

## **Benjamín Aróstegui**



Benjamín Aróstegui was born in 1984 in Lima/Perú. After high school he entered a public university and graduated as a mechanics technician. Then he realized he needed a higher quality education to get the jobs he aspired. He enrolled at TECSUP for the three-year course of Heavy Machinery Maintenance. However, his savings didn't last for the entire career, and it was only thanks to the Fundación Educación scholarship that he was able to finalize his studies.

After graduating from TECSUP, Benjamín has earned a Master from the Universidad de Ingeniería and taken several post-graduate courses. He has been working as a maintenance planner and independent consultant and serves as a professor for maintenance and related topics at several institutions, among them TECSUP.

Currently, he is the Director of the School of Engineering of the Cibertec Institute, a technical college in Lima.

### **My Personal Testimony**

My name is Benjamin Arostegui, I am 35 years old and I want to share my story with you.

At the end of my basic education (5th year of secondary school), I decided to study a career related to mechanics at a national university. There I spent a beautiful time and learned many things. But when I graduated, I was not really satisfied with my formation due to the lack of equipment and means for the practical activities of the courses in the national university.

I decided to look for a job, which was rather difficult for me as for any who graduates from a national university. So, I decided to better continue my studies in a prestigious institution that is well equipped, in order to fill the gap that a state institution usually has. In July 2006 I enrolled at TECSUP and studied *Maintenance of Heavy Machinery*.

During my earlier studies I had been able to work and save some money, which I now invested in this new career.

My savings only lasted for one semester. From Enit Vivanco, our student advisor, I heard of this opportunity to receive a scholarship that did not require any guarantee or further requisitions other than the commitment to maintain a good academic performance and the repayment of the full scholarship.

At that time, Peru was going through rough times and trust had been lost especially in politicians. There was a lot of insecurity everywhere. It was kind of difficult to understand that someone would be willing to take up the responsibility for my scholarship.

Fundación Educación came into my life like a light in the distance. Without much complications, Fundación Educación accepted my request, so I was able to continue my studies and finish the technical career in 3 years. From then on, my professional life took a tremendous turn.

When I graduated from TECSUP I got four job offers and I felt very happy. I paid back my scholarship as soon as possible and I realized that not only had I gotten financial support but also a second mother – Bertha Aspillaga – who was always very attentive and kind to me. I also regained trust in manhood, I regained the believe that people can keep a word, that honesty and commitments really exist.

I believe that Fundación Educación transformed my life, because, one, it allowed me to complete my studies and, two, it made me understand the values of honesty and trust.

It is for this reason that following the initiative of Ernst Keller, I carry out talks, seminars and technological events through the engineering school that I lead in an educational institution in Lima, Peru. My purpose is to promote the professional education of people and to break the myths that a qualitative education is impossible, because there are opportunities and they are available for everyone.

It is very gratifying for me to be able to share my experience with you. It is a proof that giving a hand to another person is like uniting links in a chain with an exponential effect on people. Muchas gracias.



## **Claudia Carazas**



Claudia Carazas was born in 1975 in Lima/Perú. She grew up in Lima in a migrant family from Ayacucho and visited public schools. Her outstanding scholar performance led her to embark on an academic career, notwithstanding all financial obstacles. Thanks to the scholarship of Fundación Educación, she was able to finish her studies at the renowned Universidad de Lima, and graduated 1999 in the top 20% as a Systems Engineer. She forms part of the first generation of scholars of Fundación Educación.

After having worked for more than ten years in different positions in various multinational companies in Perú, in 2008 she took on a professional challenge that brought her to Madrid where she now lives. After a successful career in database management and applications architecture, she is now the Project Manager of a development team in a leading French DIY-company.

### **My Personal Testimony**

Once a friend said to me: "Surely one of your grandmothers, while preparing the field for sowing, mentally planted the following seed: One of my granddaughters will study in an important university and become a professional." The name of this grandmother was Constancia, and constancy, which honors her name (and Ma Bertha knows well that mine could be called stubbornness) has led me to where I am.

My name is Claudia Inés Carazas Gutierrez, I am Peruvian and I can proudly tell you that I am a descendant of Ayacucho farmers.

I grew up in Lima with a wonderful mother (who during my adolescence went to heaven) and a wonderful father, who both taught me respect for others, roots and nature, and taught me that I could achieve everything with study and dedication.

I went to primary and secondary school in a public school. It is what my family could afford. This did not prevent me from standing out in the top positions of all my courses.

When I arrived at the university stage, I already had the idea of studying in a public university, but the confidence of my older sister and that of my father motivated me to enroll at the University of Lima to study Systems Engineering. We were confident that soon a scholarship would come up.

Even though I worked and obtained partial scholarships during the first two years, I was only able to take two or three courses per semesters and thus progressed very slowly. Even though I had made up my mind that I would finish my studies in double the time, in 1995, after two years of study, I realized I had not even finished the first year of my career. I reflected and made the decision to leave the university to go to a public university to study Journalism.

