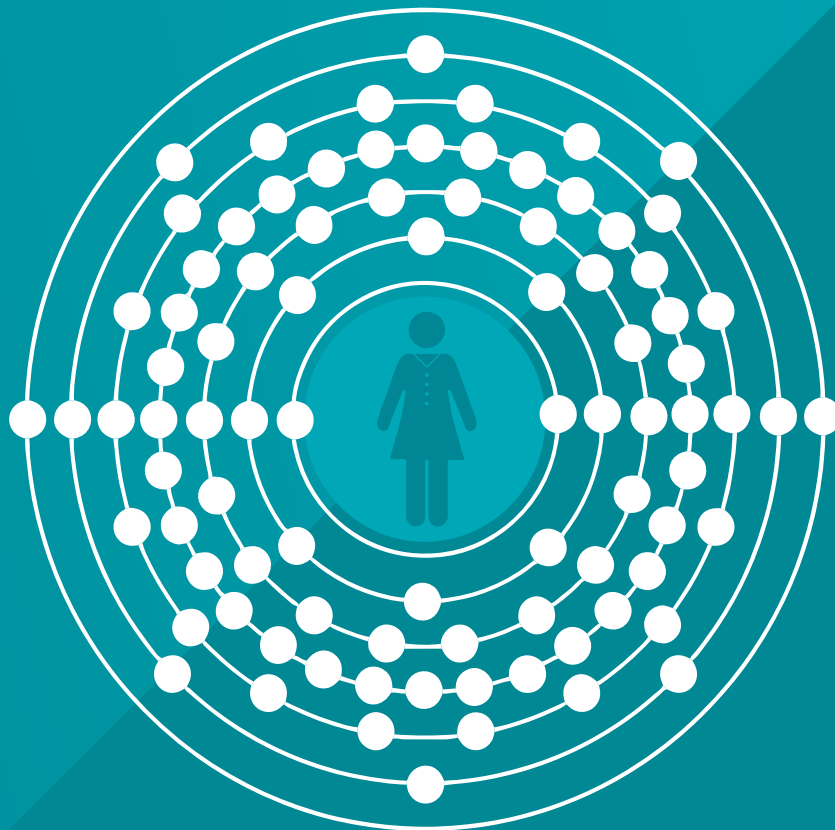




ROLE MODELS FOR MOBILITY OF **MCAA WOMEN SCIENTISTS**



Marie Curie Alumni Association
GEMS Working Group

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GEMS Working Group
Role models of MCAA women scientists.
Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA)

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Introduction

More and more women today are choosing to study science and undertake scientific careers. Likewise mobility during one's career is increasingly important in today's world. Cutting edge research tends to be undertaken via international collaboration, often within networks built up by moving to a new country to obtain a degree or undertake research. In addition many of today's funding opportunities are geared towards international cooperation. Therefore this ebook has been developed to showcase the careers of women scientists who have undertaken mobility during their careers, many of whom have moved to a number of different countries during their careers to undertake research. It is hoped that their stories will provide young women who are just starting out in their science careers with inspirational role models, and that these stories give them realistic information about career opportunities.

These are not famous scientists, but rather real examples of people who express all the passion of the world of science. It is hoped that reading about successful scientists who have achieved a healthy work-life balance while moving to new locations will be particularly helpful for those individuals considering mobility in their own career. An e-mail address is included in the profile for each scientist. You are welcome to approach us with questions you may have

as to how we dealt with the situations we have faced in our careers as you undertake similar adventures in your own.

This ebook is available to be used by programs that support the development of systematic approaches to increasing the representation and advancement of women in science, engineering and technology, since mobility plays a key role in these programs. The stories contained herein will be useful to mentoring or advising program focusing on career, networking opportunities, discussion and grants opportunities in conjunction with mobility.

There is still a gap between female graduates and the pool of female job applicants – even though the proportion of female graduate students and postdocs in most scientific fields is higher today than it is ever been. Therefore we suggest that focus should be placed on examining the real challenges which women need to overcome, particularly when “mobility” comes into play. Role models who have overcome these challenges will continue to play an important part in moving in the right direction, because it may take some time to achieve true gender equity in science.

In general people choose mobility as a path to acquiring new and different skills with respect

Introduction

to those available in their country of origin, but the aim of each individual who chooses mobility depends mainly on their previous occupation and age. At an early stage of their career undertaking a PhD or a Post-doc position in a different institution may add substantial scientific value to the CV. For those who already hold an established position, mobility may be seen as a way to improve their scientific profile, to make it internationally competitive and to gain experience in managing projects and disseminating research results profitably.

The benefits gained from the mobility experience and the ease of reintegration afterwards also depend largely on the career stage and country of origin. Challenges may arise in the early career stages, for example just after completing a PhD, when one may encounter a lack of funds or specific equipment necessary to implement new or different techniques. In addition some individuals experience challenges arising from discrimination or scarce opportunities in their own home lands to obtain a stable position. For people facing such issues the availability of role models who have triumphed over similar situations can be inspiring.

Challenges specific to mobility can arise due to family situations; often it can be difficult to fulfil the needs of dual careers. Even when one's

partner is willing and able to relocate, it is not always straightforward to find the partner job or a position close to the one's new working place. When children are involved, in particular when they are little, special attention must be devoted in order to organise their new life, as well. Therefore role models for dual career couples are needed.

Practical arrangements for the everyday life in a new country, inside and outside Europe, are also a critical issue. In order to make the mobility period as profitable as possible, care and attention are required in advance to be able to organize logistics for the new life, be it for a lone scientist, or their whole family, well in advance. Circulation of information on the destination country and the precise timing from proposal submission to actual starting of work, etcetera, are just some of the aspects to be considered.

All of the women whose stories are included herein agree that mobility is an enriching experience from both the point of view of their personal lives and their careers.

Gianna Avellis, Chair of GEMS WG

MCAA | Marie Curie Alumni Association

The non-profit purpose of the MCAA is to promote and exploit, in the broadest sense, the full potential of the community of researchers who have benefitted in terms of mobility from the People programme of the "People" 7th Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007 to 2013), its successors (in the future) and its predecessors (from past Framework Programmes) and to foster greater public awareness of European research. In order to achieve this non-profit purpose, the MCAA will develop, alone or in collaboration with third parties, directly or indirectly, all activities related, directly or indirectly, to this purpose. The MCAA is active in Europe and other parts of the world, by seeking to, in particular but not limited to:

- encourage networking, cooperation and mutual understanding among Members from different countries, sectors of the economy and across scientific disciplines;
- foster global relationships as ambassadors within the world-wide research and innovation community, with particular emphasis on the Marie Curie experience of international and inter-sector mobility;
- serve as a forum of debate, enabling Members to promote the values of the Association and to enhance their own careers and the careers of other Members;
- support the dissemination of the outputs of the Members' work across disciplines and internationally.

GEMS | Gender Equality for Mobile Researchers in Science WORKING GROUP

The MCAA is committed to the promotion of women scientists and is sensitive to gender issues in science, and thus an additional "Women in Science" (WIS) working group has been established, namely the Gender Equality for Mobile researchers in Science (GEMS). The GEMS working group has been active since September 2014 in order to promote mobility among the women scientists community, provide feedback from the European Community on policy issues regarding mobility in particular, and to collaborate with other associations and organizations active in the same fields. More generally we deal with issues related to women in science, for example glass ceilings and sticky floors: both of which are terms to indicate the possible causes for the high gap existing between men and women scientists numbers at the top levels of public and private research institutions. The main goal is to find ways to promote the participation of and motivation for women with regard to science and therefore finding and analyzing reasons why women face problems or give up at the high levels of the science field.

The aims of GEMS are as follows:

1. Strengthening the role of women scientists in Europe and discourage discrimination and marginalization;
2. Promoting mobility among woman scientists in Europe and outside Europe;
3. Empowering women scientists in Europe by promoting policies which foster gender equality and scientific excellence in Science;
4. Promoting the role of woman at all levels and supporting their representation in leadership and decision-making positions in all fields;
5. Conducting and publishing studies, articles and analysis to support the development of policies which promote gender equality and empowerment in science
6. Networking with other WIS associations to create global forums and discussion platforms on common issues of interest;
7. Educating the next generation of women in science through training and mentoring schemes and disseminating Role Models inside MCAA

The WG GEMS has participated in WIS conferences at the European level and outside of it, including Gender Summit, WIRES, MARIE CURIE CONFERENCES ESOF2016. In addition one of our biggest contributions has been to make an electronic book showcasing role models of woman scientists in MCAA. We are also applying to HORIZON2020 to study different types of researchers' mobility, such as virtual mobility, Intersectoral mobility between industry and academia, interdisciplinary mobility, and others.



Ana Sofia Ribeiro

Nationality: Portuguese / Year born: 1979
Research field: Educational Sciences

MCFA ACTIVITY > Marie-Curie fellowship: ITN EDUWEL- Early Stage Researcher
Currently: Research Fellow at Instituto de Ciências Sociais, University of Lisbon
Languages spoken: Portuguese, English, Spanish, Italian
email: aribeiro_dos_santos@uni-bielefeld.de

Ana Sofia Ribeiro, or Sofia as she is generally known, was born in Coimbra, Portugal, and spent her childhood in a small village near the city. As a child, she loved to explore nature but, as soon as she learned to read, the library became her second home. She was born to a family which had no tradition of higher education, yet she recalls always listening with great respect to people talking about the university. When she expressed interest in attending university herself, people would tell her how great it would be to become a doctor, or a lawyer, or a teacher, or some other profession that everyone could understand its use. Yet, even with all of the suggestions, she felt that what she wanted to be when she grew up remained a mystery. All Sofia really knew was that her favourite things were reading, writing, people, languages and travel. Though at the time she hadn't yet travelled much outside of her small village, she imagined the world to be big and exciting, and Sofia so longed for an exciting life that she once told her primary teacher that she wanted to be a war reporter. Plans change with time, and soon psychology and philosophy began to stroke her attention. As puzzled as ever as to what she would do when she grew up, she applied to university for the Psychology program, but ended up instead in Educational Sciences, a multidisciplinary field that gathers knowledge from pedagogy, sociology, psychology, philosophy, biology, statistics, policy analysis, and so on. This field is diverse enough so one is never bored, but it has such a broad profile that is hard to explain people what it is that you do.

