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Impact Report  
2023-2024

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**Dear Reader,** Take a breath before we plunge into the stories of just some of the young people and students who have benefited from the Student Support Program (SSP). It's a real honour for me to share this celebratory fifth report with you this year.

I encourage you to discover the journeys of students like Gustave, a 3<sup>rd</sup> year Bachelor's student in Mechanical Engineering, whose participation in Blaze helped him launch his entrepreneurial project, BoundaryAi, by offering him an important grant of CHF 10,000 and a foot in the door of the Swiss startup ecosystem. Quite an achievement! Then there's Eduardo, who is in the PhD Excellence Program. He strengthened his transversal skills, grew his network of colleagues from other disciplines, and developed long-lasting friendships.

This report also highlights the impact of the newest addition to the SSP: the Hardship Fellowships. These have acted as a beacon of hope, enabling individuals to continue their studies despite facing unexpected financial challenges. For one student, she said there was a clear "before" and "after" – from three hours of daily commuting, a knot in her stomach and constant financial stress, to living just ten minutes from EPFL which allowed her to fully focus on her studies and embrace campus life.

Children also benefit from the program, including Cassandra, who started the Euler course when she was 13 years old. Her participation in the classes gave her a tantalising insight into the world of higher maths, inspiring her to pursue both a bachelor's and master's degree in this field.

This year we're excited to introduce a special section: *Paths Forward*, with some audio testimonies available in French. This segment illustrates the impressive adventures of beneficiaries, such as Adrien, who, after his time at EPFL working on the Swiss Solar Boat, a MAKE project, went on to participate in the 37<sup>th</sup> America's Cup.

These stories demonstrate that the SSP's impact reaches far beyond the classroom and lecture halls. I hope you enjoy diving into this report to discover how this program supports *Excellence for a brighter future!*

In closing, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our dedicated and engaged donors, our SSP ambassadors, and the students, staff, and professors for their remarkable commitment. Your contributions have been essential in making this program the great success it is today.

With my warmest regards,



Pierre Dillenbourg  
PROFESSOR AND VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AD INTERIM


