter, but they also know how to make us love it. They exude a real passion for teaching." Lucie's most memorable moment of the year was when she learned that she had passed her first semester. "I said to myself, I do belong here after all." Happy at EPFL, her favorite spot on campus is the Agora on Place Cosandey. "At dusk, it's really beautiful. I love the liveliness that reigns there!"

With our sincere thanks to the *McCall MacBain Foundation* who supports all the Bachelor Excellence Fellows through its *Leadership Development Program*.

The benefit of her Excellence Fellowship? "It was great to have so much support, especially during what is a really difficult first year." She describes her cohort as "kind and caring. We all helped each other in any way we could. We were a very close-knit group." She was amazed by the level of knowledge of the trainers and the scope of the workshops. The one that impressed her most was the workshop on communication and understanding emotions. "This workshop was interactive and very practical. I've already been able to implement some of the techniques in my life." Lucie is grateful for what the program has brought her. In addition to removing part of the financial burden from her parents, not insignificant with two daughters entering university in the same year, it has enabled her to acquire valuable skills and develop new friendships. What does the future hold for Lucie? "I'd like to find a way to marry realistic drawing with physics. That would be ideal."

Master Excellence Fellowships

attract
talent



Maxime Bourassa

Alan Howard Master Excellence Fellowship

Maxime is an inveterate optimist who firmly believes in the importance of data protection, both for companies and for citizens. Thanks to the Master Excellence Fellowship, he can concentrate fully on this domain.

AGE
24

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
Canada

BACHELOR'S
Electrical and
Electronic Engineering

MASTER'S
Cyber Security

INSPIRED BY
Claude Shannon
(mathematician)

While growing up in Laval, north of Montreal, Quebec, Maxime loved building from an early age and was already certain that he would become an engineer, just like his father. His father has always supported and encouraged him to follow his passions: "He encouraged me to dig deep and seek out studies that really inspired me, and to see them through to the end. He has had and continues to have a hugely positive influence on my life." What began with playing with LEGO® bricks turned into a passion for cryptography and eventually data science. Having just completed the first year of his Master's degree in Cyber Security, Maxime is grateful for the time offered by the Excellence Fellowship: "I can concentrate on my studies and give my best." A keen sportsman, in particular rock-climbing, Maxime appreciates being able to combine his studies with his other interests. "Switzerland is an outdoor playground. I've never had so many opportunities to keep fit while doing what I love in the great outdoors."

What does a Master's degree in Cyber Security at EPFL entail? "It's quite a broad subject once you get into it." Maxime focuses on data protection, but explains that cyber security encompasses, among other things, cryptography and security systems. What he particularly appreciates about his Master's program is that the first year is devoted solely to course work. "This gave me an idea of what I wanted to focus on and, I hope, will allow me to perform well when I go into research." During his semester project, which he is carrying out with Professor Troncoso, he is focusing on privacy and security issues in the context of the latest artificial intelligence models. "I discovered in this project that it's a huge challenge to create an artificial intelligence model that doesn't pose a major risk to privacy and security."

Maxime is impressed by the quality of teaching in his program. He admires the professors who are not afraid to push students to think outside the box: "The subject of a course is always much broader than the curriculum. I love it when professors talk about their research projects and the many possibilities they open up. At the end of the day, that's what I came here to learn." As for the EPFL campus, Maxime spends most of his time at the Rolex Learning Center: "I always try to have a view of the mountains from where I study. And there's so much to choose from!" When asked if after his Master's he'd rather go into industry or academia, Maxime keeps his options open. "The two are not mutually exclusive. I think an experience in industry would be beneficial, as it would give me a valuable perspective and enable me to pursue doctoral research that might have more practical applications." Whatever he decides to do next, Maxime will make sure that it corresponds to his values and allows him to maintain a certain balance in his life.



Summer in the Lab



CHARLOTTE GIRARD

AGE

25

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

France

BACHELOR'S

Materials Science
and Engineering

MASTER'S

Environmental Sciences
and Engineering

For Charlotte and Rayan, the Summer in the Lab program provided the opportunity to immerse themselves in the world of research. From optimizing machine learning algorithms to studying biofilms that transform their aquatic environments, this experience opened up the world of research to them, and gave direction to their studies and future careers.

What was your research project?