Her family was very happy once she reached the university (the first in the family to do so!), but every time they asked her if she was going to be a teacher, and she replied 'no', they seemed concerned. Perhaps, in part, because it was clear that Sofia didn't actually I didn't know what she wanted to do, either. Eventually, by the end of her degree, she moved towards arts education, inspired in part by her extracurricular activity as an actress at student theatre and as a radio hostess. She did a traineeship at a national museum and then began working as a cultural manager in the university's main artistic venue. She liked her work very much, since it allowed her to develop creative skills and meet incredible people, and she stayed in that position for 3 years, until she got an opportunity to change cities and trades. In 2006 she moved to Lisbon and started to work at the Ministry of Education, at the Eurydice Unit, where she finally got to practice the knowledge acquired in her undergraduate studies. In this position, she had to work with several languages, gained a wide perspective on education in the European context and further deepened her interest in Comparative Education. However, her urge for travelling was still on the agenda, so she decided that it was time to go out and see the world. Her first stop was Italy, Ascoli Piceno, through a Leonard Da Vinci traineeship, where she learned Italian and some web development skills. After that, she gained a grant from the Higher Education Development Association to study the Erasmus Mundus Master in Higher Education.

In August 2008 she arrived in Oslo, ready to start her studies again, this time all in English. It was hard in the beginning to adapt: different weather, different food, different cultures...but then again, her entire class was on the same page, as most of her classmates were from non-European countries. By the end of the first semester she was ready to move again, this time flying to Tampere in Finland. Cold weather, warm people, and she slowly started to be truly fond of Nordic life. From June to August 2009 she was a visiting student at the University of Melbourne. She remembers looking outside her window in Little Italy and thinking how far she was from home. Travelling is indeed learning and when you travel for studying you are basically opening your mind and your life for change in all possible manners. She says "I cannot describe how much this master's course taught me not only in terms of higher education but also in terms of cultural awareness." By the time she finished that program she knew that she wanted to be a researcher, and so she applied to the EDUWEL

Marie Curie ITN and moved to Poland to initiate her research in August 2010. The EDUWEL network was constituted under the umbrella of the capability approach of Sen and Nussbaum, with the goal of seeking solutions for vulnerable youth related with education and welfare systems. Sofia was an Early Stage researcher at the Adam Mickiewicz University, in Poznan, and a PhD candidate at the University of Bielefeld in Germany. Her working group dealt with post-compulsory education, and her topic was to research widening participation for underrepresented groups in higher education. Given the overwhelming economic crisis that has been hitting Portugal since 2011, she choose to focus on the vulnerability and resilience of first generation, low income students in higher education, a population risking drop-out due insufficient economic means. She took a biographical approach and during her interviews with students in this category she was lucky to meet truly inspiring examples of students who struggled to survive the crisis and maintain their hope. In many ways, the EDUWEL research echoed her desires of doing significant research about people lives, voicing the aspirations and pains of those who do not usually get to be heard.

Of course, the taking the opportunity to travel and joining her colleagues in other universities was also very enriching, and the support given by all of the senior researchers in the program was of great value.



In 2014 she returned to Portugal and started to work as a researcher in the University of at the Instituto de Ciências Sociase, in a project about funding and management in public and private schools, funded by the Gulbenkian Foundation. Coming back satisfied an urge of reconnecting with her roots. After six years of travelling in six different countries, she felt the need to base herself somewhere for a longer period, to more easily take care of her personal life and family affairs. She remembers once hearing someone say that "Mobility threatens integrity", which sounds somewhat dramatic, but carries some sort of truth in it. Mobility changes you so much that integrating your new experiences and finding your wholeness again takes some time. At the moment, she is balancing her work as a researcher with writing her PhD thesis. She says "I believe that education is the only way to change the world, which is why I keep on working on that slow but steady revolution."

After years of wondering what it might be, Sofia can finally report that her vocation has found her: she is a researcher. Her primary school teacher says this is not so different from being a war reporter! There may be no blood on her field, yet there is certainly sweat and tears. It is not an easy task, it can be very individualistic and extremely competitive, particularly now that humanities and social sciences funding is being severely reduced. But it is also quite rewarding, as you get to understand the world and to create its meaning. If any advice is to be given it is: never cease to question and to look for answers. And never cease to imagine. She says "That's what got me here in the first place."



Gianna Avellis

Nationality: Italian /Year born: 1959
Research field: Computer science

MCFA activity: Founding member of the Woman in Science working groups
GEMS of MCAA and m-WiSET of MCFA
Marie-Curie fellowship: Imperial College, London (UK), 1992-1994
Currently: Senior researcher in ICT at Innovapuglia SPA, Bari (Italy)
Languages spoken: English, French, Italian
E-mail: g.avellis@innova.puglia.it

Gianna was born in Molfetta, a lovely fishing town near Bari, in the Apulia region, the heel of the Italy boot, with about 70,000 inhabitants. From an early age she showed a dedication to scientific studies and she received her diploma with 60/60 cum laude from the scientific lyceum. She then attended the University of Bari, where she graduated in Information Science with 110/100 cum laude, with a particular interest in the studies of Mathematical Logics. Her thesis was on “An algorithmic logic for non-deterministic programs”. After achieving her degree, she was invited by the Italian Union of Mathematics UMI (Unione Matematica Italiana) to Cortona, Siena for a research stage at the international summer school, funded by University of Bari, where she undertook computer science graduate studies in Mathematical Logic: Connections between Logic and Computer Science. After this experience she came back and worked at Bari University, Department of Mathematics, in Graph Theory with the man who would become her husband.

She then decided to accept a job as a high school teacher at the School of Mathematics and Informatics in Treviso, Italy, near the Dolomite Mountains, where she spent the next two years. Her time as a teacher provided many good experiences; including the wonderful relationships she developed with her students, the beauty of living in the Dolomite Mountains, and making new friends in the area, many of whom she is still in touch with today. However, she decided to accept a work offer to become a researcher at the TECNOPOLIS Science Park in Valenzano, Bari, Italy, where she first worked on the project “Linguistic Analysis of European Languages” before moving her efforts toward Software Engineering, which was, and is still now, her main field of interest.

As a result of this position she has been involved in some European projects in Software Factory (SFINX-Software Factory Integration and Experimentation), and Software Maintenance (MACS-Maintenance Assistance Capabilities for Software), which gave her the opportunity to take on the role of project manager. She loved the field of software engineering research and decided to explore opportunities for exchange research with the Imperial College in London, at the Logic and Software Engineering Department, where she spent two stages of research time, three months each. Later she applied for, and received, a Marie Curie fellowship to spend an additional 18 months at the Imperial College to study “Constructive Analysis of Composite Systems”, this time at the Distributed Software Engineering Laboratory. Having already married at that time, her husband followed her to London for this adventure and, as a result of the new things he experienced, he changed completely his way of teaching and his field of research—from “Discrete Mathematics and Graph Theory” to “Philosophy of Science and Mathematical Logics”. His story was featured as an example of a successful dual career at the ESOF (European Science Open Forum) in Turin, Italy, where the Marie Curie Fellows Association held a session on dual career families. After this experience he also became a writer of scientific books on “formal thinking”, i.e. that human skill of thinking by signs manipulation, such as in Logic or Computing—one can see in it the fundamentals of the modern computer in the philosophical thought of Greek philosophers such as “The Computer of Plato”, and in the Middle Ages such as “The Computer of Occam” and in the Renaissance such as “The Computer of Kant”. Needless to say, Gianna and her husband agree that sharing the same logistic and temporal aspects of studying abroad turned out to be a great advantage for both of them.

The time spent at the Imperial College proved very fruitful and she learned useful skills, like how to rent a house for her family in London. She also made new friends from the Imperial College and outside of it, many of whom she continues still now to see now

AT ESOF EUROPEAN SCIENCE OPEN FORUM,
Copenhagen - June, 2014 - Fighting the brain drain of researchers



that her fellowship has finished, and they meet up now and then in Italy, or in England. All of the changes she experienced during her fellowship made her very strong character, so that when her fellowship ended and her husband returned back to Italy after his sabbatical at the University, she chose to spend three more months travelling extensively; attending conferences and visiting laboratories and universities in Europe and the US. The time spent at these various laboratories was so stimulating that there was a strong temptation to stay at one of them and to not return to Europe. However, she felt strongly that it was important to return to TECNOPOLIS and share her results and to fight the “brain drain” of researchers from Southern Italy. So she settled into an antique house from the 1600’s in the historical centre of Rutigliano, in the countryside of Bari, where she is raising her daughter to both appreciate the richness of the local history and to enjoy travel and new experiences.

For Gianna returning to her home country was an “ethical” choice, she feels it is important to not only go out and learn new things, but to bring the information home again. She feels strongly that mobility, especially when demonstrated by a woman, can be a good stimulus to change. This made her more willing to face the challenges awaiting her upon returning home—challenges to reintegration related to gender issues (the “glass ceiling”). There are days where she feels that she has not moved forward in her career in Italy as she might have done had she stayed home and focused on local career growth, but she is still aware of the many benefits to the path she has chosen.