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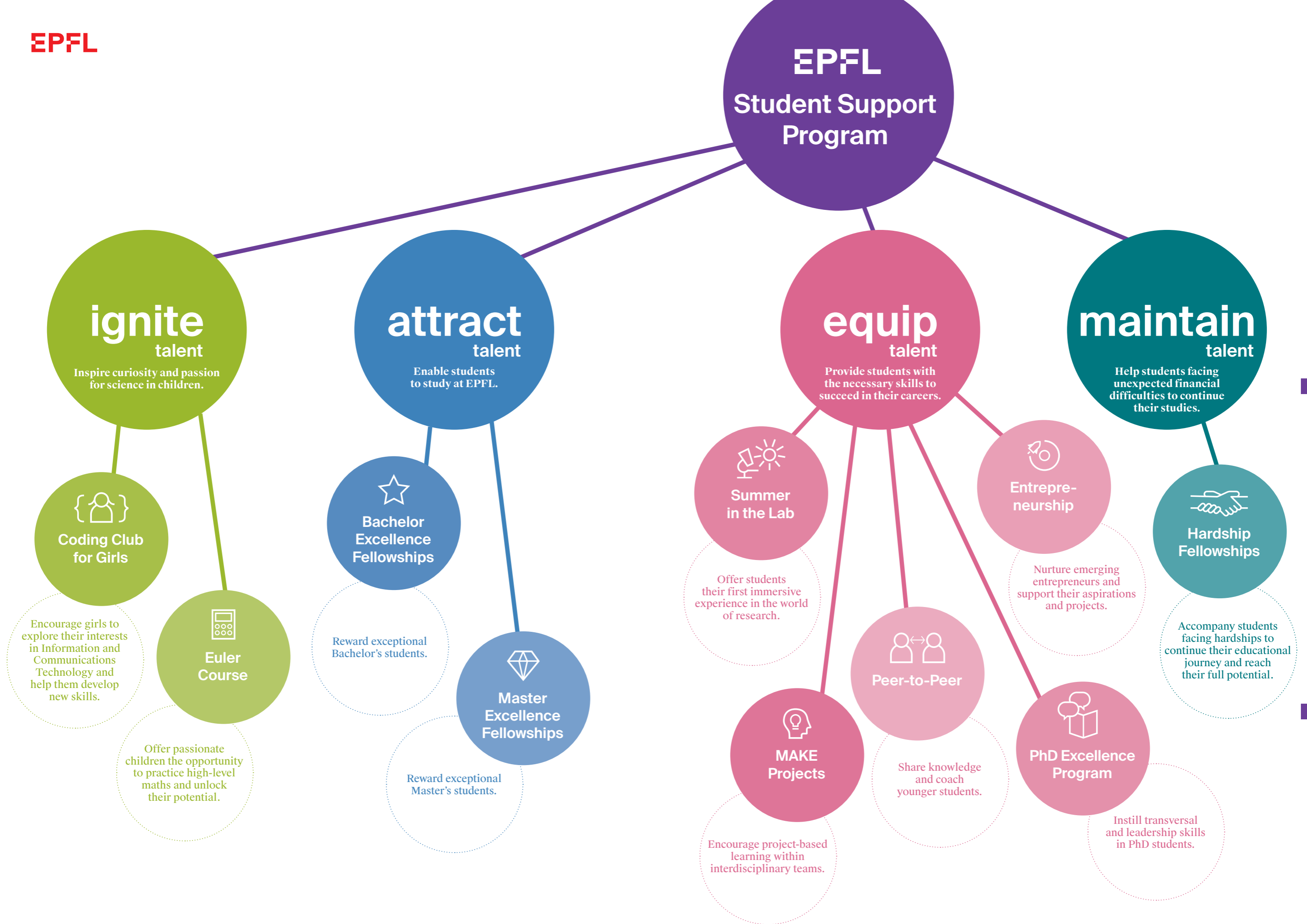
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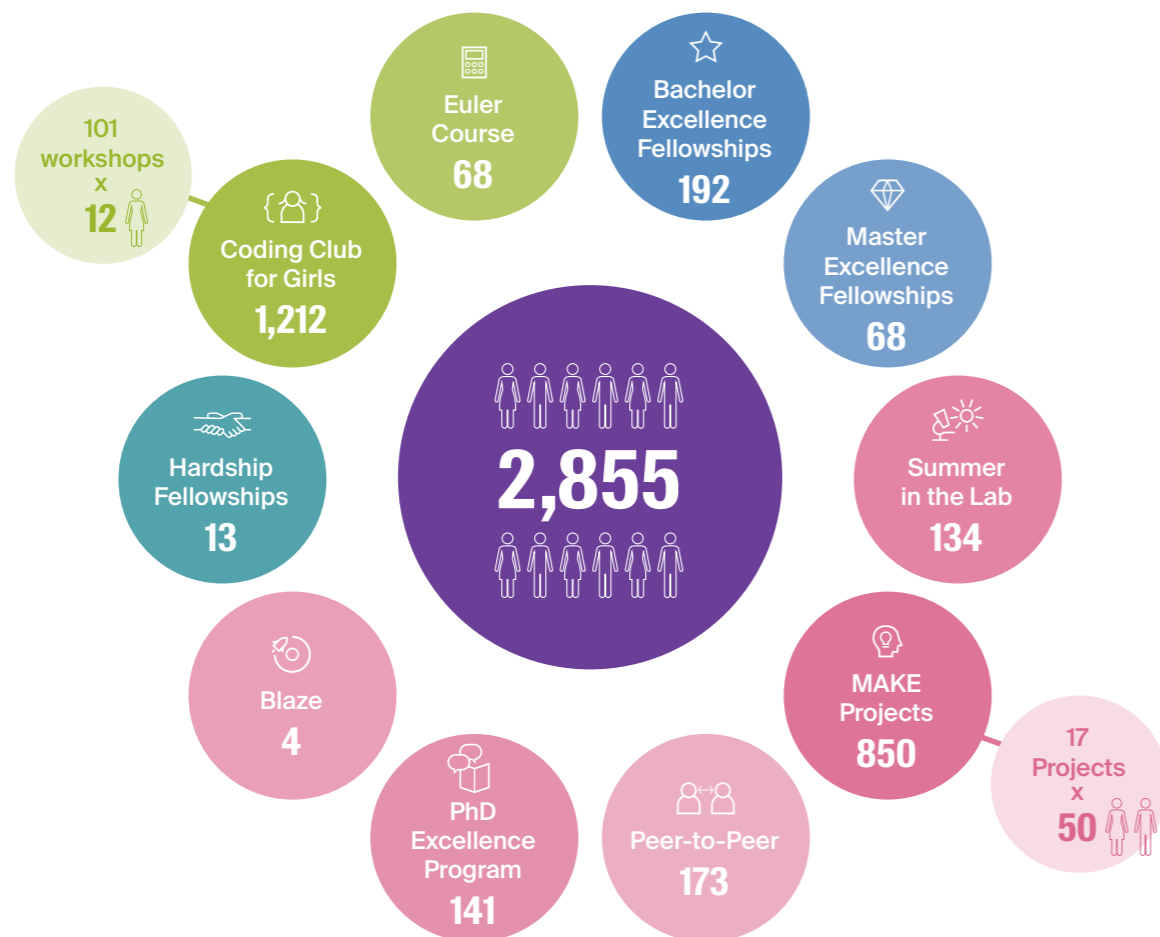
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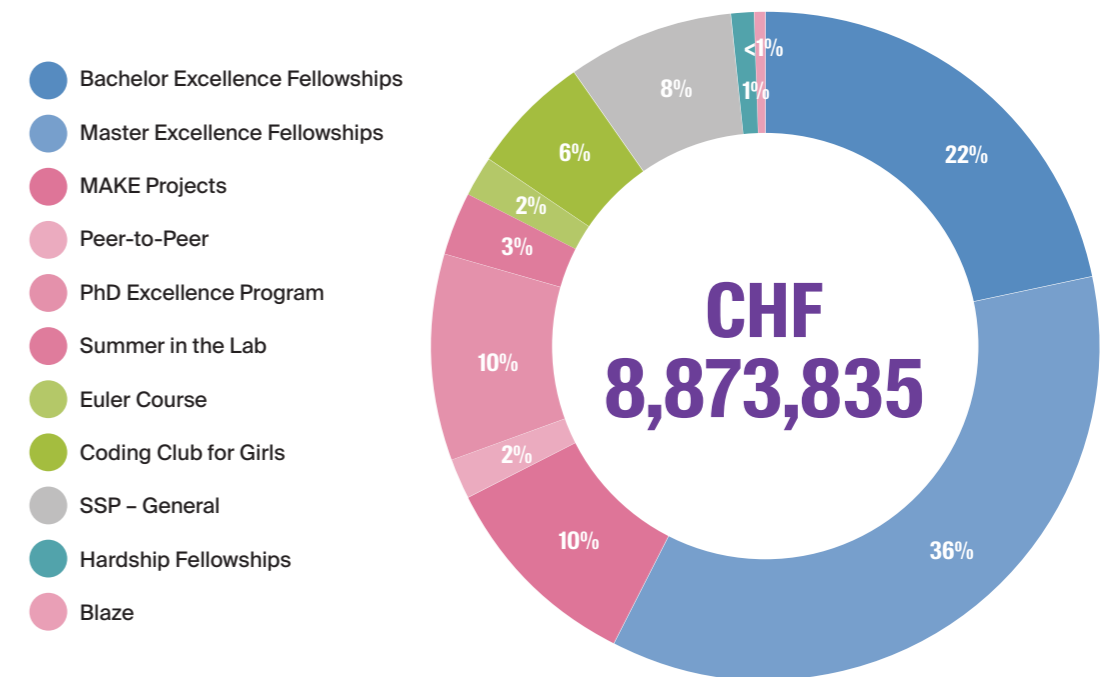
Our donors and partners support more than **2,800 beneficiaries** through the Student Support Program initiatives.

