



## Introduction\*

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In October 2013, the Esteve Foundation organized a one-day roundtable about “Philanthropy in biomedical research and development in Catalonia”. The idea was that, at that time of crisis, when public funding of research had decreased to the point where it was totally inadequate, philanthropy should take on a new dimension. Thus, the roundtable provided the opportunity to raise and discuss some questions related to this issue.<sup>1</sup>

On September 18, 2015, some of the same individuals who participated in that first meeting again contributed to the debate in a more international meeting jointly sponsored by the Esteve Foundation and Obra Social “La Caixa” that was held at CosmoCaixa Barcelona. During the morning, various exemplary experiences in philanthropy for research were presented. Anthony Newman of Cancer Research UK presented ten key principles underlying successful fundraising. Philip von Segebaden discussed why the Karolinska Institut’s “Breakthroughs for Life” campaign was so successful, and H el ene Bongrain of the Institut Curie shared her vision of communication and fundraising strategies for public hospitals. These views were complemented by singular views from a unique vantage point closer to home when Antoni Garcia Prat presented the experience of the Josep Carreres Foundation, where he is the general director, and Ricard Valls summarized the most noteworthy figures related to fundraising in Spain.

From this first part of the symposium, we learned that philanthropic contributions to research in Spain amount to about €130 million, representing only 6% of all charitable donations; by contrast, in other European countries such as France, Italy, and Great Britain, most charitable funds are allotted to research. Although various considerations help explain this disparity, the main factor seems to be that hospitals and research centers have not been very active in raising funds from private donors. The exception is contributions from companies and foundations, which have probably reached a ceiling. However, the proportional weight of individual donations and bequests, once an important source of hospital funding, is still negligible.

In the afternoon, Antoni Plasencia, the director of ISGlobal, moderated the second part of the symposium, a presentation of the particular experiences of three Catalan hospitals (Hospital General de Vic, presented by Nuria Roger; Institut de Recerca Vall d’Hebron, presented by Alejandra Manau; and Hospital Sant Joan de D eu, presented by Merc e Tura) and the Spanish ITEMAS network, presented by its coordinator, Manuel Desco. It is important to point out that in Catalonia and Spain the proportion of funding that comes from the government is higher than in the rest of Europe. This difference is due to the lower levels of private investment in research, development, and innovation and of philanthropic contributions to research at hospitals, universi-

\*Text adapted from “El potencial de la filantropia en la recerca i innovaci o en bioci ncia” published in the CosmoCaixa blog 21/10/2015 and available in Spanish at <http://blog.cosmocaixa.com/ca/-/el-potencial-de-la-filantropia-en-la-investigacion-y-la-innovacion-en-biociencia>

ties, and research centers. Whereas funds from foundations, individual donors, and philanthropic investors account for about 4% of all funding for research in the European Union, these sources account for less than 1% of research funding in Spain.

There are various reasons for this deficit in private funding, such as inadequate or inexistent communication and underdeveloped strategies for capturing available funds. Scientists and research institutions have concentrated their efforts in communicating with the scientific community while neglecting to develop lines of communication with other key elements in society and the general public; consequently, philanthropy for research has barely been developed.

Nevertheless, it seems that things are changing very quickly. Society's view of science is improving, and this change is having an impact on health funding. The data from some foundations and hospitals show that people are more willing to help finance biomedical research. Now research foundations need to simplify the process to make it easier for individuals to contribute.

At the end of the day, Joan Bigorra reflected briefly on the proceedings, and Enric Banda brought the symposium to a close. We can draw

the conclusions that there is great potential for increasing philanthropic contributions for research and that efforts to boost fundraising will bear fruit. The examples presented at the symposium are proof in point, and it seems evident that research organizations' attitudes are changing. What is more, society can appreciate the impact of scientific research and wants to participate.

The active participation of the approximately 50 people that made up the audience also contributed to the debate. This Esteve Foundation notebook compiles the contents and main ideas of the presentations and discussions that took place at the symposium, with the hope that this valuable information can reach as many of the people interested as possible. We believe that this type of event and the publication of its contents can serve as an example for future undertakings to promote philanthropy for biomedical research and innovation.

## References

1. Bigorra J, Bosch F, coord. *Filantropía en investigación e innovación biosanitaria en Catalunya*. Cuadernos de la Fundación Dr. Antonio Esteve, nº 30. Barcelona: Fundación Dr. Antonio Esteve; 2014. Available at: <http://www.esteve.org/ca/cuaderno-filantropia>