



ANNUAL REPORT 2016

ESTABLISHED 1991

IN SHORT

The Swiss Study Foundation supports students at all universities and technical colleges who thanks to their personality, creativity and intellectual skills are expected to perform exceptionally well.

The foundation's mission is to encourage young people who are willing and capable of assuming leading positions in all sectors of society. Since its establishment in 1991 the Swiss Study Foundation has already invested 36 million francs in the domestic talent program.

2016

Support and Program

- 748 sponsored fellows, of which 159 in the French-speaking part of Switzerland and in Ticino: 387 women and 361 men
- 18 one-day selection seminars
- 120 new admissions
- 6 summer academies
- 32 multi-day seminars and intellectual tools
- 29 additional educational events
- Support and advice from mentoring professors at the place of study
- Counseling and networking offered by the foundation's head office
- 48 approved applications for financial support
- Approved amount in total: Fr. 203 500
- 33 sponsored fellows were awarded a scholarship
- Scholarships awarded amount to Fr. 698 476 in total

Voluntary Staff

- 55 lecturers acting as mentors and 127 assessors
- Many of the lecturers in our events and all the members of the Foundation Board and Committees work on a volunteer basis.

Financial Statement

- Expenditure Fr. 2 607 777
- Donations Fr. 3 500 933
- Fund and organization capital Fr. 5 611 497

Strategic goals of the foundation board

As a national institution, the Swiss Study Foundation is committed to promoting excellence widely at all the universities and technical colleges:

- The foundation aligns with a global perspective and positions itself as an internationally connected organization for the promotion of talents.
- In the years ahead the number of students sponsored will grow to 1000 (around 0,5% of all students in Switzerland).
- The foundation optimizes the quality of its offerings and thus reinforces its commitment to excellence also in its own activities.

EXCERPT FROM

THE ANNUAL REPORT 2016



PROMOTING THE BEST TALENTS FOR THE PAST 25 YEARS – A SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

On November 4, 1991 the Swiss Study Foundation was created as a new program fostering talented young scholars at university level. Exactly 25 years later, on November 4, 2016, 400 guests celebrated the anniversary in a truly worthy and inspiring setting, with plenty of music and considerations of thought leaders and sponsored fellows on the subject of «Promotion of talent and equal opportunities»

In the last quarter of a century the Swiss Study Foundation invested more than 36 million Swiss Francs in the promotion of talent and supported 1714 enthusiastic fellows in all subjects, at all universities and from all socio-economic groups in their aspiration to develop their abilities and to place them at the service of society.

Can our program also promote equal opportunities? We think so. In its history the Swiss Study Foundation never applied any quotas – not in terms of gender nor field of study nor background. But precisely for that reason, in our view, this program makes an important contribution to equal opportunity. Not to an absolute equality of opportunity – that would be an illusory objective, which might only be achievable by means of totalitarian measures. However, support programs that are awarded without distinction as to the person, but are only based on performance criteria and personal commitment, have an exemplary effect on society that should not be underestimated. Not socio-economic factors, background, status or relationships, but only personal achievements count. The fact that women – even without quotas – have accounted for more than half of the sponsored fellows for many years now, seems almost too trivial to mention. Similar developments today emerge with regard to students that come from a migrant background and modest financial circumstances. The structure of scholarships in recent years underscores our commitment to a needs-based support. When achievement is all that counts, talents can prove themselves. In combination with the general permeability of our dual education system, the reward of achievement and commitment is an important pillar for a just and at the same time innovative society that lets growth and advancement happen – and coincidentally absorbs a drop in societal status that might come with it.

Even after 25 years, the Swiss Study Foundation is still the only institution in Switzerland that gives a specific weight to the secondary school grades (Matura). The signal effect of this type of promotion fosters a social climate that offers everybody the chance to fully develop his or her talents.

The number of extraordinary talents is limited. The promotion of the best is thus always a selective, i.e. also an arbitrary process. Incidentally, the Swiss Study Foundation intends to continuously increase the number of students sponsored in the coming years, of course this will be done without compromising on the qualitative criteria. Students that want to be admitted to the program have to demonstrate their academic excellence and their social commitment and continue to prove their engagement throughout the entire course of the funding.

Also in 2016, the Swiss Study Foundation dedicated its resources to reaching these objectives, and we will report on our activities in the following. In our endeavors we are in the lucky position of being able to rely on the extraordinary commitment of over two hundred experts who put their abilities and time at the service of our goals on a voluntary basis. They all have earned our sincerest gratitude. They make an invaluable contribution to a Switzerland that is innovative, equal opportunity as well as solidary and despite growing global turbulences is well equipped to face the future with confidence. Is there a better hobby than this type of voluntary commitment?

The Swiss Study Foundation is continuously on the lookout for ideational and financial support. If you would like to support the promotion of the best talents, do not hesitate to contact us! The foundation office is happy to advise you on what is the best option for making your very own personal contribution to this now adult, national collaborative exercise.

Prof. Dr. Antonio Loprieno
President of the Foundation Board

Prof. Dr. Cla Reto Famos
Director



Interview originally in French

PORTRAIT EHTESHAM SHAMSHER (*1991)

One has to imagine a young PhD student in medicine, invested in cutting edge research at the Institute of Ophthalmology at the University College London and used to sterile white hospital hallways, roaming the unpaved roads of Sargodha, Pakistan. Ehtesham Shamsher has come to visit his father's family, always welcomed with the same warmth and the same curiosity, in this country where he has never lived, but that he flies to regularly. He feels good here, appreciates the hospitality, and at the same time expresses his regret about the hardship that weighs so heavily on some families. He remembers a man affected by a cardiovascular disease, one of his father's friends, doomed by the lack of access to care.

«There is some infrastructures, in the big towns, that allow people to seek treatment, but one has to know where they are and how to get there, not to mention the money that one will have to spend. Going forward, I would love to take advantage of my stays to perform charitable ophthalmologic operations. That would allow me to directly provide efficient help.» As a matter of fact, it is very frustrating to contribute to the progress of medicine, while at the same time realizing that health is a privilege that is difficult to access.

For Ehtesham Shamsher medicine was not a childhood dream, but in retrospect turned out to be the obvious choice. A teenager with a passion for science, he was inclined toward the EPFL, but in the end he was captivated by the medical studies at the University of Geneva. This option allowed him to continue to apply his knowledge of mathematics and physics, while still including the human contact with the patients, an essential aspect for him. «During medical consultations people agree to show themselves naked, to share their problems. It is hard not to be affected by that!»