## Beneficiaries

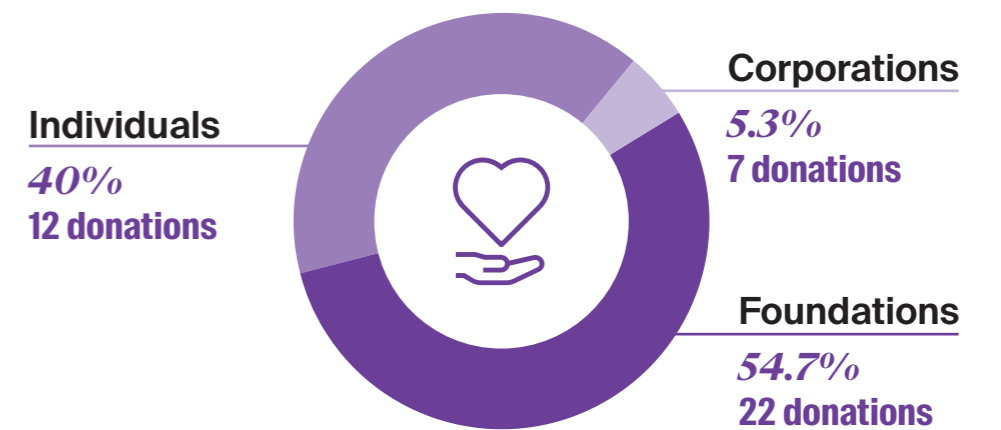


\* until August 2024

## Donations received to date



## Donations



## Alumni



> 1/3 of the donations are linked to alumni and account for 45% of the total amount raised to date.

# Do- nors

Through their generosity, our loyal partners play a lasting role in shaping the journey of our students. We extend our deepest gratitude to the donors listed below, as well as to those who have chosen to remain anonymous, for their invaluable support.

Alan Howard

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We also extend our heartfelt thanks to the many online donors, Euler students' parents, as well as to those who have chosen to remain anonymous, for their support of the Student Support Program.

Alain Giraud  
*ALUMNUS COMPUTER SCIENCE '89*

Anne-Françoise Vincent Coigny

Aurélia Rochat  
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Lionel Dumartheray  
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Lorenzo Panchetti  
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Maurice Pittet  
*ALUMNUS ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING '92*

Michaël Thémans  
*ALUMNUS PHD MATHEMATICS '07*

Mougahed Darwish  
*ALUMNUS PHD PHYSICS '75*

Myriam Prongué Costa  
*ALUMNA MATHEMATICS '92*

Omar Awile

Pauline Baumgartner Harris  
*ALUMNA CHEMISTRY AND CHEMICAL ENGINEERING '97*

Sarah Sobczak

Serge Rochat  
*ALUMNUS COMPUTER SCIENCE '84*

Steve Jiekak Ndeutou  
*ALUMNUS COMPUTER SCIENCE '12*

Thiên-Anh Nguyen  
*ALUMNA COMPUTER SCIENCE '20*

Valérie Ruch

Wilfried Ku  
*PROFESSOR EMERITUS*



# Am- bassa- dors

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# Coding Club for Girls

**1,200**  
beneficiaries

Through a mix of in-person and online workshops, the club gives girls the opportunity to learn to code and build confidence in a collaborative setting. By exploring different programming languages, they develop essential skills, all while fostering a sense of community and belonging.

*"I decided to join the Coding Club for Girls when my parents read about it on EPFL's website, and I have always been curious about my father's work as a computer scientist. I found a calm and welcoming environment. The teachers and the other girls were fantastic. Everyone enjoys being there. Learning the basics of programming has given me confidence; now I know that coding won't be an obstacle in my academic career."*  
LUCIE

**40**  
women  
role models

**FREE**  
for everyone

*"What drove me to join the Coding Club for Girls was the chance to explore programming while connecting with other girls who shared my interests. The atmosphere was amazing, and we had fun learning with excellent coaches. I loved studying HTML, CSS, Python, and JavaScript. This skill set will help me create websites and effects for presentations, and I may even become a coach myself to teach other girls what I've learned."* VALERIA

from **11 to 16** years old

*"During the workshops, I had a lot of fun, but I also learned how crucial it is to code with precision and accuracy. Programming with Python taught me that even a small typo can cause the entire program to fail. This lesson in precision has been incredibly valuable, not only in coding but also in my schoolwork and at home. The workshops provided a supportive environment, where I could explore my interest in computer science alongside other girls who shared the same passion. This enjoyable and unique experience has significantly improved my attention to detail and problem-solving skills."* NAOMIE

**100**  
workshops  
per year in  
**15**  
cantons  
and in  
**20**  
cities



# Euler Course

The course comprises an advanced program where young math enthusiasts can explore the subject at a higher level than typical school courses offer. It fosters a deep passion for mathematics, connects like-minded students, and opens doors to further academic pursuits, competitions, and lasting friendships.