Mobility means becoming an expert at coping with changes

GIANNA AVELLIS

Her mobility helped her to develop an “open mind” attitude towards finding new research opportunities, which has helped her to write many European research project proposals. In addition, her mobility helped her take a different approach to her work: while she originally was only interested in very technological issues on research in Software Engineering, she is now more open to tackle different fields, especially the ones that have a direct impact with the social environment. Another major change she made in her working environment was her transition from serving as a European project manager to becoming an evaluator and monitor of regional projects funded by the European EDSF funds. Thanks to the experience of mobility, she became expert in software engineering and worked as expert independent evaluator for the European Commission in Software & Services and Information Technology for SMEs, and she is currently the domain expert of Education&Training of Living Labs projects funded by European EDSF funds.

Her mobility experience helped to develop her sense of self confidence to tackle different fields of investigation, and she has become a leader in helping to foster Women in Science. She has long been a member of the Marie Curie Fellows Association (MCFA), where she founded two Working Groups, m-WiSET at MCFA, and GEMS at Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA). She was also instrumental in founding the non-profit association Italian Women Innovators and Inventors Network (ITWIIN) and has worked at the European level as evaluator in the EUWIIN (European Women Innovators and Inventors Network).

Having had the experience of moving to new locations, she has also gained the sense of independence and well-being necessary to travel alone to places she never thought before to go such as China, USA, Canada, Mexico, Iceland, as well as several destinations in Europe.

Ira Didenkulova

Nationality: Russian | Year born: 1980

Research field: Oceanography, coastal engineering

Doctorate: Nizhny Novgorod State Technical University (Russia), 2006;
Tallinn University of Technology (Estonia), 2008

Habilitation: P.P. Shirshov Institute of Oceanology (Russia), 2013
Marie-Curie fellowship: Tallinn University of Technology (Estonia),
2006-2008, University of Sheffield (UK), 2009

Currently: Senior researcher at Nizhny Novgorod State Technical University
(Russia) and at Tallinn University of Technology (Estonia)

Language spoken: English, German, Russian
email: didenkulova@gmail.com



In the same period, being inspired by the idea of trying everything new, she defended her second PhD in Civil Engineering from Tallinn University of Technology. In 2009, still remaining within the same Marie Curie research and training network, she changed her host institution to the University of Sheffield, where she applied methods of extreme value statistics to the rogue wave problem. In 2010 she was awarded Plinius medal by the European Geosciences Union for the results she had achieved during her years of the Marie Curie fellowship or, as it is stated in the diploma, "for the contribution to solve complex problems of oceanography and coastal engineering by applying nonlinear wave theory to natural hazards, including tsunamis, freak waves and storm waves".

Her next challenge was also related to mobility. In 2012 she received the Humboldt Fellowship for Experienced Researchers for conducting research in two big German oceanographic institutions, MARUM (Bremen, Germany) and GEOMAR (Kiel, Germany), where she stayed half-time till the end of 2014. That was another turn of the path, as special and interesting as her previous Marie Curie story. She met people working, as she did, on the problems occurring in the coastal zone of the sea, but treating them from very different points of view. Together they found some new approaches to the problems she was working on.

She says that "It was a new reality", which taught her a lot from professional, cultural and personal points of view and even now she is still trying to digest all information she received while staying there. During that period she also found the motivation to prepare and defend her Doctor of Science (habilitation) degree in oceanography, which she did in P.P. Shirshov Institute of Oceanology in Moscow, Russia. Probably this early defense, together with a rather wide range of topics she covered in her research, was the reason for her receiving the national L'Oréal-UNESCO award for Women in Science, in the end of 2014.

When asked about her mobility Ira says "I learnt by my own experience that it is always beneficial to change environments. First of all you learn a lot professionally, especially if in the new place the focus is on slightly different problems or the methods used are slightly different, second, you enlarge your professional network by meeting and making contacts with new people and, third, which might be personal to me, the mobility (starting life over from a clean white sheet) also helps to mobilize and focus all of your energy on the research."

Ira Didenkulova says of life: "Now, looking back, I think that all real challenges in my life and indeed my real scientific life started with getting Marie Curie Fellowship and leaving my home country."

Ira was born to a family of Russian scientists and, growing up, never even thought about leaving the country. She says that if you had met her during her early University years and asked her about that possibility she would have replied that leaving the country could happen to anybody, but not to her. She confesses that at first she was not even determined to undertake a scientific career. It was simply the path that was set before her, so she took it.

In school it was noticed that she had a certain aptitude for mathematics and her parents were advised to send her to the lyceum which specialized in it. That was the beginning of her path. Practically everybody graduating from this school continued with physics and mathematics in the University and she was no exception. She admits that when the time came to apply to university she was not sure that this was what she wanted to do. However, her father pointed out that the best way to tell would be to try it, and that she can always rewind and start something different if she later realizes that it is not the path for her.

So Ira went on with physics, graduating from Nizhny Novgorod State University with a Master of Science Degree in radiophysics in 2003. Even at the end of this degree she was still asking herself whether it is truly her path. However, she very much enjoyed the research on tsunami that she did with her supervisor Professor Efim Pelinovsky. So she decided to try a bit more with science and started PhD studies, which ended with PhD in Fluid mechanics in 2006. This was marked the end of her predefined path and the beginning of her new life.

That same year she started her long-term Marie Curie adventure as a researcher in the Research and Training Network SEAMOCs, staying in Tallinn University of Technology in Estonia. She says that she was very much afraid to leave her home and live outside of her home country, so she limited that first trip to just six months: she felt that she would not be able to stay longer without her family.

Six months passed very fast and at the end of it she decided to come back to Estonia for a longer time period. It was a very special and unique experience. Being away from family, friends, and every day commitments, she found that she could fully dedicate herself to science. Also, the Marie Curie scheme is organized to support all initiatives regarding knowledge and mobility. Taking this chance and travelling a lot both within network institutes and outside to different conferences and workshops, little by little she started to enlarge her area of expertise from tsunamis to other marine hazards such as rogue (freak) waves and ship induced waves, from analytical studies to physical modelling and field experiments.

Irene Marco-Rius

Nationality: Spanish | Year born: 1987
Research field: Biomedical Imaging

Doctorate: University of Cambridge (UK), 2014
Marie-Curie fellowship: ITN METAFLUX, 2011-2014 (UK)

Currently: Post-doctoral fellow at
University of California San Francisco (USA)

Languages spoken: Catalan, Spanish, English, German
E-mail: irene.marco.rius@gmail.com



She had met so many friends during her time in Germany and US that she decided to take a short break and visit them at their hometowns before embarking on her new PhD project. She organized her own around-the-world trip and spent 48 days traveling from friend to friend, learning a lot about their cultures, but above all learning that the differences among all of us are only superficial. This trip was definitely one of the most positive, rewarding and life-changing experiences of her life.

In spring 2011 she accepted an Early Researcher Marie Curie ITN fellowship and moved to Cambridge (UK) to start her PhD in a new field: magnetic resonance, an imaging technique that allows diagnosis and treatment evaluation without the need of using ionizing radiation. She would spend the next three years combining magnetic resonance with a new technique known as "hyperpolarisation" that would allow monitoring metabolic changes in tumors using carbon-13.

Little did she know that she would meet Michael, her future husband, while she was in the UK! As she neared the completion of her PhD, Michael was awarded a post-doctoral Marie Curie IOF to work at UC Berkeley (USA) and Cambridge (UK). This inspired her to test just how useful networking can be, and, during a conference, she managed to secure a post-doctoral position at UCSF (USA), very close to Michael's new job.

They plan to be in the US for two years, and then move back to Cambridge (UK), where Michael will complete his last year of his MC IOF. What will come next? They both love research and are considering a career in academia, although that means that they will need to be open to the possibility of continuing to move to new locations. She thinks it has been very enriching to have had all these opportunities and to have experienced life in so many countries, living numerous adventures. She has even found her other half! But she is also longing for that day when she will have once again found a place to call home.

Irene was born Montse Rius Vico and Vicente Marco Ibañezin Terrassa, a city about 20km north of Barcelona (Spain). She has an older brother, Dani.

When she was 15 she received an award from the Catalan government to spend two weeks learning English in Bath (UK). It included a one-day trip to Oxford, where she fell in love with the charms of the old university. Upon her return to Spain, the idea of moving to study abroad at some point had already sunk in. During her school years, she liked sciences as much as languages. She had grown up in a bilingual family (Catalan and Spanish were spoken interchangeably) and she was learning English and French at school, so she considered becoming a translator. However, when the moment to make a decision came, she was so fascinated by the stars and the galaxies that she chose instead to head in a different direction.

In 2005 she took the university entrance exams, scoring amongst the best 20 in the Spanish region of Catalonia, and decided to study Physics at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. In her mind, she would later move to the Canary Islands to study Astrophysics. However, the fact that research in Astrophysics seemed to have no direct effect on the every day lives of most people troubled her.

It was during the last year of her undergraduate program that she changed her mind. She had taken Erasmus and AGAUR studentships to study her last few courses at the University of Heidelberg (Germany) where she was exposed to new fields of Physics, taking courses in Astrophysics, Physics of the Atmosphere, Aquatic Systems, and Medical Physics... It was the latter that got her full attention. She had the opportunity to work on her Bachelor's thesis at the DKFZ under the supervision of one of the professors who taught the course, and to her it seemed to be the perfect pairing of a basic science like Physics and an opportunity to have a real impact on people's lives. Impulsively, she decided to apply for a fellowship from "La Caixa-DAAD" and stay in Germany for another year to study for a master's degree in Medical Physics.