And why ophthalmology in particular? «Everything concerning the brain and sight fascinated me, and from a medical perspective, the retina is part of our nervous system. Incidentally, when you work on the eye, you often have the privilege of tangibly treating a patient and obtaining immediate results. That is not always the case: in neurology for example, you are often confronted with diseases, for which you can only delay the symptoms without being able to successfully treat them. To be able to take care of somebody's eye sight is very gratifying, and the appreciation of the patients is very precious to us.»

His research allows him to take advantage of this proximity between the eye and the brain. Ehtesham studies the beneficial effects of resveratrol, a molecule found in grapes, cocoa beans and peanuts, on diseases like glaucoma or Alzheimer. By studying the effect of this molecule on the retina, he will be able to extend his conclusions to the brain cells, by using the eye as a window to the brain.

This three-year doctoral project at the prestigious university of UCL could only be realized thanks to two scholarships that Ehtesham received: one granted by the university itself and one by the Swiss Study Foundation. After having received assistance from the Foundation to study in the United States and in England for some months and having participated in a good number of events, among which a visit to the CERN and a rhetoric course, Ehtesham obtained the annual scholarship to be able to begin with his research.

«At the moment I am primarily trying to create a drug that will contain enough resveratrol to be effective. I am therefore developing some pharmacology skills, since the aim is to combine the excipients to obtain a stable formulation, with the highest percentage of this molecule possible. One does not only have to ensure that this percentage does not decrease in time, but also that it can be absorbed by the body.» During this first PhD year, Ehtesham will thus be more a chemist than a biologist, and it is only later that he will be able to test his products in vivo, for example on mice suffering from glaucoma. In the hope, of course, that in a few years' time patients affected by diseases that today are incurable will be able to benefit from these breakthrough treatments.

In the meantime, Ehtesham will continue on his path, trying to balance his time between research, teaching and clinical care. Beyond the laboratory he is fascinated by the complexity of ocular diseases that are often the consequences of other health problems without any direct link to the eye. «These studies have taught me about the importance of not only focusing on the illness of the patient, but to also look at his or her experiences and beliefs that turn out to be inseparable from the person, and understanding them is essential to the treatment of the patient in the best possible manner.»

For this young, talented and altruistic doctor the eye is truly the window to the soul.

Text: Alice Bottarelli, Swiss Study Foundation scholar

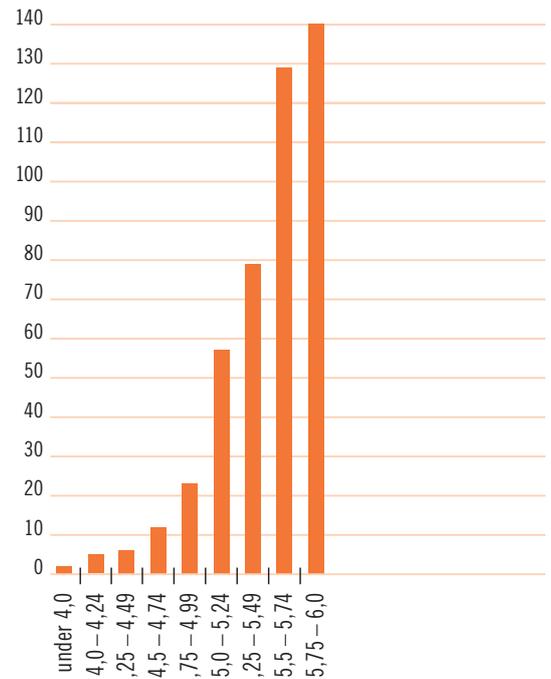


STUDENTS SUPPORTED 2016 STATISTICAL INFORMATION

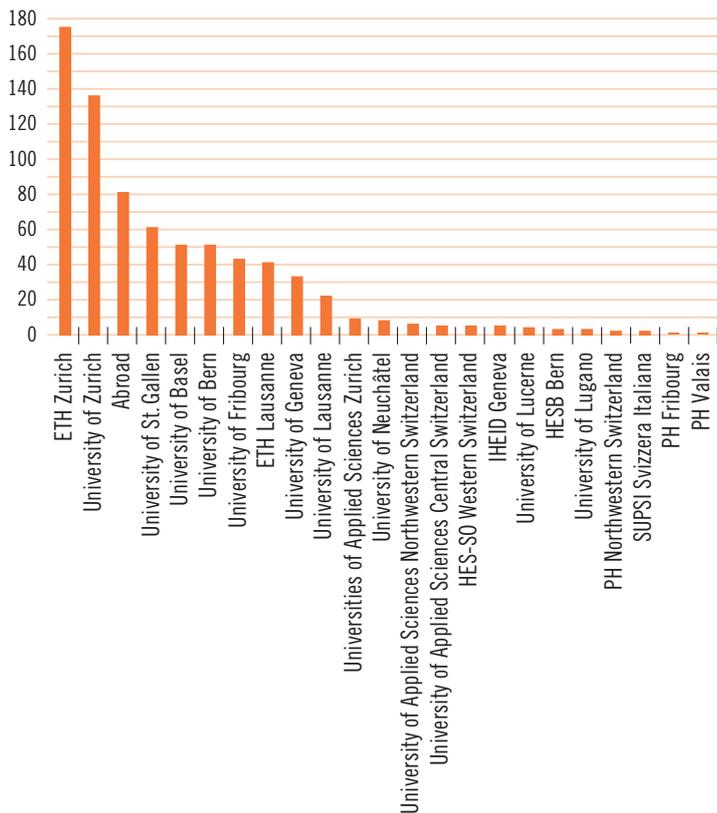
(As per 31.12.2016, previous year's figures in brackets)

- Number of students promoted: 748 (687), of which 158 (181) PhD students, 159 (144) at universities in the French-speaking part of Switzerland and Ticino and 81 (83) abroad.
- Admissions: 120 (102), of which 58 (56) women and 23 (23) at universities in the French-speaking part of Switzerland
- Degrees in the reporting year 123 (107), of which with doctorate 20 (5)
- Study Foundation students by gender: 387 (350) women and 361 (337) men.
- From the establishment of the foundation a total number of 1714 students have been sponsored.
- The average grade of the 454 reported exam results resulted in a value of 5,48 (previous year: 422 grades reported, average 5,48)
- 45% (47%) of the students sponsored study the subjects mathematics, natural sciences, information technology, technical sciences and pharmacy/medicine