*"It was a dynamic and enriching environment where I met people who shared my passion for mathematics. The five years I spent in the Euler course nurtured my curiosity and pushed me to pursue my studies in life sciences at EPFL. I am deeply grateful for the new perspectives it opened and for giving me the math skills necessary to succeed in my studies. I now envision a future career as a life sciences engineer."* ELLA

created in  
**2008**

from **11 to 18** years old

*"I'm happy to meet up with friends on Wednesdays and do math."* ANONYMOUS

*"Thanks to the Euler course, I discovered a passion for mathematics that far surpassed what I had experienced in school. The five years of training greatly motivated me and helped me qualify for the 2023 International Mathematical Olympiad in Japan, where I earned an honorable mention."*  
IVAN

**140** students divided  
into **6** classes

**~90%**  
of participants  
come to study  
at EPFL

*"The Euler course was an experience I truly loved. At just 13 years old, I met other students who shared my interest in mathematics, many of whom I am still in contact with today. It gave me a glimpse of what higher-level math would be like, confirming my passion for the subject and leading me to pursue both my bachelor's and master's degrees in the field."* CASSANDRE

*"In the Euler course, you have to use creativity, imagination, and intuition."* ANONYMOUS

Program lasts  
**5 or 6** years

# ☆ Bachelor Excellence Fellowships



## FAMSA Foundation Bachelor Excellence Fellowship

*Elliott combines a rare blend of creativity and scientific rigor. Architecture has allowed him to merge these two facets, and the fellowship has provided the ideal conditions for him to thrive in this demanding, multidisciplinary program that seems perfectly suited to him.*

**ELLIOTT ATOM CROUBALIAN**

**AGE**  
20

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN**  
Switzerland  
**BACHELOR**  
Architecture

**PROFILE**  
Feet on the ground with his head in the clouds

Elliott has the confidence of someone who knows where he's going. At just 20, his choices appear clear and deliberate. Yet he navigates between two seemingly opposite worlds: the arts and the sciences. "I took math and physics in high school, but honestly, that doesn't define me. I could just as easily have pursued an artistic diploma."

At one point, it even seemed like the arts might prevail over science. "I made a film that won the Swiss Federal Matura Thesis Prize, awarded by the Bern University of the Arts (Hochschule der Künste Bern, HKB). I also wrote and directed a play at the far°, an important theater festival in Nyon." So, how did he end up at EPFL? "During my experience at the festival, I met established artists who struggled to make ends meet. That reality really made me think twice about pursuing a career in the arts."

Elliott set his sights on finding a more stable career that could bridge both the arts and science. "My father is an architect, so I already had a pretty good idea of what the field involves. I knew it was highly interdisciplinary." This choice turned out to be a perfect fit. "We have technical courses, artistic ones, and classes in social sciences and architecture. It's an incredibly rich combination! The curriculum is highly multidisciplinary yet remains very coherent."

His start at EPFL, however, was nearly thrown off course. "I was struggling to find housing, and it really stressed me out. It meant having to commute long distances every day from Geneva. I wasn't even sure it was feasible, especially since we often finish after midnight, when there are no trains back at that hour."

The fellowship changed everything. "It made finding housing much easier, and I found a place just five minutes from campus." This allowed him to fully dive into his studies and even continue a few artistic projects on the side. "I've managed to find a balance, but it requires almost military-level time management."

"The fellowship also connected me with people from different fields, which is important for someone as eclectic as I am." The fellowship recipients even spent a week in Chamonix together before the semester started. "That was all it took to build a team spirit." And when asked where he sees himself in the future, Elliott once again shows his sharpness of mind. "I see myself in research. I think my creative side can really shine there. For example, the world really needs major innovations in housing to address climate change." There's no doubt—he's on the right path.

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

# ◆ Master Excellence Fellowships



## Basil Panzer Trust Master Excellence Fellowship

*Alexis Cogne is a passionate and determined student whose academic journey reflects his constant pursuit of new experiences. Thanks to his dedication and the fellowship support, Alexis is well-equipped to achieve his professional goals and make significant contributions in his field.*

**ALEXIS COGNE**

**AGE**  
24

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN**  
Switzerland

**MASTER**  
Neuro-X

**PROFILE**  
Swiss Army Knife

It only takes a few minutes in his company to see that Alexis is someone who thrives on curiosity and exploration. "I'm always eager to dive into different fields, but as a result, my academic path has been somewhat unconventional," he admits. After earning a Bachelor in Materials Science and Engineering, Alexis chose to pursue a Master at EPFL's Neuro-X Institute—an unusual transition. "At one point, I was even considering going into medicine, or perhaps something in environmental science," he recalls with a smile. "My bachelor's studies allowed me to keep moving forward in a field I loved, without needing to make a definitive choice."

How does someone with so many interests keep from getting overwhelmed? "I need to take breaks now and then, to step back and reflect before digging in again," Alexis explains. This need for reflection took him on a hitchhiking trip to Istanbul with a friend. "We discovered places we never would have visited, meeting people from each region along the way. That's something I really enjoy—connecting with people."

"Engineering appeals to me," he continues, "but I was drawn to medicine because it offers the chance to work closely with people and find real solutions to their problems." The biggest challenge of studying at EPFL, he notes, is time management. "During my bachelor's, I sometimes lost sight of why I was studying in the first place. When you're constantly racing against the clock, it's easy to focus on grades and forget the bigger picture."

