

Eleventh edition of the Bank's international debates programme

CaixaBank brings together in London women who invest in the STEM sectors at a “Diversity Talks” session

- ***The event focused on women “business angels” in companies related to the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics sectors.***
- ***CaixaBank's London branch was opened in 2016 and has clients from the finance, telecommunications, infrastructure, transportation and consumer goods sectors.***

London, 5 December 2018

CaixaBank has held the eleventh edition of its “Diversity Talks” international debates programme at the National Gallery in London, focusing this time around on women who invest in the STEM sectors (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). At the conference, the Bank brought together women who are leaders in these fields to debate about diversity and the presence of women “business angels” in companies of the fields of technology and science.

“Business angels” are private investors that, in an individual or collective way, invest in companies in their starting-up phases, not only with financial support, but also contributing with their expertise and know-how in the market or sector of the new company.

This “Diversity Talks”, which was held for the first time in London, was attended by **Sonia Contera**, a doctor in Physics and the second woman to hold a position in Experimental Physics at the Clarendon Lab, in Oxford, and founder and director of the Oxford Martin Institute of Nanoscience for Medicine; and **Esther Rodríguez-Villegas**, the only female full professor in the Electrical and Electronic Engineering department at Imperial College London and founder of the start-up Acurable. The conference was moderated by **Regina Llopis**, chairwoman and chief executive of Grupo AIA, and chairwoman and cofounding partner of WA4STEAM (Women Angels for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Architecture, and Mathematics).

Sonia Contera emphasised that “Most students (especially from minorities and lower economic backgrounds) join STEM research careers out of a genuine vocation to become a force for improvement amidst the worrying trends developing in the world, however their inventions are often lost in a system that disincentivise scientists/technologists ... debates like this one are fundamental to unlock the floodgates of innovation that are needed for humanity to progress (and even to survive)”.

Esther Rodríguez-Villegas, meanwhile, recalled that “Diversity teaches people to have more open and curious minds, more attentive ears, and more tolerant and empathic attitudes towards those surrounding them. Hence, it is ultimately the best ingredient to create highly performing but also happy teams”.

The moderator of the conference, Regina Llopis, presented WA4STEAM: “The recently active Spanish originated Women Angels for Science Technology Engineering, Arts & Architecture and Mathematics: WA4STEAM, all women angels organization of 40 members is one of many new answers to impacting the low numbers of women investors in EU as well as facilitating access to capital for entrepreneurship on STEAM lead by Women”.

CaixaBank in London

CaixaBank has had a branch in London since 2016, which was previously a representative office since 2003. From the British capital, the Bank provides support to subsidiaries of Spanish companies with a presence in the United Kingdom, British parent companies with a presence in Spain, and multinationals with headquarters in the United Kingdom.

The clients of the London branch include companies in the finance, telecommunications, infrastructure, transportation and consumer goods sectors.

The United Kingdom is the third largest market for Spanish exports of goods and services, after France and Germany, according to data from the ICEX for 2017. In that year, Spanish exports of goods and services to the United Kingdom amounted to 37,889 million euros. The United Kingdom is also the main market for Spain's tourism sector.

Diversity, key for CaixaBank

CaixaBank launched its “Diversity Talks” international debates programme in October 2017 in a bid to stimulate reflection on diversity and business management. The Bank has now held events in Istanbul, Warsaw, Dubai, Johannesburg, Milan, New York, Casablanca, Shanghai, Lima and Singapore, where it has brought together renowned experts, economic leaders and employees to analyse the various dimensions of diversity within the financial sector and in relation to business management.

CaixaBank is a pioneering company when it comes to managing diversity in Europe. Its specialised team coordinates transversal projects across the entire organisation that embrace numerous facets: cultural diversity, gender diversity, functional diversity and generational diversity. Diversity is also one of the main levers of its Socially Responsible Banking plan.

For the Bank, diversity not only provides an excellent vision of human resources, but it is also a key part of the business model. CaixaBank's international network is highly adept at providing advice to Spanish companies that do business outside Spain and that therefore

require expert knowledge of not only international banking but also cultural diversity. More to the point, no less than 21 different nationalities are represented on CaixaBank's international banking team.

The company has multicultural teams of different origins, who undertake projects to ensure the utmost proximity and meet the specific needs of each region.

Gender diversity is another hugely important issue: across CaixaBank's international network, women account for 42% of all international managerial positions.