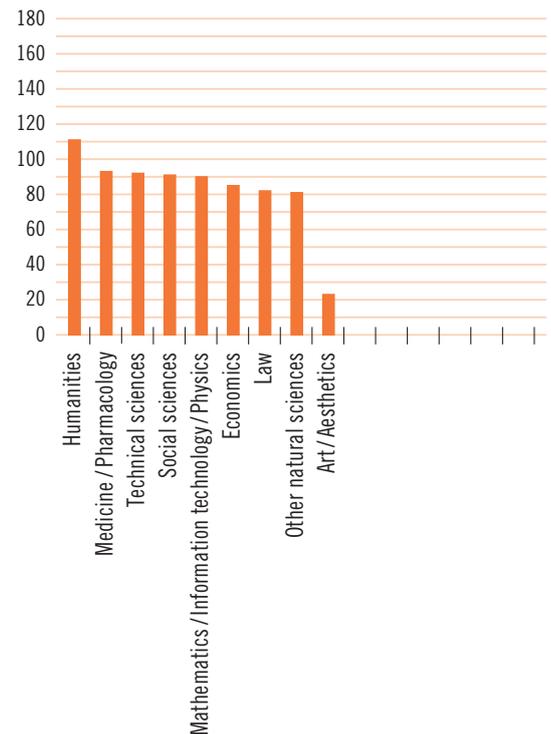
Grades 2016



Students by University 2016



Students by Faculty 2016





Interview originally in Italian

PORTRAIT SIMONA DAGUATI (*1994)

Simona Daguati grew up in Igis (GR) with parents that hailed from Poschiavo and discovered her passion for mathematics during her years at the secondary school. At present she is a master student in mathematics at ETH in Zurich and she chose this direction for three main reasons: firstly, she is fascinated by the logical rigor of the ideas, of the structures and of the demonstrations that distinguish it. Secondly, mathematics has innumerable practical applications, as for example in finance or insurance, and it is striking how this subject permeates our everyday lives and all the things it allows us to create. Finally, for Simona it is an exceptional form of exercise and discipline for the analytical capabilities.

And Simona has a brilliant analytical mind that already in 2012 received a prize for the best matura grade in her lyceum in Schiers. From 2014 on, Simona also worked as an assistant at the polytechnic. Her tasks in this position are preparing and holding exercise sessions in class as well as correcting the exercises that the students submit back. Simona has also held courses for first year students preparing for the exams and offered workshops on how to plan an appropriate preparation for the examination period. Given her predisposition for teaching it is therefore not surprising, that after obtaining her master degree, Simona intends to continue her studies for one more year to obtain the teaching diploma in mathematics for secondary schools.

At present Simona is specializing in the probability theory, statistics and their applications, in particular with regard to actuarial mathematics and the applications in the area of statistics of clinical data for medical purposes. In the next few months Simona will work on her master thesis that is indeed dedicated to a project in the area of clinical statistics.

Member of the Swiss Study Foundation since March 2013, Simona had the opportunity to participate in numerous events and trainings as well as the summer academy.

These events have been very helpful and allowed her to meet politicians and other personalities that she would not easily have encountered to exchange ideas in her everyday life. Simona has taken part in interesting presentations and roundtables, as well as excursions such as to the EXPO in Milan in 2015. What Simona appreciates most about the events of the Swiss Study Foundation is the fact that interdisciplinary discussions take place with the other members participating in the event. The conversations that arise in these settings are in fact fascinating and enriching.

Simona has also played an active role within the Foundation organizing the event «Meeting Point Bern» together with three other foundation members on 29 November 2016, where the subject of a mandatory paternity leave was discussed. Her strong commitment, not only at an academic level, was recognized in 2014, when she received a scholarship from the Suyana Foundation that allowed her to spend a semester abroad at the University of Göteborg, in Sweden, in the spring of 2016. Thus, Simona was able to concentrate with more ease on her studies and on her associational commitments.

There was no lack of professional experiences either; in 2015 Simona completed a four-month internship with the actuarial team of Ernst & Young Ltd. in Zurich. During this internship she was able to directly put her mathematical abilities gained during her university studies into practice, when she was asked to create models for different products intended for life insurances. Therefore, once she will have obtained her teaching diploma for mathematics, Simona is thinking of rejoining the actuarial team and completing her training also in this area.

Besides all her very important academic and professional commitments Simona is also involved in voluntary activities. From 2009 to 2016 she was the leader of the CEVI (a Christian Youth Association) of Igis-Landquart. In this role she organized numerous activities for a group of young women, such as games, singing, manual labor and similar practical activities.

Text: Costanza Naguib, supported by the Swiss Study Foundation



PORTRAIT

VIVIANE LOOSLI (*1995)

In the summer of 2016 Viviane Loosli completed her bachelor in Life Science Technologies with focus on pharma-technology at the College of Life Sciences FHNW. At present she is taking the Drug Sciences master course at the University of Basel.

Dark blue on white

Doing good for people – Viviane goes one step further and specifies at the same time how she wants to achieve her goal: using better drugs with fewer side effects. Since earliest childhood she has been driven by this wish, maybe also because her grandfather was a chemist. «I have simply always wanted this. We had a school project in which we corresponded with pen pals in India. I remember one exchange during which we talked about our career aspirations; I already knew then and it was also the first documentation of my wish, I have it dark blue on white.» Viviane seems inconspicuous and delicate, in the conversation however you are quickly assured that you are sitting opposite a very sharp mind. Viviane is purposeful, thinks fast, analytical, logical –she plans and sorts things out, step by step and does not waste any time on unnecessary thoughts. And she is very precise: she does not talk about black on white, when she remembers the written proof of her early ambitions – no, Viviane remembers the color of her writing exactly and with acrobatic ease and quite sassily adjusts the expression to suit her needs. «I inherited the analytical mind from my father» she states. He is originally from Burgdorf and works as a civil engineer; the mother is from the canton of Vaud, she dedicated herself with passion to raising her children and now works again as a secretary. Viviane has a younger brother who is busy with an apprenticeship as computer specialist. Due to the origins of her parents they grew up bilingual.