CHARLOTTE I worked on biofilms, which are multicellular communities, in aquatic environments. More specifically, I was interested in exploring how these communities play a fundamental role in the ecology of aquatic ecosystems. For this project, I was able to go out into the field – on a glacial plain at an altitude of 2,150 metres – a fantastic experience!

RAYAN I worked in the lab on theoretical approaches to finding more effective mathematical strategies that could enable machines to learn even faster. The aim was to optimize these mathematical algorithms and demonstrate their applications.



RAYAN HARFOUCHE

AGE

22

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Algeria

BACHELOR'S

Physics

MASTER'S

Physics with a minor
in Mathematics

What motivated you to enrol in the Summer in the Lab program?

CHARLOTTE With the idea of changing fields – from materials science to environmental sciences – I thought that doing an internship in a laboratory would be an excellent opportunity to fill in some of the gaps in my knowledge. It was a chance to get closer to the different laboratories in my new department, to the professors and PhD students. I also wanted to see if I was truly interested in research, because although the idea was very appealing to me, I needed to experience it first-hand.

RAYAN At the end of my Bachelor's degree, I thought about whether I wanted to do a PhD. To answer this question, I wanted to explore the world of research. The year before I took part in this program, I was inspired by the experience of a friend who had done an internship at the Swiss Plasma Center in a physics laboratory. He had been able to experience the world of research while doing exactly what he was interested in. That's what seemed possible with Summer in the Lab, and I wasn't disappointed.



What did this summer's experience bring you?

CHARLOTTE My experience in the field has reinforced the idea that the world is not always simple and straightforward. Problems that we didn't think of always pop up. In fact, the main job in research is to look at all the little things. This summer's experience helped me to better understand the work of a PhD student. I still don't know if I'm going to continue in this direction, but I now know I'm capable of doing a PhD and that the possibility is open to me. The program also allowed me to be recognized on my own merits, and to free myself from the status of student for a summer.

RAYAN It gave me a better idea of what research is all about and strengthened my desire to pursue a career in this field. Research often seems mysterious and inaccessible, whereas in fact it's a privilege to live one's passion on a daily basis. I appreciated the good atmosphere in the team, which is key to working together effectively.

Do you have a clearer idea of what you plan to do next?

CHARLOTTE These two months have confirmed that I made the right choice in changing departments to do my Master's in Environmental Sciences. I now know that I want to work in the domain of water, from the glacier to the wastewater treatment plant. I'm motivated to find ways of aligning our human interests with those of ecosystems.

RAYAN This program strengthened my resolve to do mathematics. I still don't know if I want to do a PhD, but thanks to this experience I know I have the ability to do one, and I have a clear idea of what it would entail.



**VIDEO-INTERVIEW
OF CHARLOTTE
AND RYAN**

go.epfl.ch/SummerInTheLab



MAKE projects

With these interdisciplinary projects, theory is put into practice and students develop key competencies in teamwork and project management.



Méline Cretegy

AGE, COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, SECTION

22, Switzerland, Life Sciences Engineering (Master)

PROJECT NAME

SensUs

PROJECT GOAL

To develop a biosensor that can detect the presence of the GFAP biomarker released by the brain when an individual suspects a head trauma by using just one drop of blood. This enables a rapid, effective and inexpensive diagnosis.

TEAM SIZE

12 people

YOUR ROLE

Co-captain of the whole team (managing organization, communication, administration)

YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES

Having an overview to establish deadlines, work priorities and how best to coordinate between teams.

3 SKILLS DEVELOPED

- Leadership;
- Collaboration (within the team and with external stakeholders);
- Ability to develop a protocol: critical thinking, problem-solving, risk management.

WHAT YOU'LL NEVER FORGET

The creation of our first prototype with the whole team, where we could see what worked and what problems remained to be solved.