Much hard work and many exams later, she was given the chance to spend the last semester of her master's program at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston (USA) to work on her Master's thesis.

Being on the move had given her not only very good friends, but also a valuable overview on how different groups approach research. After her stay in the US she went back to Barcelona, but the government had started cutting funds for research and it became clear that pursuing a career in research would translate into the need to be open to moving to another country again, and again. At that time, the idea of traveling around seemed so appealing that relocating appeared to be a perk rather than a nuisance. It would only present itself as a problem later on in life, when she began thinking of settling in one place to start a family.



Jodi Schneider

Nationality: USA
Research field: Information science
MCFA activity: ERCIM Marie Curie Fellow
Languages spoken: English, French
E-mail: jschneider@pobox.com



She then returned to Ireland to finish her Ph.D.

An introduction from one of her advisors led her to meet and work with one of the top researchers in the field, who became her postdoc advisor. She stresses importance of networking for finding research opportunities, and grantwriting skills for making them feasible. Jodi's postdoctoral work, in France, was also funded through a competitive grant.

She says: "I had visited France as a teenager while studying the language and culture, but moving to the French Riviera with my partner was much more complex than a 10-day trip to Paris. Living in France has introduced me to a very different ways of life and vastly expanded my professional network."

I highly recommend mobility for developing new friendships and new ways of thinking.

JODI SCHNEIDER

Informatics researcher Dr. Jodi Schneider says that her job is to come up with new ideas, and that exposure to other ways of life helps her think "outside the box", beyond her native culture.

Jodi has worked in five countries, including her native USA. Her first international research exchange came during a year off from university, when she worked with astronomers at an American observatory in Chile for a few months. This adventure was funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation. She remembers standing inside the enormous 8.1 meter Chilean Gemini "Twin" Telescope then being built.

During her time as an undergraduate student she lived all over the USA for several different research jobs. One of these even led to publications: both an article in a research journal and a hands-on activity for math teachers in a national magazine. This enabled her to gain admittance to mathematics graduate schools immediately after her Bachelor's degree. She chose the University of Texas at Austin, and after a Master's degree she decided to work outside of research for a few years.

Then, for an online degree in library & information science, she took technical classes related to digital libraries. She says: "I found that I could combine my love of computers, my love of books, and my obsession with how knowledge is created, and turn that into another career!" From the library technology community (Code4Lib), she had heard a lot about the Semantic Web. Particularly an institute called DERI, where leaders in the field were making a difference in how info was organized on the Web. This fit her vision, and when she saw a tweet about a Ph.D. position in Social Semantic Web, she applied. Months later, she was in Ireland. New technologies and cultural exchange go hand in hand, she says, because learning new ways of life and questioning assumptions generate new ideas. The dynamic multicultural environment at DERI (now the Galway branch of The Insight Centre for Data Analytics) was ideal for her: 130 people from 30 countries, all focusing on managing information.

Since her research is interdisciplinary Jodi decided to seek funding for a research exchange in the research field of argumentation. Both the grants she wrote were funded, from Science Foundation Ireland and COST, leading her to spend two periods in Liverpool, England, from January to March and from May to July 2012. This was a culturally enriching experience as well as a boon to her research. She says that while the UK and Ireland are similar in infrastructure, culturally they are distinct places. The UK is much more densely populated and differences in economic class are much more prominent.



Louise Hardwick

Nationality: British | Year born: 1982
 Research field: Francophone Literature

Doctorate: Trinity College, University of Oxford, 2009
 Marie-Curie Fellowship: University of Birmingham (UK) 2012-2014
 Currently: Lecturer in French, University of Birmingham (UK) and
 AHRC Early Career Leadership Fellow

Languages spoken: English, French, German
 Email: l.a.hardwick@bham.ac.uk

Ploughing straight ahead isn't always the best way to arrive at your destination, and when the paths twist and turn through the forest, you need to be able to turn with them.

PATRICK CHAMOISEAU

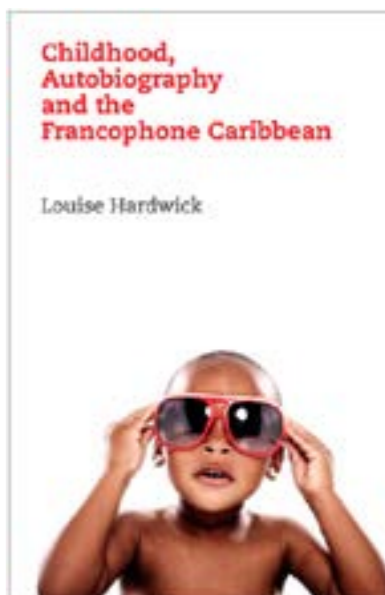
Louise grew up in a small village, and thinks that this may be why she was always keen to explore the wider world. Her love of literature led her to study for a BA in French and German at the University of Oxford. Before applying to University, she was selected to attend a residential Summer School at Oxford aged 17, which was run by the Sutton Trust scheme. The scheme aimed to encourage state school pupils to aim for top University places, and offered Louise her very first taste of mobility, followed by work experience in a French school during her A Levels.

It was in her First Year of University that Louise was introduced to French Caribbean literature, an interest which she nurtured throughout her BA studies. To deepen her linguistic and cultural knowledge, Louise attended a Summer School at the University of Bamberg, in Germany, and then spent a year at the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn studying German and French as part of the undergraduate student exchange program called Socrates-Erasmus, funded by the EU. She was awarded the Oxford Heath Harrison Travel Scholarship for French by written and oral examination, which she used to spend six weeks on 'The Flaubert Trail', visiting sites around Normandy which had inspired the author Gustave Flaubert. In 2002, Louise was awarded a European Peter Kirk scholarship for young EU citizens to carry out an independent study project on an aspect of European culture, and chose to investigate 'Rheinromantik'.

After receiving her BA (1st Class), Louise took her interest in Francophone literature, particularly from the Francophone Caribbean, to the next level. She completed an M.St at Oxford, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, specializing in Francophone Postcolonial literature. This included a period in Normandy to prepare her research dissertation, where she visited the Espace Senghor, a cultural centre dedicated to the Senegalese President and poet Leopold Sédar Senghor and Francophone culture more generally.

Louise's D.Phil at Oxford was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and looked specifically at childhood memoirs from the Francophone Caribbean: Martinique, Guadeloupe, Haiti and diasporic communities in Canada and France, and included fieldwork and research visits in Martinique, Guadeloupe and metropolitan France. Martinique has been French since 1635 and on 1st January 1947 it became an Overseas Department of France, making it one of the more far-flung regions of the EU. Its history and culture reflect a rich,

diverse heritage and the island has produced some of the greatest authors of modern French literature, notably Aimé Césaire, Edouard Glissant and Patrick Chamoiseau, whose works present a compelling examination of colonialism, transatlantic slavery and their legacies. Louise later transformed this thesis in the monograph *Childhood, Autobiography and the Francophone Caribbean* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013). Her book was welcomed by reviewers as shedding new light on an important body of writing which uses childhood narrative in both a politically and an aesthetically subversive manner to explore the representation of colonialism and slavery and to offer new modes of resistance to this challenging historical legacy.



On completion of her doctorate, Louise moved to the University of Cambridge as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Francophone Culture. While she was at Cambridge, she was one of twelve applicants from an international field selected to participate at the "World Seminar on Canada", a funded residential course at the University of Ottawa, where she presented her research on the Haitian and néo-Québécois author, Dany Laferrière.

In January 2010, Louise took up a Lectureship in French at the University of Birmingham (UK), where she launched the FRANCOPOCO Research Network (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/lcahm/departments/french/research/francopoco.aspx>). This network aimed to raise the international profile of Francophone Research in her department, and in 2012 an important milestone in this ambition was achieved when Louise was awarded the role of Principal Investigator on a Marie Curie Inter-European Fellowship (over 200,000 Euros), working with Postdoctoral Research Fellow Dr Alessandro Corio (PhD Bologna/Strasbourg). Their research collaboration focused on postcolonial biopolitics and assembled a group of international colleagues from the UK, France and US to strengthen research in this field. In addition to a number of international conference papers in the US, France and the UK, the collaboration included fieldwork in Martinique, when Louise and Alessandro met with leading Martinican cultural figures including Martinique's Director of Museums and the Directors of libraries and cybercentres who work closely with the Martinican public and local schools. Their discussions focused in particular on the social and economic impact of the arts and presented the opportunity to plan future collaborations. They also developed links with academics at the University of the Antilles and Guyane (UAG) and attended an inaugural event at the UAG's Caribbean Campus of the Arts, where they had the chance to discuss the social and political significance of literature and the visual arts with Lecturers and students. In addition, Louise and Alessandro conducted interviews with Martinican authors, journalists and artists. The tables were turned when they were themselves interviewed by the leading French Caribbean daily paper, France-Antilles. This two year research collaboration resulted in several papers and culminated in a special themed issue of the International Journal of Francophone Studies on 'Race, Violence and Biopolitics in Francophone Postcolonial Contexts', guest-edited by Louise and Alessandro.

Willfully misquoting John Donne, Louise believes that "No researcher is an island". Her research activities are multilingual, interdisciplinary and international, and are consistently conceived as part of wider global collaborative networks with a range of academic and non-academic partners. To date, she has given invited lectures and talks in English and French at events organized by the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge, Liverpool International Slavery Museum, Ottawa University, Laval University, the Institut Français de Londres, the Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Université Paris III – La Sorbonne nouvelle, Université Cheikh Anta Diop Senegal and Université Toulouse - Jean Jaurès. In 2014, Louise was awarded an AHRC Early Career Leadership Fellowship (£168,000) as Principal Investigator, to conduct a programme of research on the Martinican author Joseph Zobel. This fellowship involves international partners in Paris, Martinique and Atlanta, where Louise will undertake study visits, fieldwork and events with the local public and non-academic stakeholders throughout the project's duration.

