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Sponsorship Programmes of the Alexander
von Humboldt Foundation

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Alexander von Humboldt (Uncle Alex)



The "*greatest scientific traveller who ever lived*", Darwin



Profile

- **Born** 14 September 1769 in Berlin
- **Died** 6 May 1859 (aged 89) Berlin
- **Nationality** German
- **Fields** Geography, naturalist and explorer
- **Known for** Humboldt's quantitative work on botanical geography laid the foundation for the field of biogeography
- (1845) Humboldt resurrected the use of the word *cosmos* from the ancient Greek and assigned it to his multi-volume treatise, *Kosmos*, in which he sought to unify diverse branches of scientific knowledge
- **Influenced** Darwin
- **Notable awards** Copley Medal(1852)

Recognition by contemporaries

- [Charles Darwin](#) expressed his debt to Humboldt, and admiration for his work, writing to [Joseph Dalton Hooker](#) that Humboldt was the "*greatest scientific traveller who ever lived*".
- [Wilhelm von Humboldt](#) wrote that "Alexander is destined to combine ideas and follow chains of thoughts which would otherwise have remained unknown for ages. His depth, his sharp mind and his incredible speed are a rare combination."
- [Johann Wolfgang von Goethe](#) observed that "Humboldt showers us with true treasures."
- [Friedrich von Schiller](#) wrote that "Alexander impresses many, particularly when compared to his brother - because he shows off more!"

"Every scientist is a descendant of Humboldt.",
Emil



Recognition cont'd

- [Napoléon Bonaparte](#) remarked "You have been studying Botany? Just like my wife!"
- [Claude Louis Berthollet](#) said "This man is as knowledgeable as a whole academy."
- [Thomas Jefferson](#) remarked "I consider him the most important scientist whom I have met."
- [Emil Du Bois-Reymond](#) wrote that "Every scientist is a descendant of Humboldt."
- [José de la Luz y Caballero](#) wrote that "Columbus gave Europe a New World; Humboldt made it known in its physical, material, intellectual, and moral aspects"

Recognition Cont'd

- His contemporaries considered Alexander von Humboldt the most famous man in the world after Napoleon, and Thomas Jefferson called him “one of the greatest ornaments of the age.”
- There are more plants, animals, minerals and places named after Humboldt than any other person.
- In California alone, a county, a bay, a college and a state park all bear his name.
- He is a founding father of environmentalism, a visionary who predicted man-made climate change as early as 1800.

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation

- After his death, Humboldt's friends and colleagues created the [Alexander von Humboldt Foundation](#) (*Stiftung* in German) to continue his generous support of young academics.
- Although the original endowment was lost in the [German hyperinflation of the 1920s](#), and again as a result of World War II, the Foundation has been re-endowed by the German government to award young academics and distinguished senior academics from abroad.
- It plays an important role in attracting foreign researchers to work in Germany and enabling German researchers to work abroad for a period.

About the AvH Foundation

- The AvH Foundation promotes academic cooperation between excellent scientists and scholars from abroad and from Germany.
- Her research fellowships and research awards allow you to come to Germany to work on a research project you have chosen yourself together with a host and collaborative partner.
- If you are a scientist or scholar from Germany you can profit from her support and carry out a research project abroad as a guest of one of more than 26,000 Humboldt Foundation alumni worldwide - the Humboldtians.
- As an intermediary organisation for German foreign cultural and educational policy the AvH promotes international cultural dialogue and academic exchange.

Fostering a Culture of Welcome in Germany

- As global competition to court the best minds continues to grow, talented researchers can choose in which country they wish to continue their careers.
- Apart from an attractive salary and an inspiring academic environment, “soft factors” play an increasingly important role in choosing a suitable location.
- For more than a decade, the Humboldt Foundation has been working with various partners to establish a “Culture of Welcome” in Germany in order to attract researchers and their families, support them in their preparations and throughout their stay, and to maintain relations long-term relations after their stay has finished.

Important to note

- If you would like to become a member of the Humboldt Family, only one thing counts: your own excellent performance.
- There are no quotas, neither for individual countries, nor for particular academic disciplines.
- The selection committees comprise academics from all fields of specialisation and they make independent decisions, based solely on the applicant's academic record.
- The Humboldt Foundation supports people, not projects. After all, even in times of increasing teamwork, it is the individual's ability and dedication that are decisive for academic success.

Equal opportunities for women academics

- The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation emphatically campaigns for equal opportunities for men and women in research.
- It aims to draw the best minds in academia to Germany for a research stay and thus to create a world-spanning network of excellent researchers.
- However, we have to face the fact that the percentage of women amongst both the applicants and those sponsored is much lower than that of their male colleagues, even though the AvH does not apply quotas for specific countries or disciplines in their sponsorship programmes.
- The sole criteria are academic record and excellence.¹⁴

Applications and nominations from women explicitly welcomed

- The Humboldt Foundation would like to tap academic potential for its network irrespective of gender.
- In order to exploit outstanding talent in science and research to the full the Foundation, therefore, explicitly welcomes applications and nominations from highly-qualified female researchers.
- Likewise, the AvH encourages women academics in Germany to internationalise their research teams by becoming a host and including junior researchers from abroad.