That's where the Excellence Fellowship made all the difference. "Suddenly, the time I used to spend working to support myself was freed up. I had the luxury of following my curiosity again. It gave me the chance to deeply explore subjects, to take my time, and make more thoughtful decisions. It changed everything!"

"The boost in confidence is also significant," Alexis adds. "Knowing that EPFL believes in my non-traditional path means a lot. It gives me a sense of legitimacy—not just for myself, but also when I apply to labs." With the fellowship's financial backing, he can now seek internships that align perfectly with his unique academic track.

As for the future? "My dream is to work as a neuroengineer, directly interacting with patients." Is this the medicine of the future? With his knack for connecting with others and his passion for interdisciplinary work, there's little doubt that Alexis will contribute to the development of this new field.



**VIDEO-INTERVIEW OF ALEXIS**

<https://go.epfl.ch/MasterExcellenceFellowAlexis>



# Summer in the Lab



**JULIE ESTELLE MARIE BANNWART**

**AGE**  
20

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN**  
France

**MASTER**  
Mathematics

**LABORATORY FOR TOPOLOGY AND NEUROSCIENCE**

Julie worked on mathematical tools to better understand and organize complex ideas in the field of topology, publishing a paper on her findings. Benjamin, on the other hand, studied the components of protein aggregates in neurodegenerative diseases using electron microscopy.

*Could you explain what this program is about?*

**BENJAMIN** Summer in the Lab is a research internship program designed for bachelor students. It runs for eight weeks during the summer and allows us to explore the world of research by working in laboratories. In addition to hands-on experience, the program includes a series of workshops aimed at developing transferable skills, such as communication and leadership.

*What were the main takeaways from this experience?*

**JULIE** This internship allowed me to delve deeper into highly theoretical concepts in mathematics. I explored how various mathematical operations are interconnected, focusing on complex and abstract ideas. This experience taught me a lot about problem-solving and exploring new approaches in mathematics. It was intellectually stimulating and a deeply rewarding adventure!

**BENJAMIN** I learned how to use specialized tools, like the electron microscope, which strengthened my practical skills alongside the theoretical knowledge. I also discovered that I prefer computational work, where I can manipulate data and run simulations, over wet lab work that involves physical laboratory manipulations.

*How has this experience contributed to your academic and professional development?*

**JULIE** It was an incredible summer! Working on a research project was a unique opportunity to gain real-world experience in this context. This immersion in the lab confirmed my desire to pursue a career in academic research, and I'm now considering doing a PhD after my master's.

**BENJAMIN** It allowed me to gain more hands-on experience. I was able to figure out what I like and what I don't like. I also appreciated the workshop on communication, where we worked on public speaking and presenting our research in 180 seconds. This exercise helped me better structure and synthesize my ideas—something I had never truly mastered before!



**BENJAMIN MANCINI**

**AGE**  
20

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN**  
Switzerland

**BACHELOR**  
Life Sciences

**LABORATORY OF MOLECULAR AND CHEMICAL BIOLOGY OF NEURODEGENERATION**





# MAKE Projects

Students involved in these interdisciplinary projects hone their ability to lead, collaborate, and innovate, all while navigating the challenges of project management and technical design in dynamic, real-world settings.



## Alexia de Lestapis

**AGE, COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, PROGRAM**  
22, Spain and France, Mechanical Engineering (Master's)

**PROJECT NAME**  
EPFL Xplore

**PROJECT GOAL**  
By building rovers to participate in international competitions, Xplore leverages project-based learning with student-led teams.

**TEAM SIZE**  
Around 80 students

**YOUR ROLE**  
I evolved from designing and manufacturing rover components to leading a team in an international competition, and ultimately contributed to the development of a pioneering, open-source plastic-recycling machine.

**YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES**  
Managing a multidisciplinary team while balancing my EPFL studies tested my leadership and time management skills.

**THREE SKILLS DEVELOPED**

- A “can-do mentality,” knowing I had the tools and skills to find answers;
- Overcoming the fear of asking questions;
- A general overview of the different disciplines necessary in robotics.

**WHAT YOU WILL NEVER FORGET ABOUT THIS PROJECT**  
Constantly being surrounded by deeply motivated, brilliant individuals who pushed me to constantly improve.

**YOUR FAVORITE SCIENTIST**  
I've been a fan of Leonardo Da Vinci (1452 – 1519) since I was seven years old, captivated by his bravery in challenging the dogmas of his time.

**AN INSPIRATION DURING THE PROJECT**  
Andrew Huberman's podcast about science-based tools for everyday life.

**A PIECE OF ADVICE FOR FUTURE PARTICIPANTS**  
Be as curious as possible.



## Lorraine Naux

**AGE, COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, PROGRAM**  
22, France, Physics (Master's)

**PROJECT NAME**  
Sailowtech

**PROJECT GOAL**  
To promote a sustainable and environmentally friendly model of scientific expeditions by developing low-tech scientific tools, while focusing on the preservation of aquatic ecosystems through education, awareness, and knowledge sharing.

**TEAM SIZE**  
30-40 students

**YOUR ROLE**  
President

**YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES**

- Maintaining clear and effective communication within a multidisciplinary team;
- Overseeing each team while maintaining a global vision of the project.