Inner Fire

The university education was not a priority for Viviane at first, because her plan was elaborate and pragmatic: After the apprenticeship as laboratory chemist and at the same time obtaining the vocational maturity qualification, at most she would do a master at a university of applied sciences; after that she wanted to get back to the professional world and contribute to the improvement of medication with new formulations. Her inquisitiveness and scientific curiosity however continued to drive her ambitions and she decided to also pursue PhD studies. When our conversation touched upon pharmaceutical sciences, Viviane's eyes begin to shine: «I am fascinated by the fact that people react differently to one and the same medicine. There is a lot we can achieve with drugs – nevertheless every drug will still have side effects, no matter how good it is.» She is particularly taken by galenics – the packaging of drugs into pills, syrups, solutions and much more: «Just think about everything that needs to be considered when an eye ointment is produced!» Her enthusiasm helped her to obtain a bachelor at the university of applied sciences as the best in her year with a grade of 5.94, which was honored with the Roche Diploma Award at the graduation ceremony. In her bachelor thesis Viviane analyzed single-use syringes: «A syringe has to be coated with silicone all along the piston. Without this coating the content of the syringe would never find its way into the bloodstream of the patient.» The bachelor thesis brought insights to light that had not been described in the literature before. Therefore it was decided that Viviane's results would be published in a scientific journal. «It is good to plan in life. But not too much. Things don't always go as planned.» Viviane would never have believed it a few years ago, but now she can very well imagine an academic career. An important concern for her is the promotion of women in research. «I remember one of my maths teachers, who encouraged me tremendously. If I should ever lecture, I would like to inspire more women through my teaching.»

Text: Sandro Christensen, Swiss Study Foundation scholar



Alumnus Kaspar Etter has been teaching the seminary on information technology since 2013. During the compact course students learned about the functioning of hardware and software, the difference between the Internet and the Web, and the security of information through cryptography. The program also included practical exercises and a visit to the computer museum in Solothurn.

DISTINCTIONS AND PRICES

In 2016 twenty fellows obtained a full or half grant of over 5000 Francs for their stay abroad:

Bühler Janina Larissa, Chautems Marc, Cortada Maurizio, Didisheim Joanna, Eberhart Sara, Ernst Kathrin, Flütsch Andrin, Isabella Giulia, Kilcher Constantin, Küng Johannes, Marty Simeon, Mégret Yves, Nöbauer Bernhard, Pelloquin Gabriel, Philipp Adrien, Serwart Jan, Spirig Yoko, Strub Moris, Ulrich Mathias, Zermin Laura

In the following discover the students whose work was rewarded with prices and distinctions:



Mauro Salazar

Mauro Salazar became a member of the Swiss Study Foundation in 2012, due to the success of his maturity exam project (developed with Andrea Agazzi) that won various national and international awards. He studied mechanical engineering at the ETH Zurich, where he obtained the Outstanding Bachelor Award for the best grade average. For his master studies he obtained the Excellence Scholarship and Opportunity Award. He developed his master thesis at the EPFL in Lausanne in 2014 on the control of low energy consumption; this work was presented at the Control and Decision Conference in Osaka. The quality of his research earned him the ETH Medal. In March 2015, he started his doctoral studies at ETH Zurich where he researches the energy management of hybrid vehicles in collaboration with a prestigious Formula 1 team. He is very passionate about art, literature and music, plays the piano and is the keyboardist of the rock band Topsy Road.



Odile Ammann

Odile Ammann is a PhD student in international law at the University of Fribourg under the supervision of professor Samantha Besson. After her bilingual law studies in Fribourg including a one-year stay at the Centre for Transnational Legal Studies in London, she was an intern in law firms in Zug and London, at the FDFA and the Court of Justice of the European Union. During her thesis she wanted to complete her legal knowledge with a master in law (LL.M.) from the Harvard Law School. The North-American interdisciplinary approach led her to get interested in the empirical approaches to law and the collaboration with specialists in empirical and computer methodologies. In 2016, Odile obtained a Summer Academic Fellowship of the Harvard Law School and she had the opportunity to present her research at the Yale Annual Doctoral Scholarship conference. Odile is in the process of finalizing her PhD with a research stay at Oxford University.



Rayan Aebi

Armed with a scientific maturity diploma from a Lausanne gymnasium, Rayan Aebi chose to pursue a bachelor in mechanical engineering and design at the Arc Upper School of Engineering in Neuchâtel. His outstanding results earned him a robotics prize and a mention of excellence, in particular after his bachelor thesis on a connected medical watch. Supported by a Suyana scholarship Rayan committed to a first master course in economics at the Nova School of Business and Economics (Nova SBE) in Lisbon. At present he is pursuing a second master in international management at CEMS between Nova SBE, the London School of Economics and the GSOM in St. Petersburg. During his two master courses, Rayan won the first entrepreneurship award of the Nova Idea Competition. In addition, he was chosen to be part of communities for young leaders and innovators under 30, the Global Shapers of the World Economic Forum as well as the Sandbox Network.



The art of negotiation lies in recognizing the central influencing factors, responding to them and being able to purposefully affect the negotiation process. Only if you make the most of your bargaining space, you can obtain sustainable negotiation success. This principle was trained at the seminar «Practical Negotiating Skills» based on theory and practical examples. In addition, negotiation examples from the personal experience of the participants were simulated.



Timo Wild

Timo Wild from Appenzell won the Swiss Championship in category 3 of the Swiss Drummer and Percussionists competition when he was 14. After his maturity exam and the military music recruit school he completed his bachelor of arts in Jazz at the university of Lucerne – Music. In January 2015, he passed the preliminary exam in Paris for the New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music in New York and was awarded the Provost Scholarship by the New School. In the same year he was accepted into the Swiss Study Foundation and was one of the lucky recipients of the Ernst-Göhner-Scholarship. From August 2015 until December 2016 he lived, played and studied in New York. At the end of 2015 he was accepted onto the Dean's List of the New School. In New York he had the opportunity to collaborate with many top-class musicians and was able to grow immensely with these new experiences. Timo's highest goal is to be able to journey through life with passion and respect and to be able to touch people emotionally with his music.



Carla Cordin

Carla Cordin pursued history and Slavic studies at the university of Basel. During her studies she participated in the organization of various events of the Foundation. After obtaining her degree, she started her doctoral studies in Eastern European history. For her dissertation on the autobiographical records of a Russian lawyer sponsored by the Swiss National Foundation she worked in archives in Moscow and St. Petersburg and spent one semester at Cornell University in the United States. She submitted her work at the end of 2016 and shortly after she devoted herself to a new challenge. The Scientific Politics Scholarships Foundation granted her a one-year scholarship that allowed her to work in the parliamentary services at the Federal parliament building

and thus gain valuable insight into the political processes and operating principles of parliamentary commissions. This activity combines all of Carla Cordin's interests at the interface between politics, administration and science.