It seems that Fate had already decided that I should become a Systems Engineer. That same year I received the news that marked my university, professional and personal life, the scholarship of Fundación Educación (which we baptized in the first promotion of fellows as Keller Scholarship). My financial problems being solved, I improved my academic performance and finished my degree in the small group of students with best grades of the whole university.

Who would have predicted that I would finish my university studies with the best qualifications and with a job in one of the largest American Telecommunication companies? Thus began my professional adventure through the most important international organizations both in Peru and in Europe, from which I have been learning and contributing the best of me. In Peru, I worked in companies such as BellSouth, Telecom Italia Mobile, Barrick Gold Corporation and PepsiCo. In Europe, in companies such as British Telecom, Oracle Ibérica, NH Hotels, IBM, Hewlett Packard, Telefonica Spain, Telefonica Germany, Telefonica Italia, Enagas Ibérica (Portugal-Spain-France interconnections) and currently in Leroy Merlin based in France.

Thanks to the scholarship of Fundación Educación, I was able to dream big and learn from the greatest, rub shoulders with CEOs who are mentors to me, such as Nacho Sanchez Villares, CEO of Leroy Merlin, the company I currently work with.

And although I am convinced that I will never stop learning something new, the seed that Fundación Educación planted in my destiny continues to bear fruit and I hope it will continue doing so in order to improve the life of all who receive and will receive the fruit of my work.

## **Gonzalo Parra-Alvarez**



Gonzalo Parra-Alvarez was born in 1991 in Lima-Perú. He grew up as a son of a single mother who had no support of any kind from Gonzalo's father. He was able to visit a private secondary school only due to performance-related discounts. He got admitted to the Pontifical University of Perú through the top school students' admission procedure and chose to study electrical engineering.

Even though he was an outstanding student he would have been forced to leave university because of financial reasons wouldn't there have been the scholarship of Fundación Educación. He then won another scholarship, this time for an exchange semester at Leibniz University in Hanover. Once in Germany, he managed to transfer to RWTH Aachen University, where he graduated in Electrical Engineering, Information Technology and Computer Engineering in 2015. At the same university he also did a master's degree in Systems Engineering and Industrial Automation in 2018.

Already during his studies he was engaged in various research and development projects and in volunteering work. A few months ago, he founded his own company in the field of preventive medical technology.

### **My Personal Testimony**

Peru, as a developing country, has very limited access to high-quality education. Getting access to it requires several factors to come together and, with limited economic means, it is even harder to access it, no matter how hard people try.

In my case, due to our financial situation, there was a time when we could not afford university costs anymore. We were in debt and I was about to leave my studies to get underemployed to support my family. In Peru, underemployment is stagnation. It is so time consuming and has such low wages that it is impossible to follow any educational activity at the same time. Saving money of it is neither an option.

Luckily for me, I got the scholarship from Fundación Educación just before I was about to leave my studies. Since then, a lot has changed for the better. Not only was I able to continue my studies, but it opened the doors for even bigger things. First, I got funded for an exchange program at the Leibniz University of Hanover. Once in Germany, opportunities kept appearing: RWTH Aachen admitted me to transfer from PUCP and continue my studies there. So, I moved to Germany.

Now, seven years after that first flight to Hanover, so much in my life has changed. I made friends from all over the world and graduated in B.Sc. and M.Sc. from RWTH Aachen. I had the opportunity to work at very interesting projects and companies I never thought I would be part of.

For example, I worked for 2 years with a full-replacement artificial heart at the Aachen University Hospital as part of a European Union's initiative. After that project, I moved to Berlin to get in touch with the European startup ecosystem, where I worked for relayr Inc., an industrial automation startup. In 2018, it was acquired by Munich RE for 300 million dollars. I was very lucky to work together with world-class talent.

After these experiences, in 2018, together with two friends, we started Vintus. Vintus develops dynamic office workstations, since lower back pain is the number 1 cause of sick days in Germany. Nowadays, Vintus keeps improving prototypes and plans to go to market in the fall of 2020. And now, in the fall of 2019, I am starting my own technology consultancy, and I hope to grow through it as well.

As you can see, thanks to the scholarship, but also to mother Bertha's advice, I have been able to make important decisions in crucial moments. Today, I am relieved to say that my family is doing much better than before, the scholarship has been fully reimbursed and I don't lack opportunities in Germany. None of this would have been possible without such an important support at the time. I can hardly express how grateful I am for the opportunity I received, and I will keep responding according to the trust I received from the foundation and from my family. Thus, it is my plan to return to Peru in the near future to use all my resources and knowledge to address the unattended areas of my region.



## **Florencio Paucar**



Florencio Paucar was born in 1980 in Colcabamba in the Andean region of Perú. He is a native Quechua speaker. He visited public schools in Huancavelica and went as a migrant worker to Lima. However, his mind was set on studying at one of the most prestigious universities of the country, the Pontifical Catholic University of Perú.