**THREE SKILLS DEVELOPED**

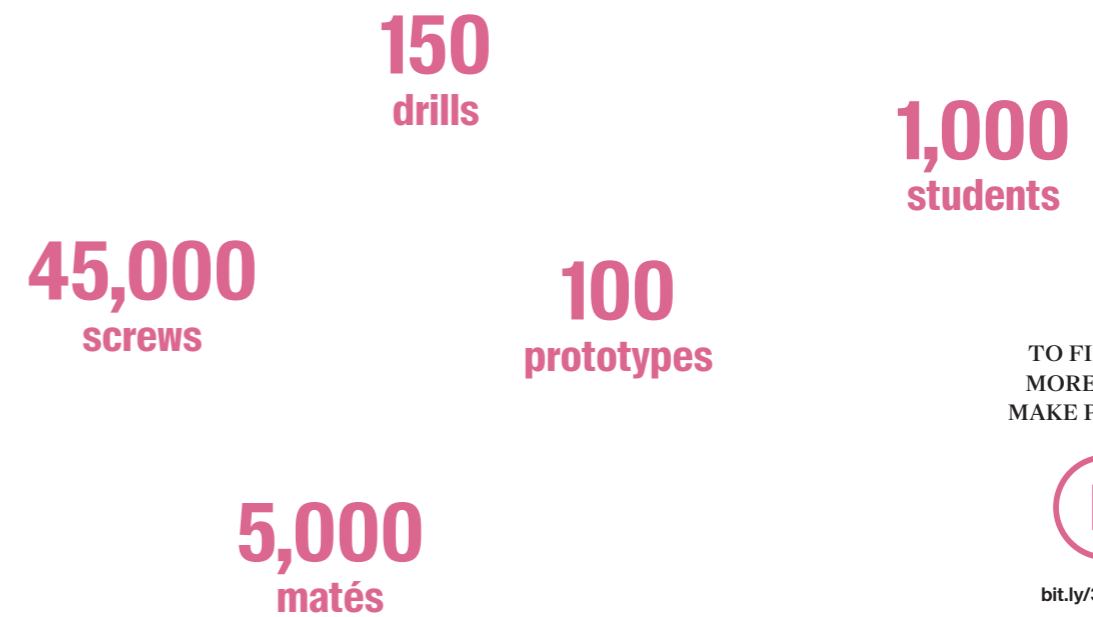
- Team coordination and management;
- Project presentation to various partners for fundraising;
- Setting objectives and creating a strategic project plan.

**WHAT YOU WILL NEVER FORGET ABOUT THIS PROJECT**  
Taking part in an expedition on Lac Lemán, where the entire team engaged in scientific protocols while learning how to sail.

**YOUR FAVORITE SCIENTIST**  
Heidi Sevestre (born 1988), a passionate glaciologist and science communicator who regularly leads expeditions in the Arctic and Greenland.

**AN INSPIRATION DURING THE PROJECT**  
The book *Nomade des mers: Le tour du monde des innovations low-tech* by Corentin de Chatelperron.

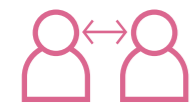
**A PIECE OF ADVICE FOR FUTURE PARTICIPANTS**  
Keep your imagination alive and participate in projects that align with the values you share with your team.



TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT MAKE PROJECTS



[bit.ly/3jGLABG](https://bit.ly/3jGLABG)



# Peer-to-Peer



**KENZA RHACHI**

**AGE**

20

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN**

Morocco

**MASTER**

Life Sciences

Engineering with a specialization in biological data science

**PROFILE**

A chef with a taste for variety

*Kenza is a student with a passion for education and an insatiable curiosity about the world. Originally from Morocco, she completed both her Bachelor's and Master's in Life Sciences at EPFL, where she also became a teaching assistant for Analysis I exercise sessions.*

Meeting Kenza is like diving into a pool of infectious good humor. She openly shares her passions for cats, baking, and her perspective on EPFL, which she discovered after moving from Morocco a few years ago to pursue both Bachelor's and Master's in Life Sciences. "I immediately formed strong friendships with international students during my preparatory year."

Certain aspects of life in Switzerland—and at EPFL—took her by surprise. "I admit, I was a bit taken aback during my first year when I realized it was former students who answered our questions and helped with exercise sessions. Maybe I naively expected the professors themselves to do it."

Did this bother her? "Not at all. In fact, it quickly made a lot of sense. Most of them had faced the same challenges we were dealing with, so their approach was often empathetic and patient." She herself had to retake two courses in her first year. "I realized that I needed to completely rethink how I was studying."

But Kenza didn't dwell on the setback. She applied for a teaching assistant position that was supported by the Student Support Program. "I was excited to share what I'd learned from my failures and to help other students find their own ways of solving problems based on my experience."

The job isn't always easy. "It's really challenging because every student is unique, and a good assistant has to find different ways to explain the same problem." But the rewards are real. "When you run into a former student later on, and they tell you they passed their exams and that you played a part in it... it really warms your heart!"

Kenza admits that she, too, has grown from the experience. "You learn to listen, to adapt. And to express yourself! It's amazing how much it's helped me feel more comfortable with public speaking. I've gained a lot of confidence."

Suffice it to say, she's thoroughly fulfilled by the experience. "Plus, the financial side isn't negligible. Thanks to this extra income, I've been able to travel. It opens up new horizons!" Her curiosity is boundless and contagious—and there's no doubt many students have been touched by it in her classes.



**VIDEO-INTERVIEW OF KENZA**

<https://go.epfl.ch/PeertoPeerKenza>



# PhD Excellence Program



Academic training does not always place transversal skills at the center of its curriculum. By connecting students across disciplines, this program broadens perspectives and fosters collaboration. Participants refine their leadership and communication abilities, learning to navigate both academic and industry landscapes with confidence.

