

Initiative to promote diversity

CaixaBank and Microsoft launch the WONNOW Awards to celebrate female excellence in university level technology degrees

- **The awards are aimed at students in the final year of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) degrees at any Spanish university.**
- **Entries may be submitted until 30 June at www.WonnowAwards.com**
- **11 prizes will be awarded: One cash prize of 10,000 euros for the female student with the best academic record, while a further 10 students will win paid internships at CaixaBank and take part in a mentoring program at Microsoft.**

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CaixaBank and Microsoft have launched the WONNOW Awards, an initiative aimed at supporting female talent and diversity, while helping women to embark on careers in the world of science and technology. All female students in the final year of studies in science, technology, engineering and mathematics degrees at Spain's 84 universities will be eligible to take part in the awards.

There will be a cash prize of 10,000 euros for the student with the best academic record. While a further 10 students will win paid internships at CaixaBank, a financial institution overseen by Chairman Jordi Gual and CEO Gonzalo Gortázar. These students will be given 6-month internship contracts, with a chance to join the company on a permanent basis at the end of said term. They will also take part in a mentoring program run by Microsoft, designed to support them as they embark on professional careers in the tech industry.

"We have set up these awards to honour the academic and personal excellence of female students studying technical degrees, an area that is ever more pivotal to the development of our society, but where women tend to be underrepresented", said CaixaBank CEO Gonzalo Gortázar. "The initiative is coherent with our banking model: environmentally engaged, socially responsible, and driving the development of both individuals and society as a whole".

Meanwhile, Pilar López, Chairwoman of Microsoft, said “fostering a passion for technology among young women and sparking their interest in the world of science will help to encourage more women to venture into the ICT industry, which is key to ensuring Spain’s long-term competitiveness. Our goal in setting up the WONNOW Awards, in partnership with CaixaBank, is to drive progress toward these goals, shining a spotlight on the finest talent and holding up female role models in the STEM sector, while driving diversity in the tech industry”.

All those who wish to take part in the initiative can submit their nominations via www.WonnowAwards.com until 30 June. The winners will be chosen based on their academic records and personal experience. Candidates must complete a form, featuring a number of questions designed to establish their merits and build an understanding of their background. They must also include a C.V. and their most recent grade average. The winners will be announced in September.

Driving diversity

CaixaBank and Microsoft have embarked on this initiative to promote diversity in key sectors, while honouring female students who excel in STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics). This is an inclusive project seeking to draw attention to the hard work and commitment of women who study these disciplines.

The programme mirrors the values of social engagement, equality and excellence that are shared by CaixaBank and Microsoft, while the awards are set to be held on an annual basis. The project embodies the dedication of both companies to promoting gender equality in major industries.

According to analysis from the OECD, one in three engineering graduates is a woman, while just one in every five IT graduates is female. Figures from the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport reveal that just one in four engineering students in the country is a woman.

OECD data shows that 71% of male graduates in science and technology go on to work in STEM positions, compared with just 43% of women graduates. In OECD countries only 13.7% of inventors registering patents are female.

This contrasts starkly with strong demand for STEM professionals in the European Union. It is estimated that there will be a total of 756,000 unfilled job positions in the information and communication technologies industry in 2020. Parity between men and women in the digital sector would drive up European Union GDP by some 9 billion euros annually. Fostering an interest among women in STEM subjects will help to narrow the current gender gap in the science & technology sector.

About CaixaBank

Social engagement is one of CaixaBank's core values, aspiring to drive progress towards a fairer society and equal opportunities. To this end, it supports and organizes a wide range of initiatives aimed at fostering diversity, including the WONNOW Awards. One hallmark of the bank is its engagement in numerous partnerships and corporate responsibility initiatives, both domestic and international.

CaixaBank is involved in several initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality, such as the United Nations Women's Empowerment Principles; a voluntary agreement with the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality to support greater female representation in management positions; the Diversity Charter to promote equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory measures; and the Generation and Talent Observatory, intended to support generational diversity.

At present 39.1% of management positions at CaixaBank are held by women, while a specific initiative is in place to drive gender diversity. It has likewise established an Equality Plan aimed at ensuring effective equality between men and women. CaixaBank is the leading retail bank in Spain, standing as the primary bank for 26.7% of the retail customer market. The bank serves around 16 million customers in the Iberian market and has 5,379 branches.

About Microsoft

Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT" @microsoft) is the leading platform and productivity company for the mobile-first, cloud-first world. Its mission is to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more.