YOUR FAVORITE SCIENTIST

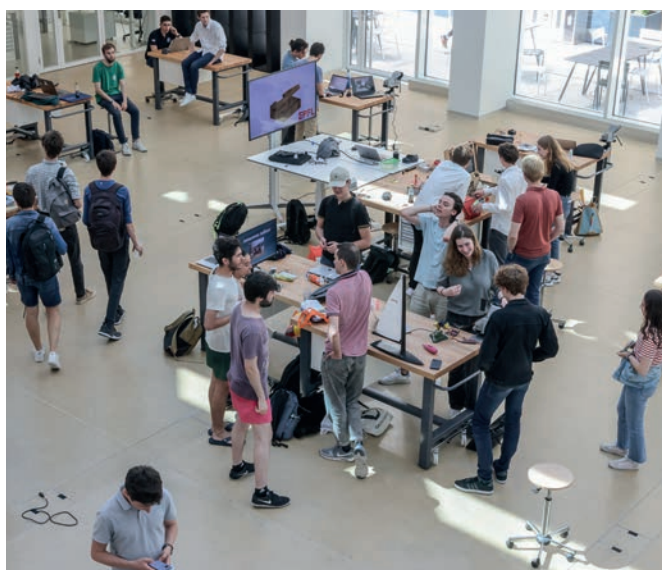
Katherine Johnson (1918-2020), famous physicist, mathematician and space engineer

YOUR FAVORITE BOOK

Mere Christianity, C.S Lewis

THE MUSIC THAT INSPIRES YOU

Brother Jack, Gable Price and Friends





Pierre-Jean Renaud

AGE, COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, SECTION
22, France, Mechanics (Master)

PROJECT NAME
RebuiLT

PROJECT GOAL
RebuiLT aims to research how to most effectively reuse materials and make use of low-tech in construction. It promotes sustainable construction and healthy living.

TEAM SIZE
20-30 students and 15 volunteers

YOUR ROLE
RebuiLT student project coordinator, site safety manager and sponsorship manager

YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES

- Finding where I fit into the world of construction;
- Coordinating all the responsible stakeholders on the building site to successfully complete the project.

3 SKILLS DEVELOPED

- Team management under shared governance;
- Communication skills: we had to learn how to talk about our project and our needs to professionals and financial backers;
- Legal and “diplomatic” skills in negotiating contracts.

WHAT YOU'LL NEVER FORGET

Being on a participative worksite where everyone was in a positive spirit of solidarity and interested in learning. It's the culmination of a long work, both on a theoretical and logistical perspective.

YOUR FAVORITE SCIENTIST

Marie Curie, with her two Nobel prizes and her altruism

YOUR FAVORITE BOOKS

- Integrating the circular economy: Towards reversible, demountable and reusable buildings, ADEME;
- Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind, H. Miyasaki.

THE MUSIC THAT INSPIRES YOU

Spotify radio stations



**VIDEO-INTERVIEW
OF MÉLINE
AND PIERRE-JEAN**

go.epfl.ch/MAKEprojects

2,000
hours of coaching

10,000
cups of coffee

50
km of 3D wire
printed

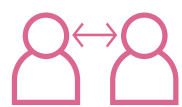
100
sleepless nights

100,000
hours of prototyping

**TO FIND OUT
MORE ABOUT
MAKE PROJECTS**



bit.ly/3jGLABG



Peer-to-peer



Through this peer-to-peer approach, tutors learn the art of knowledge transmission, develop their ability to teach and their sense of empathy and solidarity.



“It's very rewarding to support students and see the evolution in their understanding of physics. Tutoring forces us to respond quickly to complex and varied questions, which requires us to have a very deep understanding of the material being taught. This has enabled me to develop my listening and teaching skills. It's also an opportunity to take a fresh look at subjects you've already studied.” MAXIME ROUX, PHYSICS TUTOR (MASTER)

“In my first year, when I was lost in a subject, the tutors were always there to help me move forward and reassure me of my abilities. So, I also wanted to act as a bridge to connect students to their courses, to be the person who is comfortable enough in a subject to explain it and also close enough to students to be able to understand their difficulties. For me, the bond between tutors and students is the driving force behind tutoring. Advice is of more value when we've been through the same thing just one or two years before. As well as helping students with their work, as a tutor I like to discuss and reassure them about any doubts they may have about their current skills, and to offer advice on their choices for their next years at EPFL.”

LUCIE REYNAUD, TUTOR IN ANALYSIS II AND LINEAR ALGEBRA (BACHELOR)





PhD Excellence Program

equip
talent



Horia Hashimi

Horia means to make a difference with her life and work. From research on fat cells to setting up scholarships for women in Afghanistan, she has big dreams, and the program is helping her refine the skills she needs to make those dreams come true.