Bettina Meyer

Early in life Bettina Meyer discovered her enthusiasm for track and field athletics, which demands a combination of athletics, technique as well as mental concentration and self-confidence. As Swiss champion in the junior category she was allowed to start for the national team and celebrated a victory in the 400-meter hurdles at the Junior Team European Championship. Thus the qualification for the U20-EM seemed within reach. Unfortunately, a knee injury set the athlete back so that she missed the qualification by just one tenth of a second. She then focused on her physics studies at the ETH Zurich all the more. Despite the demanding studies she kept her passion for the physical and mental challenges of competitions as a welcome complement to the abstract world of physics. In 2013 after completing her studies «with distinction» she started another attack with the «adults»: With the four x 400m relay team of the TV Unterstrass Zurich Bettina won silver in 2015 and gold in 2016 in the Swiss Championships. In the single 400-meter hurdles race she undercut the magical 60 seconds threshold and ended her eventful career with a bronze medal at the open Swiss Championships in 2016.



FOUNDATION BODIES

(as per 31.12.2016)

* Foundation Board Committee

FOUNDATION BOARD

President and Vice President

- Loprieno Antonio, Prof. Dr., University of Basel, President of the Foundation Board *
- Hengartner Michael, Prof. Dr., Rector of the University of Zurich *

Members

- Athanas Peter, Prof. Dr., Curator, Werner Siemens Foundation
- Gartenmann Thomas, Dr., Managing Partner, aergon AG *
- Givel Reto, Dr., Head of Secondary School Department of the Canton of Zurich
- Hirayama Martina, Prof. Dr., School of Engineering ZHAW
- Looser Ulrich Jakob, Dipl. phys. ETH, lic. oec. HSG, Partner, BLR & Partners AG *
- Martinoli Piero, Prof. Dr., President the University of Italian-speaking Switzerland, Lugano
- Naef Reto, Dr., Head Research Operations, Novartis, President of the Contact Group for Research Matters (CGR)
- Noser Ruedi, member of the National Council, Noser Management AG
- Rahier Martine, Prof. Dr., Rector, University of Neuchâtel
- Springman Sarah M., Prof. Dr., Rector, ETH Zurich
- Widmer Müller Franziska, Dr., former Rector, Secondary School Rychenberg

Honorary Members

- Eberle Meinrad, Prof. em. Dr., ETH Zurich, honorary member
- Kubli Eric, Prof. em. Dr. Dr. h.c., biology, University of Zurich, initiator and foundation member, honorary member

COMMITTEES

Committee for Selection and Individual Mentoring

- Gartenmann Thomas, Dr. aergon AG, Committee President
- Baumgartner Alfred, Dr., Secondary School Hohe Promenade, Zurich
- Famos Cla Reto, Prof. Dr., Director Swiss Study Foundation
- Hiller Odermatt Sebastian, Prof. Dr., University of Basel (alumnus)
- Però Daniela, lic. phil., Manres AG
- Schenk Jenzer Elisabeth, Rector, Secondary School Kirchenfeld (resigned 2016)
- Tardo-Styner Christina, co-rector Secondary School Solothurn

Committee for Education

- Hengartner Michael, Prof. Dr., Rector University of Zurich, President of the Committee
- Famos Cla Reto, Prof. Dr., Director Swiss Study Foundation
- Huppenbauer Markus, Prof. Dr., University Research Focusing on Ethics, University of Zurich
- Pichonnaz Pascal, Prof. Dr., Dean Law Faculty, University of Fribourg
- Riecher Anita, Prof. Dr., Head Physician Psychiatric University Policlinic (UPK), Basel
- Rippl Gabriele, Prof. Dr., English Literature University of Berne
- Van Schaik Carel, Prof. Dr., Anthropology, University of Zurich

Committee for Finances and Fundraising

- Looser Ulrich Jakob, Dipl. phys. ETH, lic. oec. HSG, Partner, BLR & Partners AG, President of the Committee
- Eberle Meinrad, Prof. em. Dr., ETH Zurich
- Ehrat Felix R., Dr., General Counsel, Novartis International AG
- Famos Cla Reto, Prof. Dr., Director Swiss Study Foundation
- Juchli Andreas, Chief Executive Officer JDMT Medical Services AG (alumnus)
- Loprieno Antonio, Prof. Dr., University of Basel
- Naef Reto, Dr., Head Research Operations Novartis, Contact Group for Research Matters (CGR)
- Nevistic Vesna, Dr.
- Sprecher Thomas, Dr., attorney-at-law, Niederer Kraft & Frey AG
- Rudolf Volkart, Prof. em. Dr., University of Zurich

Entries and Resignations

After five years of dedicated work in the Committee for Selection and Individual Mentoring Elisabeth Schenk Jenzer resigned from her post as committee member to focus more on her professional challenges. We thank her for her incredible commitment and her always very accurate opinions.

In the reporting year, Prof. Dr. Sebastian Hiller Odermatt and Daniela Però were accepted into the Committee for Selection and Individual Mentoring. The alumnus Sebastian Hiller Odermatt has been teaching at the Bio Centre of the University of Basel since 2010. The psychologist Daniela Però is active in the Assessment and Coaching field.

HEAD OFFICE

(Status as per 31.12.2016)

- Famos Cla Reto, Prof. Dr., Director
- Schuler Iris, Deputy Director
- Baierlé Emmanuel, Dr., scientific assistant
- Beyeler Sarah, Dr., scientific assistant
- Cuperus Silvie, Dr., scientific assistant
- Bischoff Maja, accounting, administration
- Ellington Nathalie, administration
- Samira Landolt, administration

AUDITOR

PricewaterhouseCoopers AG, Zurich



PORTRAIT

LARS FISCHER (*1989)

«Classical music is a world that is not very well known.» For many it may be enticing, but remote and untouchable, either the kingdom of geniuses or of quixotic esoterics. For others it is hardly more than the occasional hobby. Yet, a person is sitting now across from me, who dares to penetrate the enigma and turn his hobby into a profession: Lars Fischer, fellow of our Study Foundation. For his Master of Music training to be a tenor Lars was granted the annual scholarship of the Swiss Study Foundation. With his long hair in a ponytail he smiles at me comfortably – a form that one could just as well imagine in the mathematics lectures at the ETH as on the main stage of a big opera house. In fact his interests are extremely diverse: despite an early talent for the Cello, he did not pursue a music maturity course, but one in Latin and then studied law up to the bachelor degree. But something always pulled him towards music: At the secondary school he played in the orchestra and sang in the choir. During his law studies he was a member of an A-cappella group and started with individual vocal training. After his bachelor studies in law, he pursued a second bachelor in music in Lucerne. Three years later he went on an audition tour to various music academies in the United States and Great Britain. And that with great success: soon after he started his master studies at the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London.