Financing his university studies first with his labor work, then with the scholarship of Fundación Educación, he graduated in Computer Engineering in 2012. After some first professional experiences in Perú, he earned an Erasmus Master's scholarship, which led him to University of Pisa. There he focused his studies on data science. Currently, he forms part of multinational expert teams in the field of artificial intelligence (AI) engineering and has been working in Italy and Finland for different multinational companies in the technology and finance sector.

### **My Personal Testimony**

I am Florencio Paucar Sedano, Master in Computer Science of Pisa University and a graduate of the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru.

In this personal resumé, I would like to talk about my personal life: I am happy and proud of what I have achieved until now given my difficult and pretty disadvantageous childhood. I am also sure that I am more than capable to deal with any future challenging situations. You may be wondering why I start this statement with these sentences, so let me explain:

I come from Colcabamba district in the Huancavelica region. Huancavelica is one of

the poorest regions of Peru. We were 5 children and my father only finished high school and my mother was illiterate.

However, the highest proof of life reached me when I was still a child and my 4 younger siblings, Miguel 14, Emilia 7, Sebastian 3 and Maria 1 years, and I became orphans. My father was a farmer and despite his total detachment to any political party and his old age (60 years), he mysteriously disappeared on February 4, 1991, during the politically violent years experienced by my country during the 80's and early 90'. Later, he was officially recognized as a missed person in the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. My mother, a devoted housewife and a farmer as well, died surprisingly on December 23, 1991, 10 months after my father's death, presumably due to a broken arm she suspiciously got on day.

The hard time taught me to focus my actions in a different way. I realized that with a clear mind set I could achieve a lot. As a consequence, I set myself the personal goal of obtaining the best education. And this is why I ambioned studying the career of Computer Engineering in the prestigious private Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, which is almost inaccessible for the poor.

Let me explain how I managed to study and finish my career. I arrived in Lima, the capital city, in August 2002, with only my clothes and my little guitar, with no money, but with a big dream and a giant determination to make it: to study at the most important university of Peru.

For some years, I managed to study while working as a blue-collar worker. It was very difficult for me because I had also to give economical support to my younger siblings and I had to pay the fees of the university. The fees were higher than my salary, so I could not pay the University, and I remember I even had some days without eating. Fortunately, when I was in the 8th semester, thanks to my outstanding academic performance and my economic situation I earned a scholarship of Fundación Educación.

Once I finished university, many things changed in my life. I obtained a European Union scholarship to study in a Master program in Computer Science at Pisa University. Since then, I have been working in Italy and Finland as a highly skilled professional. Currently, I am working as an Artificial Intelligence Engineer.

Like as a child, I still have many dreams and one of them is that I would like to spread the AI knowledge I have obtained to young people in Peru. I am convinced the expertise in innovative topics related to technology would permit the people to obtain better opportunities.

I am thankful to Fundación Educación for its support. I am convinced that this institution is forming committed professionals that will improve our developing countries.



## **Ricardo Zimic**



Ricardo Zimic was born in 1988 in Lima. Son of a mechanical engineer and a fashion designer, he was raised in the Peruvian capital with his two siblings. He studied at the Champagnat School and then at the San Luis de Barranco School, both managed by the Marist Brothers congregation.

As a scholar of Fundación Educación, Ricardo graduated in Journalism from the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru in the upper third of his class. After that, he took several specialization courses in digital marketing, management, and economics. Also, he has gained professional experience in Peru working as an online reporter and news anchor for television, as well as editor of politics and economics.

Currently, he is doing a master's degree in Media and Communication Science at the Ilmenau University of Technology on a German study grant.

### **My Personal Testimony**

My name is Ricardo Zimic. I am a Peruvian journalist and former fellow of Fundación Educación.

I remember that the foundation's help came to me when I needed it most.

I was studying the last semesters of my bachelor's in journalism at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru while working to pay for my studies, which was strenuous. Despite that, I had good grades and my teachers recognized my talent. My mother had irregular income and my father was ill, so the family's economic situation was precarious.

When I heard that I had been selected to receive the help of the foundation, the first thing I did was to take a deep breath, very deep. I felt an immense relief: I finally had the support I needed to finally focus on my studies.

That's how I graduated as a journalist and got my first job as an online editor and then as a TV reporter. Throughout my professional career, I have reported a wide variety of news, from natural disasters in Peru's northern regions to international summits of leaders in Lima city.

Each experience has taught me to not only be a responsible professional but also a person committed to the development of one's community. Also, to think globally and to act locally in synergy with others to achieve sustainable changes towards a better and fairer society.

Currently, I am studying a Master's in Media and Communication Science in Ilmenau Technology University thanks to a grant from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). This is another step in my development as a global changemaker.

Fundación Educación played an important role in this story because the members of its Local Committee trusted my talent and my commitment. So today I thank them in the best way I know, namely aiming to generate a positive impact on society from both my personal life and profession.