AGE

28

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Afghanistan

BACHELOR'S

Pharmaceutical
Sciences

MASTER'S

Pharmacy

**DOCTORAL
PROGRAM**

Biotechnology and
Bioengineering

INSPIRED BY

Her high-school
history teacher

As a small child growing up in Afghanistan, Horia had a simple wish – to be a cashier. “When cashiers start their shift, they come in with this big cash box and they slide it in. I thought, it’s their money, right? And then they leave with it again.” After emigrating to Switzerland when she was 6, her aspirations grew considerably. Throughout her life she has had one foot in two worlds: economics, management and psychology on the one hand, biology, pharmacy and research on the other. This is also the reason that the program fits her like a glove.

When asked about the subject of her PhD, her eyes light up. “A very interesting area of research is the behaviour of fat cells. A game-changing recent discovery is that some stem cells don’t accumulate fat. My goal is to understand why and how these cells don’t accumulate fat, and, why and how they are able to stop other cells from accumulating fat.” Horia thinks the greatest impact of this work will come with the development of a drug that mimics the behaviour that these stem cells have, to reduce rates of obesity. Natural, personalized cell therapies is the ultimate goal.

Her motivations for joining the program? “It offered management training, networking, communication and coaching skills – I mean, it was a no-brainer! You learn how to adapt to other people, how others function and how you function. It was very hands-on, and so it sticks with you. A certain aspect is explained and then you immediately put it into practice with an exercise.” She describes her cohort as “friendly, open-minded, inclusive. During the training, we were all very comfortable expressing ourselves, and the trainer played a big role in this. It was a very safe space.”

Where does she see herself after her doctorate? “I’m still on my dual-track trajectory where I want to pursue a career in research and become a professor, or do something hands-on in industry, even open something up myself.” What would she change about the world if she had a magic wand? Without missing a beat, she says “Judgement. Take judgement away, open yourself up, be empathetic. You can disagree, but don’t judge.”

Horia’s dream is to create a scholarship for women in Afghanistan to study abroad and then ideally return to Afghanistan to help build the education systems and infrastructure that will improve the quality of life for all. It was definitely her dream before the most recent government returned to power. “Now it’s more complicated, and more dangerous, as they would have to sneak out of the country. If the situation ever gets better, the idea is for them to go back after getting their education. This remains my dream.” A very noble dream indeed.



**VIDEO-INTERVIEW
OF HORIA**

[go.epfl.ch/
PhDExcellenceProgram](https://go.epfl.ch/PhDExcellenceProgram)



ignite talent



attract talent



Coding Club for Girls



Euler Course



Bachelor Excellence Fellowships



Master Excellence Fellowships



EPFL Student Support Program



equip talent



maintain talent



Summer in the Lab



Entrepreneurship



Hardship Fellowships



Peer-to-peer



PhD Excellence Program



MAKE projects

Thank you

“Thank you for allowing me to pursue my passions and for investing in my future. None of the experiences I’ve had at EPFL would have been possible without you!”

“Your donation turned a group of individually motivated students into a team of passionate engineers working together to develop an innovative diagnostic technological solution. Thank you!”

“I’m very grateful to the patron who allowed the Summer in the Lab program to change my life and my perspective on my university studies. Your contributions have helped me surpass myself, discover new skills and make new friends!”

“Thanks for the chance to learn and innovate. Your support empowered students like me to make their projects come to life. It broadens our horizon and makes a real difference in our learning.”

“I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to join the Euler Course. Thank you so much for your invaluable support that keeps this course alive, making it possible for other students to benefit from it!”

“With the PhD Excellence Program, I’ve acquired invaluable skills that go beyond traditional classroom and laboratory learning. A sincere thanks to all the generous donors who have made this exceptional training and life experience possible for myself and the other fellows of the program.”

“I’d like to sincerely thank the donors who made it possible for me to take part in the amazing Coding Club for Girls program, enabling me not only to learn about computing in a fun way, but also to consider it as a career path!”

A word from the President

Recognizing the fantastic achievement of the last four years, enabling the support of over 2,000 students, I am so grateful to everyone who has supported and accompanied this program. A sincere thank you to all of the donors who stand by our students and enable them to fulfil their potential through their educational journey. We could not have supported so many students to follow their dreams without your generosity.

As another year concludes, I'd like to wish the Student Support Program 'tout de bon' and I look forward to witnessing an ever-growing number of beneficiaries.

With sincere thanks,



Martin Vetterli
PROFESSOR & PRESIDENT

EPFL

go.epfl.ch/philanthropy

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If you would like to know more about the Student Support Program, please contact Catherine Janssens at catherine.janssens@epfl.ch or check out our website:



go.epfl.ch/philanthropy