The Swiss Study Foundation was crucial to his success. Particularly the contact with his mentor was important to Lars. His former mentor, Jürg-Beat Ackermann, is professor in criminal law at the University of Lucerne and enjoyed an artistic education himself as an actor. Professor Ackermann did not only support Lars with his experience and good advice, but also allowed him, after switching to the academy of music, to continue to work in the field of law. As an auxiliary assistant Lars first worked as a proofreader for one of Ackermann's books and later as co-author of the draft text for an additional book. Lars describes himself as someone, who was lucky. «Music is an insecure world», he says. Consequently, it is a great advantage to have an additional degree and thus a second option. London offers many artistic development opportunities to the prospective vocalist: roles in

opera plays, such as the one of Monostatos in Mozart's Magic Flute, recitals and competitions at his school as well as the possibility to learn from the most successful singers. Still he is always happy to return to Switzerland for short stays: for him it is the «return to the idyll» compared to the insane pace of London. Asked about the world of music and the main stage Lars Fischer recounts the following: «I am already aware of how much is required. «Singing is a balancing act, he continues. Balance and especially the contact with oneself are very important. Especially when singing you have to have perfect control of your own body. Therefore, the daily training includes stretching exercises, fitness training, breathing exercises and yoga. If the professional presentation creates the appearance of lightness for the audience, it conceals the amount of work involved in the process. Nevertheless, exactly this lightness is the goal: Lars' most proud moment as a vocalist so far, was a lunchtime recital last November together with his duet partner: «The technical aspect just worked», he states, «and we were able to concentrate on the story.»

For Lars it is essential to touch the audience with his singing and to tell a story. This means that also the text is of major significance. The articulation and every phonetic sound have to be transmitted correctly. Therefore, he likes to sing in German or Swedish. Of the two major directions that one can take as vocalist – opera or song – he prefers song, since it is more about the text. Nevertheless, he finds inspiration in both: Lars Fischer dreams of presenting Schubert's Winterreise cycle as well as the role of Tamino in Mozart's Magic Flute on the main stage. Given his long list of successes the fulfillment of this dream is undoubtedly just a question of time. I, for one, look forward to the performance.

Text: Kai Jappe Sandbrink, Swiss Study Foundation scholar



Interview originally in French

INTERVIEW

WITH DR. MARION HÄMMERLI (*1987)

Originally from Lucerne, Marion Hämmerli studied mathematics and philosophy at the University of Geneva; author of a thesis on the representation of space, she is now working in consulting. Fluid between cultures and alumna of the Swiss Study Foundation, she is also a volunteer examiner during the selection weeks.

Marion Hämmerli, why did you decide to study both, mathematics and philosophy, an unusual combination?

As a young adult I was fascinated by philosophy as I thought it would allow me to grasp the world in its width and depth. But I also wanted to retain an access to the sciences since they also seemed a fundamental tool to make sense of the world. In my opinion mathematics offered this guarantee of access to the sciences, since they at least represent their basic language. You point out that this combination of science and letters is not very common, which is undeniably true broadly speaking. Nevertheless, in other regions studying mathematics and philosophy is not that rare, notably in the Anglo-Saxon world. Moreover, if you look at history, you can observe this kind of proximity in the intellectual and scientific reflection, be it with Platon or even later in the 19th and early 20th century. This element of our intellectual culture is not extraordinary and can still be leveraged today.

Since 2016 you are working as a consultant at McKinsey. How did you end up choosing this career?

After working as an intermediary at the Federal parliament for one year, where I was absorbed by public administration and the strategic questions in politics, I realized how an experience gained within the corporate world could be useful for me, in particular to lose a good degree of naivety, for myself, and at the same time gain some credibility. Consulting is very formative in this regard: like birds we discover very different types of industries from above and acquire a panoramic view in a short time. It is a thinking profession, contemplation is the primary tool of a consultant.

Could you tell us more about what determines the alchemy of consulting: employees without a predefined academic background who provide very valuable recommendations?

Consulting is not directed to just anyone, but looks for profiles skilled in analytical thinking. In addition, an affinity to numbers is expected as we often work with large databases.

To be able to understand the value of consulting, you need to consider that when it comes to strategic thinking CEOs are ultimately quite alone, as they manage employees with very specific competencies, but they don't have any real peers. Therefore, it is associates in consulting groups like McKinsey who they use as sparring partners, which requires a great deal of analytical work upstream.

You were supported by the Foundation during your studies: in hindsight, how would you describe the role of the foundation in the promotion of excellence in Switzerland?

Generally speaking, Switzerland has a tendency to encourage the average over excellence. Thus, at secondary school the place of best in class has little value and is even difficult socially. The opportunity of joining the foundation, happening at the age of 18, allows this reward system to be readjusted. Personally, this was very helpful for me: I was able to meet a group of people that was just like me and in which the search for excellence and interest in intellectual topics was much appreciated. Once you are an adult, of course, this type of exchange is possible in numerous contexts, but this is not always the case when you are 18.

As an examiner how can you establish selection criteria without promoting the creation of a profile that is too calibrated?

It is paramount that the candidates demonstrate intellectual curiosity, open-mindedness and flexibility; and finally also a certain independence of thought, even if the latter cannot be fully acquired at the age of 18. Moreover, during the seminars we try to find out whether the person is interested in the interaction with the others. That being said, even though the range of profiles that one finds in the Foundation is inevitably limited, we do not have any prejudices as to the type of excellence we expect. The Foundation does not only promote academic results, but also artistic or athletic excellence or a strong social commitment. The Foundation is intended for people with a keen intellect, this is a prerequisite, but it seeks to reward the engagement more than the talent. It thus encourages an elite in the widest sense of the word with a strong sense of responsibility to society.

