

HUMER FOUNDATION

FOR ACADEMIC TALENT



DON'T LOSE TOUCH WITH REALITY!

Dr Franz B. Humer, Chairman of the Foundation Board

Famous poet and thinker Hermann Hesse coined the phrase "You have to try the impossible to achieve the possible". And right he most certainly was. In many situations, you need to think and act beyond the apparent confines in front of you. So it may be surprising to know that I have quite an opposing view where the subject matters and research fields of dissertations are concerned.

I do not, of course, wish to put the case for those topics that have already been addressed multiple times in thoroughgoing academic study. Works of this kind, which essentially build on what has already been published and, at best, shed light on a single additional aspect, are still all too common despite the professionalisation of post-graduate education in recent years.

As a rule, dissertations that are too far removed from reality in terms of content also make little sense. Based on quite outlandish hypotheses, they deal with questions that will never become reality, neither today nor tomorrow. There is indeed a great danger here that, although such works are acknowledged in the narrow academic sphere – perhaps even a little admired for their daring thinking – experience suggests that they will end up in an archive or filed on a computer sooner or later, which is where they will stay.

Yet our experience from what has now been thirteen years of the Foundation's work sends out a clear message to the contrary – dissertations that tackle current challenges and develop specific approaches to solutions find an audience beyond the academic community and are also

taken seriously by political and economic actors. This often results in a well-founded dialogue between academia and the real world, which has a measurable positive effect on action in the individual subject areas.

Let me demonstrate this briefly in the dissertations that we have supported financially at the universities in Basel and Salzburg. Research on Africa is at the heart of the dissertations we support in Basel. In most cases, this involves very specific issues with close links to day-to-day life in these countries. Many of those who have completed their doctorates in Basel in this way seek and ultimately find professional assignments in these areas where they can put their findings into practice.

The dissertations we support at the University of Salzburg focus on all aspects of Europe and the European Union. They also deal with topical problems and current developments, which means that these works generate recognisable added value.

And so we will continue to encourage "our" doctoral students to pursue questions and topics in their academic work that add value beyond the academic context, making the knowledge they have gained available to a wider audience.



PERFORMANCE REPORT 2019

Urs Lauffer, executive member of the Foundation Board

Our Foundation, set up in spring 2007, aims to fund talented young scholars in Switzerland, Austria and other European countries, on an exclusively non-profit basis. This is done in close co-operation with the universities in Salzburg and Basel.

In 2019, the University of Salzburg again received a sum of EUR 210 000. This support enabled six candidates to continue their doctoral work at the Salzburg Centre of European Union Studies during the year under review. We are increasing our annual contribution to the University of Salzburg to EUR 250 000 for 2020-2022. Our Foundation has once again supported the University of Basel with a grant of CHF 100 000 for the key research topic "Africa". This sum was used to fund two doctoral candidates.

We deeply value the intensive collaboration with the relevant staff at these universities. This is the best way to ensure the quality of the individual research projects, which is regularly monitored by the professors involved. The Hummer Foundation therefore still does not consider applications sent directly to it by doctoral candidates.

During the year under review, the Foundation Board met in two sessions, in Salzburg and Erlenbach. The main focus was the evaluation and approval of requests for financial support for doctoral candidates, which was undertaken on the basis of thorough, balanced assessments made by the two universities. In addition, the Foundation's statutory business (annual accounts, yearly review, auditor's report, elections) was dealt with.

Furthermore, the Foundation Board periodically reviews the success of funding activities, in the presence of professors and individual doctoral candidates. In doing so, we assess both the effectiveness and efficiency of our work, thus measuring the usefulness and the economic efficiency of the allocation of our Foundation's resources. Based on this, and using specific individual cases as templates,

we then define our Foundation's goals for the new financial year. And finally, we also deal with all financial issues and risks (including investment principles, which are regularly reviewed and adjusted), and oversee the work of our office.

At the end of 2019, the organisation's capital totalled around CHF 2.1 million, much higher than originally expected thanks to a very good financial result in the year under review. In this light, the Foundation Board believes that our Foundation can continue its activities until the end of 2024, although the organisation's capital will inevitably be reduced further over these years.

The office is managed by Lauffer & Frischknecht, a communication management consultancy, on a consultative basis. Stéphanie Ramel takes care of the administration, and Fritz Frischknecht, MA Econ., is responsible for the accounts department. Swiss GAAP FER 21 is used for the annual financial statements.

CURRENT THESES

UNIVERSITY OF BASEL

AFRICA

At present the Humer Foundation is supporting the following doctoral students:

RAJA DAOUAH

Emerging Trends, Developments and Opportunities of Islamic Finance: The Moroccan Case

STEPHEN ASOL KAPINDE

Political Sermons in Kenyas Quest for Democratic Governance between 1986 and 2010: A case study of the selected sermons from the three Anglican Clergy

ANDREA KIFYASI

Diplomatic History of China's Medical Assistance to Africa: A case study of Tanzania, 1960–2015

JULIA RENSING

Narratives and Negotiations of Colonial Legacies in Namibia and Germany – A Post-Colonial Heterotopia?

ESTHER TOLULOPE ILESANMI

Engendering the Colony; Maternal Health, Indigenous Knowledge and European Medicine in South-West Nigeria, 1925–1960

UNIVERSITY OF SALZBURG

EUROPEAN UNION STUDIES

At present the Humer Foundation is supporting the following doctoral students:

SANDRA HUMMELBRUNNER

The Consistency of European External Action

MILENA KERN

Trade in services in the EU common market

CHRISTIAN KLEINERTZ

Labour Market Effects of Migration

CARINA KOBLER

Mobile 24-hour Care Workers in the European Union: Different Labour Regimes and their Social Implications in Practice

ISABEL STAUDINGER

The Legal Nature of Financial Assistance Conditionality – A New Enforcement Method in European Union Law?

COMPLETED THESES

In 2019, the following dissertations made possible by our Foundation were completed at the [Universität Salzburg](#), European Union Studies:

THOMAS LEHNER

Governments, Parties and the Public – The multiple layers of conflict during the Euro Crisis

MARKUS TIEFENBACHER – Microsimulation in policy evaluation: Shifting taxes from labour to property in the awake of German and Austrian case studies

KEY FINANCIAL DATA 31 December 2019

in CHF

	2019	2018	2017
Financial support	330 000	388 000	531 000
Annual result	-70 000	-366 000	-294 000
Organisation's capital	2 106 000	2 231 000	2 601 000

Since it was established in 2007, the Foundation has provided financial support totalling around CHF 7 500 000.

FOUNDATION BOARD

CHAIRMAN

Dr Franz B. Humer (Erlenbach)

Chairman of the Board of Directors of the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children

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Dr Gottlieb Keller (Zug)

Member of the Corporate Executive Committee of F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd

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Renate Gerber (Arlesheim)

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Vice Chairwoman of the Board of Directors of the Fritz Gerber Foundation for talented young people

Urs Lauffer (Steinmaur)

Partner in Lauffer & Frischknecht,
Management Consultants for Communication

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