*"Academia often feels like a bubble in which building interdisciplinary connections seems impossible. That's why I joined the PhD Excellence Program, to grow a network of fellow doctoral students from different fields of expertise. Through the different lectures, events, and courses, the program facilitated an environment of interaction with fellow students from across all EPFL disciplines. I learned that even though our work is technically different, we all share the same type of challenges, frustrations and achievements. The program turned out to be an invaluable platform for developing long-lasting friendships, all while nourishing those often-neglected transversal skills that will likely impact our lives—and not only our professional ones—even more than our technical know-how."*

EDUARDO GUTIERREZ PRIETO

*"I believe the most challenging aspect of research is not the science itself, but the effective communication of scientific ideas. EPFL's PhD Excellence Program provided me with the opportunity to improve my communication and leadership skills while connecting with a network of other PhD students who share similar interests. Together, we embarked on a journey of self-discovery, learning the importance of identifying our strengths and weaknesses to become better leaders. This program reinforced my ambition to become an entrepreneur after completing my doctoral studies and has equipped me with essential skills that will help me throughout my career and life."* EMILIO FERNÁNDEZ LAVADO

*"I joined this program because I wanted to develop essential soft skills in leadership, management and communication that would facilitate my next career steps, and it has been extremely useful throughout this year—which would have been overwhelming without the skillset one learns in the program. The leadership courses and coaching sessions taught me how to motivate and effectively communicate with the students I supervise, as well as learning how to "manage up" with my own supervisors. The coaching sessions helped me find solutions to issues I was facing in my professional life. And the program's "Science of Charisma" workshop helped me find creative ways to communicate my research to a non-technical audience. I am finally able to explain my heterogeneous multicore processor to my grandmother!"* LARA ORLANDIC



# Hardship Fellowships



quotes from anonymous beneficiaires

Political upheaval, economic hardship, or even the sudden onset of a pandemic can severely affect the financial stability of students, threatening to derail their academic ambitions. EPFL does its utmost to support these students in need with hardship fellowships up to 2,100 Swiss francs per month.



*Gustave Lapierre is a sharp and dynamic entrepreneur. Alongside his younger brother and a couple of friends, he founded a promising startup focused on AI-driven text data analysis. The Blaze program opened the door to the tech business ecosystem for them, and the accompanying grant of 10,000 Swiss francs enabled their venture to truly take off.*

**GUSTAVE LAPIERRE**

When we meet Gustave, he's in the midst of final-year exam prep, with just a week to go before his bachelor's exams. But the young man from the region of Paris doesn't seem particularly stressed out. "There have been a lot of late nights, ending around 4 or 5 a.m. ... but I've got it all under control," he says casually. Despite his young age, he appears to manage stress with remarkable ease. Since his second year at EPFL, he's been balancing his studies with BoundaryAi, the startup he launched with his younger brother and several friends scattered across Switzerland, France and Canada.

**AGE**  
22

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN**  
France

**BACHELOR**  
Mechanical Engineering

**PROFILE**  
Burns the midnight oil

It all started in early 2023, when his brother—a business and management student at McGill University in Canada—asked for help with coding on a project involving several colleagues. "As soon as I saw the potential of their idea, I knew I wanted to be a part of it," he recalls. He jumped in without hesitation.

And what's the idea that captured his interest? "Our technology simplifies text data analysis using AI. It summarizes qualitative texts and quickly extracts key points of interest." This innovation is particularly useful for companies and institutions conducting large-scale surveys.

The idea was there... but how do you find a market and get started? That's where the Blaze program became a game-changer for the small international team. "It helped us get our foot in the door of the Swiss startup ecosystem. First, through workshops that gave us the general know-how for starting a business in tech, and more importantly, it connected us to a network. It also gave us undeniable credibility when reaching out to clients or potential investors."

Gustave and his team learned how to create a business plan, navigate legal basics, and pitch their idea. Then, they benefited from the 10,000 CHF grant that applicants can receive through the program. "That really set us in motion. We were able to hire freelance developers, run a marketing campaign, and cover legal fees."

And today? "Our product has piqued the interest of groups as varied as a consulting firm in Quebec, a city in Jersey, and a university in England... But before all that, I need to finish my exams," he says with a grin. For a few minutes, you might forget that this poised entrepreneur hasn't yet completed his bachelor's degree.

*"I would like to emphasize the crucial importance of the hardship fellowship I received and the support you have provided throughout my academic journey. These invaluable resources allowed me to overcome the financial difficulties I was facing, granting me the peace of mind necessary to fully focus on my studies. It is undeniable that this support has had a significant impact on my life as a student, enabling me to follow my aspirations and achieve my academic goals. Furthermore, thanks to this support, I was able to actively participate in exciting research projects at my university, which deepened my love for mathematics and opened doors to new academic opportunities. Finally, this help also allowed me to engage in extracurricular and volunteer activities that enriched my university experience and broadened my overall perspective."* MASTER'S STUDENT

*"This has been a beacon of hope for me. I feel more at ease, which allows me to focus more on my master's studies and obtaining my degree. My academic goal is now at the forefront of my priorities."* MASTER'S STUDENT

*"I would like to express my deep gratitude for this support, which was of vital importance to me during the previous semester. Thanks to this hardship fellowship, my financial situation has significantly improved, which had a positive impact on my mental health. Before receiving this support, I struggled to validate my semesters and often felt stressed by financial worries. Thanks to this hardship fellowship, I was able to fully concentrate on my studies and successfully complete my academic year with excellent results. This positive transformation has put my academic success on the path to achievement."*

BACHELOR'S STUDENT

*"There was a before and after the hardship fellowship. Before? Three hours of daily commuting, a knot in my stomach from the fear of not being able to continue my studies due to a lack of funds. After: housing ten minutes away by bike from EPFL and the peace of mind to study and give my best. Without the hardship fellowship, I would have never had the chance to experience student life, or the unique atmosphere of academic life. I simply wouldn't have been able to bring my dreams to life and would have had to give them up. Today I am in my master's program, and I couldn't be more grateful for this opportunity that was given to me."* MASTER'S STUDENT



**VIDEO-INTERVIEW OF GUSTAVE**

<https://go.epfl.ch/BlazeGustave>

# Paths Forward

EPFL's Student Support Program has empowered beneficiaries to succeed in various fields. From advancing technology to leading sustainability initiatives and driving innovation, these former and current students highlight the enduring impact of their education and experiences at EPFL.