Interview: Adrien Clinard, Swiss Study Foundation scholar



INTERVIEW

WITH PROF. DR. MICHAEL HENGARTNER

Mr Hengartner, what is the essence of a researcher?

He has to have an almost stubborn curiosity. It is not characterized by an «it would be nice to know», but an «I need to know». Most successful researchers have an almost obsessive curiosity. And I think: A good scientist is a person who does not only tell others what he does, but who also wants to know what the others are researching.

You yourself have been researching the worm *C.elegans* for decades. What have you learned from this animal so far?

I would say that in general the empirical research has shaped me a lot. I am relatively quick to embrace a new experiment. This also applies to my work as rector. Though universities are very stable organizations, we also have to continuously improve and tweak and adjust all the time, so that we can always offer our students and researchers optimal conditions. When we have a good idea, I say «Let's give it a shot». Nevertheless, we don't just blindly try things out, it is always an «educated guess». If something does not work out, I will also have to be responsible for that. But I don't have a problem in doing so.

As rector you have the privilege and the duty to deal with different research areas.

Yes, one of my weaknesses as a researcher was that I was interested in everything. As a scientist nowadays one has to focus and research in only one narrow specialty field. With my current job I was able to turn my weakness into strength. In the seven faculties of the university of Zurich there is an enormous variety of research topics and scientific cultures. That is a challenge, but also very fascinating. I am convinced that mine is one of the ten best jobs in the city of Zurich.

On the other hand you have a very full calendar. You are not only a researcher and rector, but also the president of Swissuniversities. What drives you?

The determination and willingness to help shape the future. The awareness that there is no benefit in complaining, if you don't like something; that you have to tackle the problem yourself, if you want to change anything. And as I said this insatiable curiosity.

... a virtue that also fosters the Study Foundation. Would you have been accepted to the Foundation during your studies?

I hope so. In Canada, where I grew up, we unfortunately did not have anything similar. The Study Foundation offers events that go beyond the curriculum of the University. The interdisciplinary educational program as well as the possibility to meet like-minded people, would definitely have interested me.

Does one then not risk moving in the same type of environment all the time?

Possibly. That is why I think it is important that you do not only spend time within the Study Foundation. Fortunately, our foundation fellows are versatile enough. They do not get their nourishment only from the foundation network.

You work for the Foundation on a voluntary basis, are the Vice-President of the Foundation Board and the president of the Committee of Education. Do you see parallels to your tasks as rector?

Both in science as well as in the Foundation Board of a Study Foundation it is important that there is a competition of ideas. The university management and the Foundation Board have to ensure that the conditions facilitate this exchange of ideas.

What do you advocate for as the president of the Committee of Education?

I think it is important that our fellows dare to go beyond the limits of their own expertise and think and act in a multidisciplinary manner. That is why I set great store by the interdisciplinary events. Also socially relevant topics such as Big Data or Artificial Intelligence are quite intriguing. It is crucial to not only look at the subjects from an academic perspective.

Nevertheless the access is often theoretical. Can one only gain insights through the mind?

Surely not. There are peer events where the foundation members go on excursions together, for example a hike to the Monte Rosa hut. But in fact there are not many events, during which the foundation members actually do something together. Why not build a stone bridge in Ticino? This could bring together young people on a totally different level.

How do you recognize a good learning event?

It has to be stimulating. If the foundation fellows afterwards say: «I was challenged and had to contribute something myself. Not everything was fed to me with a spoon and I learned something» – then we have reached our objective.

Interview: Sandrine Gehriger, Swiss Study Foundation scholar

SUMMER SCHOOL STATES AND SOCIETIES IN TRANSITION – HISTORY THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES. THE CASE OF GEORGIA AND UKRAINE 2016

Ukraine and Georgia – two countries that are afflicted by conflicts and under economic as well as political pressure. Two countries that our preconceptions or ignorance do not do justice to; where we met many friendly people and learned a lot. Odessa welcomes us with fierce looking border guards, who right at the beginning want to wrestle away one of our group members, and with flyers of an anti-corruption campaign. Driving to our accommodation we pass a cityscape characterized by contrasts. While the bus jolts over potholes, we drive past modern buildings standing between decaying art nouveau houses. We check into our posh looking hotel, the porter heaves our luggage into a tiny, decrepit elevator. In the following nine days we will try to get to know two countries and to understand their history, society and current situation. We attend lectures, conduct discussions and even meet Micheil Saakaschwili, the former president of Georgia and meanwhile retired governor of Odessa, who is willing to answer our multitude of questions.

Ukraine and Georgia are nations that in all their differences show striking parallels: Both are former Soviet Union countries, both have territorial conflicts with neighboring Russia (Ukraine in Crimea and Donbass, Georgia in South Ossetia and Abkhazia), but are at the same time connected to it historically, culturally and economically.

Both are countries that I had never visited before and of which I had only marginal knowledge. And yet they have a lot to offer. In Odessa we see Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin in the splendid opera house (heavily thwarted by a seat neighbor calmly chatting away on his phone), stroll over the most famous steps of film history (the Potemkin Stairs), jump into the Black Sea (only very quickly, at the beaches in the metropolitan area the water is indeed black, and we are extremely glad that there are showers available) and make culinary discoveries, though not speaking the local languages is a major handicap (the «snack» served with the beer turned out to be a hard rubbery, opulently salted and for my Western European palate totally inedible fish).

Especially in Georgia we are completely lost language-wise, the writing in contrast to the Cyrillic alphabet is indecipherable. Nevertheless, the experience of foreignness opens our eyes for a very alluring country. Though the capital at first seems a little bizarre visually, the old town is falling apart, while some questionable architectonic achievements from the Saakaschwili era were apparently distributed in the surroundings at random. However, it is also the country of early Christianity. Spectacular monasteries and churches present themselves not only in town, but also, like in Jvari, in the middle of a barren landscape in front of a sometimes breath-taking backdrop. Or the Bodbe Monastery, originally built in the 9th century, in Signaghi, where our view fell to a green valley South East towards Azerbaijan. There is something mystical about this place with its remoteness and tranquility.