Louise's AHRC Early Career Fellowship activities are recorded on her public-facing blog, www.josephzobel.wordpress.com



Magdalini Theodoridou

Nationality: Greek | Year born: 1983
 Research field: Civil Engineering, Conservation Science

Doctorate: University of Bologna (Italy), 2009
 Marie-Curie fellowship: EPISCON, 2006-2009 (Italy-Hungary)
 Currently: Post-doctoral fellow at University of Cyprus (Cyprus)

Languages spoken: Greek, English, Italian, Spanish, French
 E-mail: magdatheodoridou@gmail.com

Magda was born in Thessaloniki, Greece and grew up mainly in Giannitsa, a town located about 50 km northeast to the city of Thessaloniki. She has an older brother, Yiannis. Since leaving home she has spent the last ten years living in four different countries carrying out research, lecturing, accomplishing a high number of different projects and managing a laboratory with advanced analytical techniques.

She has found that spending long periods of life in different countries demands, in some ways, a certain level of flexibility. In other words, she has learned that one needs the ability to adapt to other people's cultures, everyday life, expressions and means of communication. In Magda's case that goes beyond this sensitive, yet crucial, line and touches the level of deep love of diversity.

Looking back to her school years, she always found great satisfaction in reading books narrating the history and customs of other nations, listening to folk and ethnic music, watching relevant films and even collecting traditional musical instruments of other civilizations. In retrospect, it is clear to see that these were the first sign of a future traveler.

Already as a teenager, she was dreaming of designing houses and other types of human structures, hence her goal was pretty clear: access to university studies in the field of civil engineering. As soon as she began her studies at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in Greece, a new world opened its doors, full of a variety of exciting possibilities. From these her interest was soon attracted to the path leading to the study of different aspects of construction materials, spurred in part by her clear concern about cultural heritage.

Soon after her graduation and a strong selection procedure, she was successfully funded through the EPISCON project (European PhD in Science for Conservation) as a Marie Curie research fellow. The project aimed at promoting the synergy between the cultural heritage field and the natural sciences and engineering, supporting the interdisciplinary character of this field of science. She represented Greece with fifteen other selected fellows from all over the world, all with different backgrounds.

The initial six-month training, organised by the University of Bologna in collaboration with ten European institutions, included lectures by international specialists and extensive team work, which established strong interactive relationships among the fellows. An awesome multicultural and interdisciplinary group of young scientists was born that clearly remains in everyone's mind as one of the most precious sides of EPISCON project. That network proved to be crucial during the conduction of the individual PhD research components, which in Magda's case was hosted by the Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest, member of the EPISCON consortium, in collaboration with the Budapest University of Technology & Economics in Hungary.



A new journey had started that brought her, for the first time, away from the Mediterranean to Central Europe. Initially this change seemed to be quite challenging, but, to her surprise; she found that the period she lived in Budapest could easily win the award of "most fully lived" years of her life. It turned out to be an exceptional place with high-valued art tradition, where, apart from the locals, one could meet and interact with thousands of expats of several origins. In other words, an amazing blend of different cultures and ideas generously offered to her unforgettable experiences in the heart of Europe.

Her PhD research was focused on the properties and durability of stone materials, as well as on the application of several laboratory and innovative in-situ micro-destructive tests for the characterization of monuments. This project proved the interdisciplinary character of conservation science, since she had to obtain deeper knowledge in certain fields of natural sciences, such as geology, physics and chemistry.

Immediately after obtaining her PhD, she was appointed Post-doctoral fellow by the University of Cyprus, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, where, apart from conducting research on materials science and lecturing, she has been involved in supervising students, preparing project proposals in order to generate income opportunities, and consulting external partners such as governmental authorities, as well as private companies. Since transfer of knowledge is among the main goals of every project she participates, she has communicated her research not only through peer-reviewed scientific publications but also by organising a number of special events such as scientific conferences, seminars and workshops at international and national level.

Last August, her contract at the University of Cyprus was renewed, within the frames of a M.era.Net EU joint research project. Hence, she started her new venture on the innovative field of Phase Change Materials for upgrading the energy efficiency of contemporary and historic buildings. One and a half year still to be spent on the island of Cyprus, where Europe meets Asia and sun is shining almost every day. A taste of stability for a quite longer period than usual definitely has its own bright side!

Since mobility comes along with her love of research and her desire to maintain a career in academia, it is inevitable that she will continue to move, now and then, to new places that she shall call home. And even though she admits that thinking of her birth place makes her feel nostalgic, life is unpredictable and no one can surely tell what comes next. Besides, the Greek poet C.P. Kavafis explained it very well with his famous poem Ithaca; it is the journey that counts, not the destination.



Maria Bostenaru Dan

Nationality: Romanian and Hungarian | Year born: 1974

Research field: disaster protection of cultural heritage, especially 20th century

MCFA activity: advisory board member 2003, administrative board member since 2011
 Marie-Curie fellowship: doctoral host fellowship 6 months 2002-2003 IUSS Pavia, Italy;
 Intra-European Fellowship 2005-2007 (2 years) IUSS Pavia, Italy, European Reintegration Grant 2007-2010 (3 years) Foundation Ergorom 99 Bucharest, Romania
 Currently: "Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urbanism, Bucharest, Romania (researcher, permanent position) and postdoc researcher at the University of Bucharest (structural funds), Romania

Languages spoken: Romanian, Hungarian, German, English, Italian
 E-mail: Maria.Bostenaru-Dan@alumni.uni-karlsruhe.de

Maria Bostenaru Dan was born in the capital city of Romania in 1974 to a family of mixed Hungarian, Romanian, and German ancestry. She grew up behind the iron curtain, which severely limited travel to other countries. Even visits to or from family members who lived abroad, including the countries behind the curtain, were restricted. Hence, after the fall of the curtain, Maria, like most Romanians, was keen to travel and see new countries.

Maria was trained as an architect, and it was particularly important for her to see the way different cultures are reflected in their physical heritage: the buildings of their past and their present. Therefore she has travelled to 32 countries, and she hopes to someday make it to all of the rest of the countries in Europe. Many of her international trips were made for participation in conferences, and she is currently working on a book, to be launched the 23rd of April 2015, about her experiences seeing the world this way.

These days young Romanians tend to choose studying abroad over short term tourism. However, by choosing to study abroad at the end of the 20th century, before ERASMUS was available to assist students from Romania with this, Maria was a pioneer. She first went to Germany on a TEMPUS scholarship, and later she did study and research stays abroad in Germany and Italy.

Her first degree was in architecture in Karlsruhe, Germany – which included also an internship in Darmstadt, Germany, and a short term research visit to Mysłakowice, Poland, after which she spent several years more in Germany and then moved again for research, once for half a year and once for two years in Pavia, Italy, the latter on Marie Curie Fellowships. In total, Maria has spent just over a decade abroad (11 years), and she has just won a scholarship from the Romanian state to return to Italy, this time to Rome. This new location is of personal interest to Maria, since she did her doctorate on the Romanian-Italian interferences in the interwar time, and this location saw a number of Romanians trained in the interwar time, including one of the individuals featured in her doctoral thesis.

Maria's early mobility had given her an opportunity to connect with her German roots, and more recently she has been connecting with her Hungarian roots. She has obtained Hungarian citizenship, thanks to the nationalities of some of her grandparents. She has not yet found an opportunity to spend an extended time in Hungary, but she spent a month there, thanks to a DOMUS scholarship from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest. This visit introduced her to a long-lost relative (Pál Dóczy) who is a second cousin of her mother, and, coincidentally, is an architect like Maria.

Language is, along with architecture, an expression of the local culture. After her stays abroad, with the exposure it gave her to new languages, Maria grew from having been afraid of learning new languages (despite having grown up speaking both Romanian and Hungarian) to seeking them out—she is now comfortable with German, English, and Italian, the last she started learning during her mobility, which she feels with also help to improve her French.



In addition to long term mobility, both short term relocations and virtual mobility are an important part of today's world. While much cooperation is now done over the internet, short term visits to colleagues or family abroad strengthen the personal connections between them. Maria enjoyed just such a short term visit to Montreal, Canada, where she was both able to re-connect with family members who live there, and spend month working at Canadian Centre for Architecture, thanks to a support grant.

One mobility experience often leads to others. During her Marie Curie Actions host fellowship, under FP5, and the one building up on it, the EIF under FP6, at the ROSE school in Pavia, Italy she came to know a scientist from Portugal, who was one of the people in charge of the fellowship. This connection made her interested in getting to experience the country herself and over the years a number of opportunities to do so have come up.

Her first visit to Portugal was in 2004, when Maria participated in a conference about young researchers, including Marie Curie fellows (co-organised by the MCFA), where she highlighted in her contribution the differences in the training at her Marie Curie host site, and her home doctorate site in Germany. That trip to Portugal inspired her to undertake many more, the highlight of which were two longer stays, made possible by the COST actions, which follow a pattern of the virtual mobility used to write common papers, supplemented by travel to meet in person during the collaboration. In Maria's case these consisted of one stay of 5 weeks in Faro, the Algarve in 2012, in frame of the TU0801 "Semantic enrichment of 3D city models", and a 5 weeks stay in Lisbon, in 2013 in frame of the IS1104 "The EU in the new complex geography of economic systems: models, tools and policy evaluation".

