

Believing in the power of education

Roche is dedicated to programmes that promote educational opportunities for young people around the world. By equipping them with academic know-how and essential soft skills, the initiatives prepare students to thrive as individuals and serve their communities.

In emerging markets, one of our major focal points is to fund education programmes that support talented students from poor and disadvantaged backgrounds. We engage in sustainable local projects to ensure that the students have strong employment prospects after their graduation.

Focus on disadvantaged youngsters

In India, we funded college and university scholarships for 19 students from Kiran Children's Village, some of whom had disabilities. Literally meaning 'ray of light', Kiran provides rehabilitation, education and vocational training, and shines a beacon of light into the lives of these disadvantaged youngsters. By attending university in Varanasi, the Roche-sponsored students have become the first generation from their village to go into higher education.

In 2019, 28 students who received scholarships from Roche graduated from the Maharishi Institute in Johannesburg and another 22 students are set to graduate in 2020. The institute is a non-profit organisation with the aim of educating a new generation of leaders for South Africa by providing funding for students looking to access education offered by its educational partners. With future employment prospects of about 95% for the graduates, Maharishi has proved highly successful and leaves a lasting impact not only on the students but also on their families and communities.

One of this year's graduates is Nkulumo Dlamini from Soweto, a township in Johannesburg. The youngest

son in the family, he was the first from his household to obtain a university degree. "The opportunity to get an education must not be underestimated. It is the key to everything," says the freshly-minted Bachelor of Business Administration. "With Roche as my main benefactor I was able to cover most of the expenses during my studies. My family would not have been able to bear such a financial burden. Now I am eager to work in marketing or business development and put what I have learned into practice."

In Latin America, we collaborate with Fundación Educación in Peru, Colombia, El Salvador and Guatemala. Launched in 2016, Roche provides four-year scholarships for talented young people from low-income families at leading colleges and universities. Much like our Indian and South African scholars, these students also have a great likelihood (around 95%) of finding employment in their respective countries.

Asked about one of the foundation's recipe for success, the president of Fundación Educación Ricardo Cordero is quick to answer: "Our programme is characterised by focus. We concentrate on finding the best talents in four countries and are active in only ten schools. Moreover, we focus our attention on what is most needed in the economies of the countries in question and solely sponsor economics and business administration students. Thanks to our highly motivated and dedicated team, we are able to offer truly tailor-made and highly sustainable programmes."

Giving back to the community

What also sets the scholarships apart from some other programmes is the 'compromiso de honor' principle: once the scholars have finished their studies, they are expected to repay the scholarship provided they have the financial means. While not a real contract, more a simple oath, most graduates are happy to do so.



A bright future ahead: The first batch of Roche-sponsored students from the Maharishi Institute in Johannesburg graduated in 2019.

“The foundation also fosters a very active alumni network,” says Ricardo. “This way we not only promote networking among our scholars and alumni but can also actively stay in contact with them. We want to know what happens to them after these four years of scholarship to see if it was worthwhile and adjust our programme if necessary.”

Roche initially provided scholarships for 34 students with the Fundación Educación. The first graduated in 2018, followed by another 11 in 2019 and the remainder will complete their studies in 2020. To ensure continuity, the company has already committed to another four years of sponsoring 35 scholars. Roche is therefore contributing to the foundation’s ongoing success story, which its president describes thus: “While the direct impact of scholarships on family and the community is obvious, it also has a rather invisible one: Very often former scholars serve as role models for younger students when they have made a

career or started an enterprise. Seeing our scholars succeed, we aim to continuously grow the programme, and thanks to Roche and other strategic partners we can gradually do so.”

Science and technology are at the core of our business. That is why we support international and local programmes to spark an interest in these disciplines among young people. In Europe, we have a number of science and education initiatives. We have been supporting Swiss Youth in Science for over 50 years and have been a founding sponsor of their International Swiss Talent Forum, a think tank for students from all over the world. Since the beginning of the ISTF, more than 600 highly talented young people from 30 different countries have participated in the programme. And in the US, Genentech runs Futurelab in cooperation with the local school district to inspire young students to explore careers in science, technology, engineering and mathe