But on the other side of the plane the Caucasus mountain range majestically mark the border to the overpowering northern neighbor. Both Georgia and the Ukraine are politically in a difficult position, since time and again they are faced with resurgent armed conflicts with factions that are supported by Russia, who considers both countries within its sphere of influence. In the August war of 2008 Georgia lost around a fifth of its state territory, while the situation in Eastern Ukraine remains precarious. Anti-Russian reflexes are readily at hand here. However, the cultural connection remains strong. Not only in the Ukraine, where for many it is the mother tongue, we often hear Russian, and also in Tiflis we meet many Russians. Still the two countries orient themselves towards the United States and the European Union. How much help they can expect from that side, however, is more uncertain than ever in this day and age.

Text: Gabriel Johannes Pelloquin, Swiss Study Foundation scholar





We thank our partners for their generous contributions in the year 2016

The Swiss Study Foundation is almost exclusively funded by contributions of its patrons. In the following list we only record the ones that contributed an amount of CHF 1000 and more.

STRATEGIC PARTNER

Contribution of CHF 1,000,000

- Werner Siemens Foundation

PARTNER DIAMOND

Contributions of CHF 100,000 and more

- Mercator Foundation
- Sophie and Karl Binding Foundation
- State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation
- Ernst Göhner Foundation
- Gebert Rüt Foundation
- Contact Group for Research Matters (CGR)
(BASF AG, F. Hoffmann-La Roche AG, Novartis Pharma AG and Syngenta Crop Protection AG)

PARTNER PLATINUM

Contributions of CHF 50,000 and more

- Clariant International AG
- ETH Zurich
- Suyana Foundation
- University of Zurich
- Association for the Promotion of the Swiss Study Foundation

PARTNER GOLD

Contributions of CHF 25,000 and more

- Accenture Foundation
- Alumni Organization of the Swiss Study Foundation
- Hans-Eggenberger Foundation
- Metrohm Foundation

PARTNER SILVER

Contributions of CHF 10,000 and more

- ETH Board
- Lagrev Foundation
- From the estate of Nobel laureate Heinrich Rohrer
- Swiss Re
- UBS
- Walter Haefner Foundation

PARTNER BRONZE

Contributions of CHF 5,000 and more

- Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences
- Bern University of Applied Sciences (BFH)
- Egon-and-Ingrid-Hug Foundation
- EPF Lausanne
- University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW)
- University of Applied Sciences of Eastern Switzerland (FHO)
- George H. Endress Foundation
- HES-SO University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland
- Lucerne University of Applied Sciences
- McKinsey & Company
- University of Italian-speaking Switzerland
- University of Geneva
- University of Basel
- University of Bern
- University of Fribourg
- University of St. Gallen
- Zurich University of Applied Sciences ZHAW
- Zurich Cantonal Bank

Contributions of CHF 1,000 and more

- Basler + Hofmann
- Cathy Kroll-Wick
- Dr. Jenö C. A. Staehelin
- Fidinam
- JDMT Medical Services AG
- Markus und Marlies Erni-Fähndrich
- PricewaterhouseCoopers AG
- Prof. Dr. Alexander von Graevenitz
- Prof. em. Dr. Dr. h.c. Eric Kubli
- Foundation Basler + Hofmann

PARTNER FOUNDATIONS

Werner Siemens Foundation

In its charitable activities the Werner Siemens Foundation focuses on the areas of education and schooling, mostly in the technical and scientific areas. The Foundation expects from its funding projects the willingness to realize trailblazing results. The Werner Siemens Foundation supports high quality projects or projects with a clearly recognizable strong potential. The Werner Siemens Foundation donated CHF 10 million to the Swiss Study Foundation. The funds that will be distributed in ten years will allow the Swiss Study Foundation to sponsor a thousand highly gifted students – and thus significantly more than in the past. A large part of the funds will be awarded to students in the field of mathematics, information technology, natural sciences and technology (MINT). The two foundations thus want to emphasize the importance of the technological-scientific subjects for the future of Switzerland.

Prof. Dr. PETER ATHANAS, CURATOR

Mercator Foundation Switzerland

We want to enable students and young researchers to confront social issues in an international and interdisciplinary exchange. At the same time we want to strengthen their commitment to society. We have shared these objectives with the Swiss Study Foundation for years: Together we organize the Mercator College for International Affairs. Our Foundation also promotes the European Campus of Excellence and the new initiative «Meeting Point Bern».

NADINE FELIX, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Sophie and Karl Binding Foundation

Since 2008 the Sophie and Karl Binding Foundation supports the «Univers Suisse» project – a program consisting of summer academies and exchange scholarships. «Since autumn 2015 the spoken language during the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities is only English. In the «Univers Suisse» our national languages still prevail.»

Dr. BENNO SCHUBIGER, DIRECTOR

Ernst Göhner Foundation

The Ernst Göhner Foundation is the present of the Zurich entrepreneur Ernst Göhner to future generations. In 2009, it launched the Ernst Göhner scholarships in cooperation with the Swiss Study Foundation for students who may not receive any or only insufficient contributions from their family or the state. Until 2016 a total of 48 scholarships were awarded to 23 students from all parts of Switzerland and all disciplines. In addition, the Ernst Göhner Foundation finances yearly scholarships to artists in training (35 scholarships to 19 students since 2011) as well as scholarships to students training to become teachers at secondary level II (11 scholarships to 7 students since 2014). Moreover, it supports the annual weekend seminar «Teaching Skills for School» to attract additional talented fellows of the Study Foundation to the teaching profession.

Suyana Foundation

Talent is the potential of persons for extraordinary achievements. Since 2012 the Suyana Foundation awards scholarships to young people to allow them to pursue their different talents with university studies and later apply them successfully in their working life. In the five years since 16 Suyana scholarships were granted to 11 bachelor and master students. We met all the Study Foundation applicants personally and were always impressed by the exceptional personalities and strong commitment. Thanks to the good cooperation with the Swiss Study Foundation we are certain that the scholarship holders are selected in the best possible manner and purposefully supported on their educational journey.

YVONNE IMHOLZ, MANAGING DIRECTOR SWITZERLAND

Hermann Freudiger Foundation

In 1995, Marianne de Szoczzy-Freudiger established the dependent foundation Dr. Hermann Freudiger with a foundation capital of 300 000 francs to honor her father, Dr. Hermann Freudiger, and integrated it in the Swiss Study Foundation. A donation of her brother, Marcel Freudiger, increased the foundation capital by 200 000 francs to 500 000 francs in 1998.

«Let off steam intellectually,
free from the usual constraints...»

«To see the world with new eyes
yet again...»

«Encounter many exciting
and admirable people...»