In addition to many good memories of her time there, her stay in Faro also resulted in a book, which was funded by the MCAA.

In addition to her participation in the COST networks, which also includes COST genderSTE for the MCFA, Maria is also part of the WIRES network, a European-USA collaboration for women in science, in frame of her MCFA involvement. She is also the management committee of the ESF "Network for Digital Methods in Arts and Humanities". This network implements virtual cooperation and short term visits, and is also focused on improving virtual communication, such as improving virtual archives to the point that physical travel will not always be mandatory for successful research. The ESF funded short stays are strengthening the cooperation with her alma mater, visiting it and getting a visit from it, in connection to the above mentioned book launch. The alma mater even interviewed her on the topic of this virtual cooperation issue. One challenge she has faced to being mobile was her inability to find accommodation to spend one month at the Dumberton Oaks Harvard institute in Washington, the USA, even though funding had been approved for the journey. However, she found ways to continue that research without the travel, and won a prize for it, and she continues to use virtual mobility to collaborate with colleagues in the USA from the New York City College of Technology for teaching rather than research where she trains students via blogs, resulting in research outcomes.

Maria feels that virtual mobility is great for sustaining communication across very long distances, but she also encourages geographical mobility, especially for travel between locations which are not so far apart. Geographical mobility strengthens interpersonal relations and helps with making friends. Maria's network of friends Maria is now much larger and more diverse than it was when she graduated in 1999. Back then everybody she knew spoke Romanian, Hungarian or German, but now English has also become a main language for her communications with others.



Olatz Lopez-Fernandez

Nationality: Spanish | Year born: 1976
 Research field: The impact of technology on humans

MCEA activity: Postdoctoral Marie Curie Researcher (IEF 2013),
 Catholic University of Louvain (Belgium)

Languages spoken: Catalan, Spanish, English and French
 E-mail: lopez.olatz@gmail.com

Olatz Lopez-Fernandez was born in Barcelona (Spain) in 1976, and did all of her primary, secondary and higher education in this cosmopolitan city, in bilingual private and state educative centres (Catalan and Spanish). During her secondary education she added both English and French to her studies, and continued with them through university. She describes her life as including two distinct careers that has been marked by four events. The first one was winning the grant from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport of the Government of Spain for research in Cognitive Psychology during her last year studying the degree of Psychology, which she completed at the University of Barcelona (UB) in 1999.

After finishing this degree, she felt the need to continue her training; she had intellectual curiosity for different aspects related to human behaviour, technologies, etc. Then, she made some decisions about her future. She had already taken every opportunity she could to find how to do research and teaching collaboration in the UB. Therefore, she decided she would double up for her second career, and, in 1999, begun the research for her first PhD and, simultaneously, started working on her second degree, in Audio-visual Communication with the specialisation of new Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) applied to Education. This was made possible by winning grants to support this career (e.g., Socrates-Erasmus, International Relationships Office, University Teaching Forum, etc.).

In 2001, after that “second career”, she achieved one of the highest pre-doctoral Spanish Grants from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport of Spain (“Beca de Formación del Profesorado Universitario” or FPU) to do a PhD in Pedagogy (she describes this as the “second event that marked my academic development”), in Educational Technology. She completed that degree in 2007, with an Excellent Cum Laude (maximum qualification), joint to a Mention as European Doctor. Her PhD research was about “ePortfolios in the European Higher Education Area”, and it was done between several countries: Spain (UB), United Kingdom (University of London), United States (Iowa State University) and Denmark (Aalborg University) thanks to the EU-USA Project “ILET: International Leadership for Educational Technology: a transatlantic bridge for doctoral studies”.

This project marked her career (she describes this as the “third event that marked my academic life”). She feels that the main advantage to the international nature of this project was the good opportunity for mobility provided and, above all, great academics leading the project and supporting PhDs careers. On the other hand, the main disadvantage to all of that travel was that no learning could be absorbed by the host institution. For herself, Olatz says that “the best part was the growth of my interest for higher education, technologies, and internationalisation linked to multiculturalism”.

Parallel to this research, Olatz got a position in the same University (UB) as assistant teacher in Psychology, therefore she did a

second PhD, this time in Psychology, with the topic of “Technological Addictions: problem Internet and mobile phone uses in Spain and Great Britain”. She finished this degree in 2013, again with an Excellent Cum Laude and Mention as European Doctor. She found this second PhD to be harder, in the sense that she had to develop new skills, such as to look for financial support necessary to do the face-to-face portion of this intercultural and bi-country study. She feels that one of the advantages of this was learning how to look for and apply for funding, yet she felt quite alone in aspect of the research, and admits that she spent a lot of time and effort to achieve each of them. However, the benefit was that she could do research at the University of London again, and Nottingham Trent University, as well as connect with close colleagues and excellent mentors.



Simultaneously, she achieved a tenure-track lecturer position in Psychology (UB), successfully done in 2009-2014, and achieving all the Catalan and Spanish accreditations necessary to be a permanent lecturer. Over the last 17 years she has taken care of her continuous training, undertaking several masters and courses so that she would be well updated, and worked academically national and internationally in Spain, Europe and America. She was able to collaborate in projects (with research or teaching natures), papers (alone or in team), conferences (with different formats: posters, oral and virtual communications, symposiums, round tables, etc.), etc. Above all, she taught several courses (face-to-face, online and with blended learning strategies) in several degrees in educational and, above all, psychological sciences in different Universities (above all in Spain).

Finally, she says that what has recently marked her development has been “the fourth event that changed her career and life”: the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant she won in 2013, to be a postdoctoral research in Belgium. At present, she manages a European “Tech Use Disorders” project, a technological addiction research project done cross-culturally involving more than 10 European countries. This opportunity has provided a chance to research at the European level with the support of the European Union (EU) and her host institution (Catholic University of Louvain; UCL) to do a wonderful project, with a professional promoter, and a team of high quality people who work in the Psychological Science Research Institute (UCL). This project links all of her previous research interests and expertise to recognize, discover, help and prevent potential technological addictions in European adults. However, she admits that she sees it as a disadvantage to leave her country (Spain), and thus become uncertain as to her future, but everything else about the project she sees as advantages and the opportunity to focus in research in very good conditions, being manager of her own career, yet having an excellent support network.



She is pleased to be a Barcelonian woman of 38 years who has grown along knowledge, territorial and cultural frontiers to become an excellent researcher.



Riia Chmielowski

Nationality: Triple citizen: USA, Australia, and Sweden | Year born: 1966
 Research field: Geology

MCFA activity: University of Milano, Italy 2009-2010

Languages spoken: American English, Australian English, and Swedish
 E-mail: Riia.Chmielowski@ltu.se

Riia Chmielowski has never known anything but mobility. She was born to parents who were employed by the US government—one active duty military, the other working in the civil service. On a regular basis, at least every three years, the family received orders to move to a new location, and each move was accomplished with very little advance notice. As a result, by the time she was nine years old she had lived in Japan, Germany, Crete, and the US states of Michigan, Texas, and Alaska.

With the move to Alaska the pattern changed, and Riia spent the next nine years living in Anchorage—the longest she has ever spent in one place. After a mobility-filled childhood it was a novelty to attend only one school for all of the grades 7 to 12. That school happened to be an “open concept alternative school” aimed at teaching self-motivated students to “learn how to learn”, so she enjoyed not only what, but also how she was learning. By the time she graduated high school she knew that she wanted to “be a student forever”. So she enrolled at Alaska Pacific University, which happened to be in walking distance from her home, and started taking classes in the broad field of “communications”. However, soon thereafter the pattern of moving long distances re-asserted itself, and she moved to Phoenix, Arizona, where she enrolled at the DeVry Institute of Technology studying computer information systems. This education was provided by a tuition waiver, since her mother had recently become the Alaskan Field Representative for DeVry. While there Riia enjoyed the topics of her classes, but didn’t really appreciate the emphasis the program placed on designing courses to “help the students to get a job after they graduate”. She didn’t want a job; she wanted to spend her lifetime learning new and interesting things.

Therefore she was not very disappointed when her mother made a spur-of-the-moment decision to quit her job, and move to Australia, since it provided Riia with a perfect excuse to return to Alaska and enroll at the University of Alaska, Anchorage, where she was on the books as a “natural science” student, but in reality took any course, from any field, that both sounded interesting and was offered at a time of day that didn’t conflict with other classes she was taking. Old English, Chemistry, Eastern Philosophy, and many more, all found their way onto her transcripts, and she enjoyed them all—life as a career student suited her beautifully. Eventually, about six years after graduating high school, and three since returning to Alaska, she discovered that, thanks to a variety of funding options available, graduate students are often paid to do research. In that moment her life-goal was revised, and it was time to declare a major so that she could complete a Bachelor of Science degree and then become a graduate student.

There being so very many interesting things out there one can focus on it was not so easy to choose which one to specialize in, so she decided to narrow it down to “Earth”, or more specifically, Geology. However, this was not a field in which one could obtain a Bachelor’s degree at UAA, so it was once again time for mobility. This time she moved to Oregon, where she completed her degree at the Southern Oregon State College. This turned out to be a delightful place to study geology—the department was small, so the education was perfectly tailored to the needs of the students, and there are ever so many different rock types and geological settings within a short drive of the campus.