## Bachelor Excellence Fellowship – Mateus Carvalho de Montigny

*“Receiving the Bachelor Excellence Fellowship allowed me to fully focus on my studies while becoming involved in campus life. I joined two associations: Microengineering Coaching, which supports first-year students at EPFL, and HOLÀ (Hispanic Organization of Latin Americans), which promotes Latin American culture on campus. As a Brazilian, this has been especially meaningful. This fellowship will also provide crucial financial support for my exchange year in Vancouver, where I will finish my bachelor’s degree in Microengineering. I feel truly confident in my choice of studies and plan to continue in the same field upon my return from Canada.”*

## Master Excellence Fellowship

### Maria Vittoria Oropallo

*“After graduating from EPFL, I joined Apple as an engineer, specifically working on the design of “M-chips”, which are the processors of iPads and MacBooks. My colleagues at Apple are impressed by my discipline and technical know-how, which I was able to fully develop thanks to the financial backing provided by the Excellence Fellowship. Without this support, my studies at EPFL would have been much more difficult. I want to warmly thank the donors for the support they gave me during my studies. I sincerely appreciate it.”*



**Tim Nguyen**  
Coding Club for Girls  
audio in French



**Prakriti Bhatia**  
Peer-to-Peer  
audio in French

## MAKE Project – Adrien Peltier

*“Participating in the MAKE “Swiss Solar Boat” project during my studies helped me gain practical skills and apply theoretical knowledge to make the right decisions in real-world scenarios. The skills and confidence I developed through this extraordinary experience enabled me to contribute to the BoatOne project—the Alinghi Red Bull Racing sailboat that has participated in the 37<sup>th</sup> America’s cup. I’m proud to say that is where I also currently work.”*



**Charlotte Girard**  
Summer in the Lab  
audio in French



**Valentin Tissot-Daguette**  
Euler Course  
audio in French

## PhD Excellence Program – Jonas Schnidrig

*“Participating in the PhD Excellence Program has been transformative. After defending my PhD, I now focus on applying my research in energy system modeling through collaborations with various partners. The program’s leadership training and networking have been invaluable, enabling me to manage diverse teams and foster successful collaborations with local and national energy providers. Currently, I’m contributing to a sustainable future by leading the EnergyScope initiative and elaborating large-scale circular economy models with regional, national and international industrial and governmental partners.”*

# Our Gratitude

**“Thank you so much for giving us the opportunity to develop our skills and innovate in a creative and stimulating environment. Thanks to your support, we are transforming our ideas into tangible projects while continuing our academic journey.”**

LORRAINE, MAKE PROJECT

*“Thank you for giving us the opportunity to undertake a project that will forever leave its mark on our lives, and for allowing us to have such a unique experience during our studies. Without your support, this would have never been possible.”* GUSTAVE, BLAZE

*“I am deeply grateful to the donors of the Student Support Program for this formative opportunity that has allowed me to grow both in my career and as a person. As a student assistant, I had the privilege of supporting and helping students, which gave me the chance to acquire a wide range of skills that I am convinced will greatly contribute to my future development.”* KENZA, PEER-TO-PEER

**“Thank you for your valuable support and trust. Because of you, I am able to pursue an enriching education at EPFL and participate in ambitious research projects in neuro-rehabilitation. I look forward to contributing to innovative solutions for the future!”** ALEXIS, MASTER EXCELLENCE FELLOWSHIP

**“I will always be grateful to those who make the MAKE program possible. Your support helps train engineers who will be prepared to meet tomorrow’s challenges.”**

ALEXIA, MAKE PROJECT

*“I sincerely thank all the donors who allowed me to experience the joys of the Euler Course! This course introduced me to the excitement of doing interesting mathematics alongside great people, and this has motivated me to continue in the field.”* CASSANDRE, EULER COURSE

**“Thanks to the Bachelor Excellence Fellowship, which has been essential to my academic journey so far, I was able to fully focus on my studies and take advantage of all the opportunities offered on campus. Thank you so much for this trust.”** ELIOTT, BACHELOR EXCELLENCE FELLOWSHIP

*“This program allowed me to take my first steps into the world of research, so a big ‘Thank you!’ to the donors who made this wonderful discovery possible.”*

JULIE, SUMMER IN THE LAB

# A Word from EPFL’s President

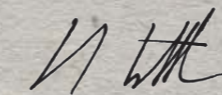
As I prepare to step down as President of EPFL, this report marks a special moment as it coincides with the fifth anniversary of the Student Support Program. I have witnessed first-hand how this program goes beyond financial aid, offering a launchpad for personal and academic growth, fostering innovation, encouraging the development of interdisciplinary knowledge, and paving the way for individuals to realise their ambitions and dreams.

Upon concluding my tenure, I do so with immense pride and hope, confident that this legacy of support and excellence will continue to shape the future of EPFL, Switzerland, and beyond for years to come.

Finally, I leave you with Plutarch’s quote which captures our axiom in nurturing the next generation of scientists, engineers and architects:

*The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled.*

Thank you for your support and trust.



Martin Vetterli  
PROFESSOR & PRESIDENT

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



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



Excellence for a brighter future