From there she enrolled in a Master of Science program at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, completing her degree in 1998 with a thesis topic of “The Structural Geometry and Evolution of the Toyuk Thrust Zone”, the research for which included one delightful summer living in a beautiful valley in the Brooks Range, the farthest north mountain range in the US, creating a detailed geologic map of the area. After finishing that degree she took a few years off from research, having resolved not to start a PhD project until after she had decided what specific topic she wanted to research; she had been advised to “pick a PhD topic you love, because you are likely to hate it before you are done”. However, her time away from research did not stop her mobility habit, and the years between finishing her MS and enrolling in her PhD program saw her move to six different towns or cities in three countries on two continents before she found the answer to that question.



When she heard about the project at the University of Tasmania, studying the Cambrian Metamorphic History of Tasmania, she knew she had finally found the topic she had been looking for, and she embarked on what turned out to be a very fun and educational project. However, she is grateful that, even though she spent five years on that study, she never did grow to hate the it; the research was fascinating and fun all the way to completion, and it gave her a chance to get to know a side of Tasmania that most of the locals are not even aware of—the colourful past recorded in the crystals of the rocks themselves.

That project led to her first true international collaboration (not counting sending rock samples to Australia for laboratory analysis during her Master’s research), working with some Italian researchers at the Museo Nazionale dell’Antartide, in Siena, Italy, comparing and contrasting some of their Antarctic rocks (eclogites) with similar ones she had collected in Tasmania, to help answer questions about exactly how/if Tasmania and Antarctica had been connected to one another back in the Cambrian time period.

That collaboration may have helped Riia to land her first post-doctoral position, as a Marie Curie Research Fellow, at the University of Milano, in Italy, where she spent a year and a half doing experiments, learning which minerals are stable at what pressures and temperatures (for the specific rock compositions she was investigating) by growing them herself, inside tiny gold capsules, under laboratory conditions. This was a fascinating and educational process, and the year and a half she was there slipped by very quickly.

By the time that contract was up she hadn’t yet lined up a new position, which turned out to be a good thing, since it gave her the opportunity to follow her new partner home to northern Sweden to see how she liked living there. She liked it so much that she approached the local university, and soon found herself undertaking a research project to create a 3D geochemical model of ore deposits in the Kristineberg area of the Skellefte District, in northern Sweden. That project wound to a close just as the Luleå University of Technology needed someone to take charge of the new Laser-Ablation Inductively Coupled Mass Spectrometer laboratory they are starting, and Riia has happily accepted the new challenge. Her geologic background is so diverse, and her network so scattered over the globe, that she will easily be able to assist the researchers here in how best to use this new equipment to answer questions in their own research.

Riia has enjoyed her life of mobility, and would not give up the richness of experience each new location has brought her. However, having now spent more than four years in Sweden makes this is the third longest stretch of time she has ever lived in any one location. One more year and Sweden will be in second place. She is enjoying herself so much that she is content to stay right where she is, in the house she and her partner have purchased together. She thinks that this house, her first home of her own, located only a four kilometre walk from her university office, yet still situated in the beautiful Swedish countryside, is an ideal place to experiment with the concept of “immobility”, at least for a while longer.



Rocio Micaela Crespo Quesada

Nationality: Spanish, Argentinian | Year born: 1984
Research field: Solar fuels

Doctorate: Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (Switzerland), 2011
Marie Curie Fellowship: University of Cambridge (UK), 2014-2016
Currently: Marie Curie Fellow at University of Cambridge (UK)

Languages spoken: Spanish, English, French, Italian
E-mail: micaela.crespoquesada@gmail.com

From this initial interest, she started to become even more interested in how science and policy interact, how research projects are managed, and how all of it can have an influence on society. Working on the development of efficient solar harvesting materials for artificial photosynthesis has strengthened her belief that policy makers and researchers should be able to interact more closely together and in synergy with one another in order to move our society forward. Therefore, she joined the committee of Cambridge University Science and Policy Exchange (CUSPE) as Head of Marketing and Communications.

At the present point in her career, Micaela feels truly multicultural and has become increasingly interested in how the research world works from an organizational point of view, as well as its interaction with the Society. Her Marie Curie experience has allowed her to conduct research in a truly inspiring University as well as granting her the opportunity to also gain experience in other parallel domains, such as research management and science policy.

She believes that her latest move has been an extremely formative experience, and has granted useful skills to the whole family, including English to the – already trilingual – children. Her whole family and life are completely international. She is Argentinian born, married in Switzerland to an Italian, whom she met in Belgium. At home they speak in two languages to their two Spanish-Italian-Argentinian children, who were born in Switzerland, and are now learning English.

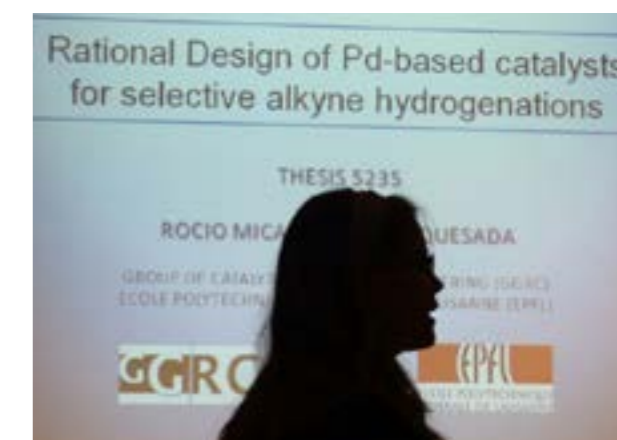
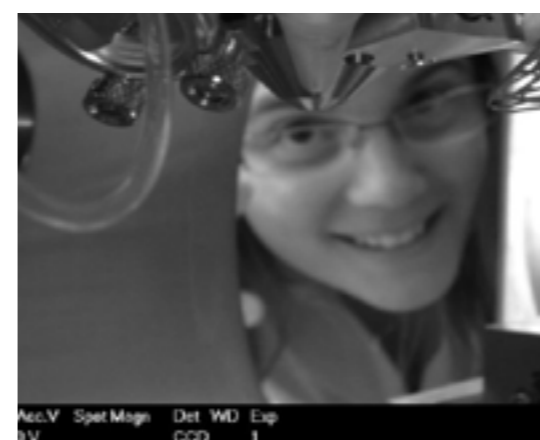
Although born and bred in Argentina, geographically far removed from the European Union, Micaela feels now a citizen of the world, and cannot imagine herself living anywhere other than within Europe. Having lived in five different countries (four of which are in Europe), she feels that each change has taught her new skills and made her more adaptable and resilient to the challenges. She also believes that once you have tried many dishes, you can finally advisedly choose the one you like best!

Her adventure began with her acquiring the Spanish nationality via her paternal blood line, which ultimately led to her whole family relocating to Spain in early 2002, where she studied Chemical Engineering at the University of Barcelona. This first big change made her face a different way of life, and even a different language, since most of the lessons were taught in Catalan, rather than Spanish. The flexibility she gained by overcoming this change at a young age (17 years old) gave her the motivation to seek to develop herself in an even more international environment. She was selected to carry out a Summer Internship with Procter & Gamble in the Brussels Innovation Center, Belgium. Those three months abroad doing research surrounded by a team of more nationalities and accents that she could count probably spoiled her for life, for she could never settle back to being in a city or job where only one language was spoken. Additionally, it was the place where she met the man who would become her husband.

Micaela then moved to Lausanne (Switzerland) where she lived for seven and a half years, obtained her PhD, worked as post doctorate researcher, got married and had two children. In Switzerland she learnt French and Italian, which she considers to be one of her main accomplishments and remembers, with a hint of sarcasm and a smile, a time when she used to believe that being able to speak English was enough to communicate with the world. Now she understands and cherishes the possibility of chatting with people in their own tongue, and she takes advantage of every possibility she can find to practice and polish her “languages”.

Micaela carried out a successful doctorate revolving around heterogeneous catalysis, studying the influence of the shape of nanoparticles on their performance. Following the birth of her firstborn, she stayed in Switzerland to finish her work during a post doctorate at EPFL. By the end of this period, she started craving new horizons and subjects. She found Erwin Reisner's group at the University of Cambridge, where groundbreaking research is carried out in the field of Solar Fuels – or energy-rich compounds that can be obtained with solar energy, much like plants during photosynthesis – and wrote an application for a Marie Curie IE Fellowship. The proposal was successful and Micaela and her family moved to the UK in 2014.

Although she believes mobility to be enriching and inspiring, she now understands how challenging it is, in reality, to move a whole family, and how little this is supported. She feels very strongly on this subject, and therefore joined the Science Policy Working Group of the Marie Curie Alumni Association, which aims at developing policies to improve the profile of former Marie Curie Researchers. She believes that in order for a researcher to work at their fullest extent, be they female or male, the funding bodies as well as host institutions must provide full support to facilitate as much as possible the difficult transitions associated with moving a family unit.



Micaela believes that multiculturalism brings exceptional richness to our lives and opens new horizons and alternatives that were otherwise unexpected. She highly recommends everyone to try it!



Theodota Lagouri

Nationality: Greek | Year born: 1970
Research field: Nuclear and High Energy Physics

MCFA activity: Postdoctoral Marie Curie Researcher (IEF 2013),
Catholic University of Louvain (Belgium)

Languages spoken: Catalan, Spanish, English and French
E-mail: lopez.olatz@gmail.com

Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood

MARIE CURIE

Theodota is dedicated to the search for dark matter associated with the discovery of the elusive Higgs particle.

She has been working since 2013 as a research Scientist of High Energy Experimental Physics at Yale University (US) working for the ATLAS Experiment at Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at CERN, Geneva, Switzerland, where she is working on dark matter physics associated with the recent discovery (in 2012) of the Higgs boson particle, which explains how fundamental matter took on the mass to form stars and planets. That discovery was a landmark in physics, earning Peter Higgs and François Englert the 2013 Nobel Prize in Physics, for the prediction of Higgs boson back in the 1970s.

Natural sciences fascinated Theodota from a very early age, so the decision came naturally, while she was still in high school, to study Physics. With it came an early realization that this is her way to better understand the fundamental workings of the world and the basis of life itself. Theodota comes from a very connected family of 3 sisters with parents who were supportive of the idea of their daughters pursuing scientific university studies. Her eldest sister followed the life sciences, biology, and her twin sister decided to study chemistry. Theodota started studying Physics in 1987 in her home-town of Thessaloniki in Greece and then decided to specialize in nuclear and particle physics during her second year. She defended her diploma thesis on "Positron annihilation Studies of Point Defects in Neutron Transmutation Doped Czochralski-Grown Silicon" and graduated in July 1991. She then continued to work in the same group to study "Positron Annihilation Studies in High-Tc Superconductors Y 1:2:3" a topic of considerable interest to better understand properties of these new materials. After several years of intense work Theodota received her PhD in Physics in May 1997. Even before the completion of her PhD, Theodota had her first positive experience with the EU mobility programs, traveling to the Positron Physics Laboratory at the Helsinki University of Technology in Finland in 1994 with the ERASMUS program. This introduction helped her to realize that she liked to travel and meet people from other cultures and languages – a trait that she still holds today. She also traveled to the Czech Republic, since her work also needed computing knowledge, where, in 1997, she attended the CERN School of Computing, in Prague.

A new research position in the nuclear physics laboratory gave her the opportunity to work, during the summer months of 1996, for the newly set up ATLAS experiment at LHC at CERN in Geneva, Switzerland. This new, intriguing field of research that was opening up immediately attracted Theodota's interest. This field did not yet have possibilities for post-doc work in Greece, so Theodota successfully applied for a TMR Marie Curie Research Training Grant fellowship to pursue this area of interest in Max-Planck Institute for Physics in Germany, where she worked from 1998 to 2000 on the topic of "High Accuracy Momentum Measurement of Muons in a new generation p-p Collision experiment". She accepted the challenge to work in Germany although she didn't know the language and was aware of that there would be a different culture and mentality of the German people as compared with what she had been accustomed to in Greece. At

the beginning it was not very easy to adjust to life in Germany, she communicated only in English at work and outside, but soon after attending a language school in the evenings she started to understand the people. She realized that knowing the language of the place where you live is a very important step to come closer and understand the people's mentality and integrate faster, something that she followed since then. Returning to her home institute in 2003, after the completion of her term in Germany, the Marie Curie Individual Fellowship Return Grant, allowed Theodota to continue for one year her research in this interesting area with the ATLAS experiment. She contributed significantly to the software to reconstruct and identify muon tracks in the ATLAS detector. She participated in various international conferences and schools like the CERN School of Computing in Krems (Austria) in 2003, where she met her future husband, also a CERN high-energy physicist.



At the end of her Return Grant with Thessaloniki, Theodota received a position at Charles University in Prague (2004-2006) with the Marie Curie Research Training Network "The Third Generation as a Probe for New Physics: Experimental and Technological Approach". This post allowed her to work both at CERN and in Prague on the muon trigger software of the ATLAS experiment and interact with the international scientific community. During these years she faced the difficulties of commuting between Prague and Geneva and without knowing the Czech language she found it more difficult to integrate in such a short-term placement. In 2006 she got a research position with the University Autonoma de Madrid based at CERN. She focused her work for the next few years on the search for the elusive Higgs particle as a member of the ATLAS Higgs physics group.

Continuing working for ATLAS experiment based at CERN, since 2012 Theodota joined the Physics Department of Yale University as Associate Research Scientist. She contributed to the ATLAS research efforts that led the discovery of the Higgs particle, which was announced on July 4, 2012 by ATLAS (together with CMS – its sister experiment at the LHC). This discovery, of course, promptly led to many new fields of investigation. Therefore, from the beginning of 2013, Theodota is focusing her work in ATLAS experiment on searches of dark matter, especially for a "hidden" sector, "dark" boson based on the already found Higgs boson particle. As Theodota is working in the international organization CERN with official languages of English and French, she is facing a lot of challenges. She is coming into contact every day with people of different countries and cultures, so by now she is used to hearing English, French, Italian or Spanish spoken in the same room without getting a headache at the end of the day. At home, she shares with her partner the same interests in physics and other areas; they are discussing and collaborating even though they work for different CERN experiments.

Theodota's first motivation to follow the EU mobility programs was her desire to learn more about her scientific research subject and explore new research areas, initially hoping that it would be a good experience and it would help her to return in a short time to her home country, more advanced than before and perhaps fit for an academic post. However, in the meantime, things changed, and rather than returning promptly to Greece she found that the EU mobility programs were much more important for her scientific life than she had anticipated; as a matter of fact, they helped form her personality and, in parallel to the scientific benefits, they also affected her personal life. Despite the practical difficulties of mobility, she learned to adjust faster and remember only the positive experiences after all is said and done. On her way she learned to be more open-minded, to not be afraid of the unknown and to not give up.

Catching new opportunities she realized soon that nothing is static, everything changes, as Heraclitus said: "Τὰ πάντα ῥεῖ". She feels now that EUROPE as a whole is her new home country. Theodota has published about 150 papers in scientific journals and 20 in conference proceedings. She is member of the MCAA and MCFA associations, the MC Women in Science (m-WiSET) and GEMS working groups, the Hellenic High Energy Physics Society and the American Physical Society. She is also member of the CERN personnel.



Wuraola Akande

Nationality: Nigerian | Year born: 1978

Research field: Biomolecular, Biomaterials and Extracorporeal Medical device Sciences

Doctorate: University of Brighton (UK) 2013

Marie-Curie fellowships: University of Brighton, UK, Lund University, Sweden, and Danube University, Krems Austria, Protista Biotechnology, AB, IDEON, Lund Sweden and Polymerics GmbH Germany.

Currently: Chief Pharmacist Tristate Cardiovascular Institute, Nigeria

Languages spoken: English

Email: wuradol@yahoo.co.uk

Having her research subjected to the real life needs and expectations of industry was an eye opener for her and brought up questions she would never have considered in an academic environment.



Wuraola completed her Ph.D in 2013, after which she decided to move back to Nigeria. She undertook a one year mandatory National Youth Service Corps at the University College Hospital, Ibadan, Nigeria (2013-2014).

She is presently the Chief Pharmacist of Tristate Cardiovascular Institute, Nigeria; this is a team of cardiologist and cardiothoracic surgeon and other professional staff, who have a mission to bring cutting edge cardiovascular disease diagnosis and treatment to Nigeria. Wura is also currently considering a lecturing position at the department of Clinical Pharmacy and Pharmacy Administration, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Ibadan.

She was elected as an ordinary Board member of the MCAA in November, 2013, a member of the gender equality for mobile researchers in science within MCAA, present chair of the Communications working group within MCAA, founder and current chair of African Chapter of Marie Curie Alumni. Having lived, studied and worked in different countries, she feels that the experience has greatly enriched her. Today she is better able to communicate with people at all levels and from different backgrounds. All her early interest seems to have come together, and working in a multidisciplinary environment is very exciting for Wura.



Wuraola with some of the working team at Danube University Krems, Austria (October 2010)



Dr Akande during the MONACO-EXTRA summer school Antalya, Turkey (October 2009)

Dr. Wuraola Akande is one of a new generation of multidisciplinary scientists and researchers, thanks to a high level of exposure to interdisciplinary training and mobility brought about by the Marie Curie program, which brings together research expertise and knowledge transfer from a wide range of subject areas with a view to bring about new advances. In the case of Wura and her colleagues, the goal is the future application of Biomaterials and Medical devices science.

A native of Nigeria, in West Africa, Wura received a bachelor's degree in Biochemistry from University of Ibadan, Nigeria (1997-2002). She then moved to the United Kingdom in 2003 to study a Master of Pharmacy at the University of Brighton, UK (2003-2007).

While in Brighton, Wura decided to take on the challenge of becoming a Marie Curie early stage researcher at that university, and she embarked on a PhD program, funded by Marie Curie MONACO-EXTRA project (218242), which was an international project (Industry-Academia-Partnerships and Pathway, IAPP), involving four Universities (University of Brighton, Brighton and Sussex University hospital NHS Trust, Lund University, Sweden, and Danube University, Krems Austria) and three small industries (Mast Carbon UK, Protista Biotechnology, AB, IDEON, Lund Sweden and Polymerics GmbH Germany).

A researcher needs to be curious about its environment and ideas

WURAOLA AKANDE

Her decision to pursue a PhD, at the biomaterial and medical devices research group of the School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences, University of Brighton, was a major life changing event. It was the first time she was involved in intense research. Wura entered the world of biomaterial sciences, studying the structural, mechanical and haemocompatibility features required to develop an affinity-binding cryogel column from a non-biological monomer, as an appropriate matrix for use in extracorporeal apheresis systems. Such a matrix would be of use in a wide range of clinical situations where specific removal of blood components would be beneficial to patients. Working on a project that involved working with so many universities and exposed Wura to differences in how different European countries worked. Coming from West Africa, she had previously assumed that Europeans were alike and worked in the same pattern. She also found that managing the expectations of different professors in what directions they wanted the research to go was often a struggle to harmonize different worldviews, but at the end it proved to be an advantage, as it allowed and encouraged her to view the project from different angles. The greatest learning was in how to relate what she was researching to the needs of the biotechnology industries.

ROLE MODELS FOR MOBILITY OF MCAA WOMEN SCIENTISTS



Marie Curie Alumni Association
GEMS Working Group