Sponsorship programmes of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation

- *Research Fellowships:*

- Humboldt Research Fellowship for Postdoctoral researchers
- Humboldt Research Fellowship for Experienced researchers
- Georg Forster Fellowship for Postdoctoral researchers
- Georg Forster Fellowship for Experienced researchers

Humboldt Research Awards

- Georg Forster Research Award
- Sofja Kovalevskaja Award
- Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel Research Award
- Fraunhofer-Bessel Research Award
- Alexander von Humboldt Professorship
- Anneliese Maier Research Award
- Max Planck Research Award
- Alumni Awards

Humboldt Research Fellowship for Postdoctoral Researchers

- Scientists and scholars of all nationalities and disciplines with above average qualifications, at the beginning of their academic career and only **completed their doctorate in the last four years.**
- A Humboldt Research Fellowship for postdoctoral researchers allows you to carry out long-term research (6-24 months) in Germany.
- Researchers choose their own topic of research and their academic host
- Applicants may apply to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation directly at any time. The Humboldt Foundation grants approximately 500 scholarships annually.

Humboldt Research Fellowship for Experienced Researchers

- Submit an application if you are a researcher from abroad with above average qualifications,
- completed your doctorate less than twelve years ago,
- already have your own research profile and are working at least at the level of Assistant Professor or
- have a record of several years of independent academic work.
- A Humboldt Research Fellowship for experienced researchers allows you to carry out long-term research (6-18 months) in Germany

Experienced researchers cont'd

- . Applicants choose their own topic of research and their academic host.
- The fellowship is flexible and can be divided up into as many as three stays within three years.
- Scientists and scholars of all nationalities and disciplines may apply to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation directly at any time.
- The Humboldt Foundation grants approximately 500 Humboldt Research Fellowships for Postdoctoral Researchers and experienced researchers annually.

Georg Forster Research Fellowship for Postdoctoral Researchers

- if you are a researcher with above average qualifications in a developing country,
- If you are at the beginning of your academic career and only **completed your doctorate in the last four years.**
- if you intend to carry out long-term research of your own choice (6 to 24 months) at a research institution in Germany together with an academic host you have chosen yourself,
- if your research outline includes aspects that are important for the continued development of your country or region of origin and
- if you want to contribute to the exchange of knowledge and methods between Germany and your country of origin, **APPLY** at anytime.

Georg Forster Research Fellowship for Experienced Researchers

- Submit an application if you are a researcher from a developing country with above average qualifications,
- completed your doctorate less than twelve years ago,
- already have your own research profile and are working at least at the level of Assistant Professor or have a record of several years of independent academic work.
- if your research outline includes aspects that are important for the continued development of your country or region of origin, and
- if you want to contribute to the exchange of knowledge and methods between Germany and your country of origin

Georg Forster Research Fellowship for Experienced Researchers Cont'd

- The AvH Foundation allows you to carry out long-term research (6-18 months) in Germany.
- Applicants choose their own topic of research and their academic host
- The fellowship is flexible and can be divided up into as many as three stays within three years.
- Scientists and scholars of all nationalities and disciplines may apply to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation directly at any time.
- The Humboldt Foundation grants approximately 500 Humboldt Research Fellowships for Postdoctoral researchers and Experienced researchers annually

Georg Forster Research Award

- The Georg Forster Research Award is granted in recognition of a researcher's entire achievements to date to academics of all disciplines whose fundamental discoveries, new theories, or insights have had a significant impact on their own discipline and beyond and who are expected to continue developing research-based solutions to the specific challenges facing transition and developing countries.
- Nominees must be nationals of a developing or transition country .
- Furthermore, at the time of nomination, they must have had their main residence and place of work in one of these countries for at least five years.
- The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation particularly encourages the nomination of qualified female researchers.
- The award amount totals EUR 60,000.

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- In addition, award winners are invited to conduct a research project of their own choosing in Germany in close collaboration with a specialist colleague.
- To support the collaboration, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation may grant additional funding of up to EUR 25,000, particularly for participating in scientific conferences, additional material resources, e.g., specialist literature and scientific equipment for the nominee's own institute, as well as for involving junior researchers.
- An established academic employed by a university or research institution in Germany must take the initiative to nominate a candidate for the Georg Forster Research Award.
- Nominations may also be initiated by award winners of the Humboldt Foundation working abroad, provided that the nomination is made jointly with a colleague working in Germany. Self-nomination is not possible.
- The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation is granting up to four Georg Forster Research Awards annually.

Sofja Kovalevskaja Award

- Submit an application if you are a successful top-rank junior researcher from abroad, only **completed your doctorate with distinction in the last six years**, and have published work in prestigious international journals or publishing houses.
- The Award allows you to spend five years building up a working group and working on a high-profile, innovative research project of your own choice at a research institution of your own choice in Germany.
- Scientists and scholars from all disciplines may apply directly to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. The AvH Foundation grants up to eight SofjKovalevskaja Awards. The award is valued at up to 1.65 million EUR₂₆

Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel Research Award

- Scientists and scholars from abroad, internationally renowned in their field, who completed their doctorates less than 18 years ago and who in future are expected to continue producing cutting-edge achievements which will have a seminal influence on their discipline beyond their immediate field of work, are eligible to be nominated for a Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel Research Award.
- Award winners are honoured for their outstanding research record and invited to spend a period of up to one year cooperating on a long-term research project with specialist colleagues at a research institution in Germany. The stay may be divided up into blocks.
- The Humboldt Foundation grants about 20 Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel Research Awards annually.
- Nominations may be submitted by established academics in Germany. Direct applications are not accepted. The award is valued at 45,000 EUR.

Fraunhofer-Bessel Research Award

- Scientists and scholars from all non-European countries, who completed their doctorates less than 18 years ago, who are internationally recognised for their achievements in the field of applied research, and who in future are expected to continue producing cutting-edge achievements which will have a seminal influence on their discipline beyond their immediate field of work, are eligible to be nominated for a Fraunhofer-Bessel Research Award.
- Award winners are invited to spend a period of up to one year cooperating on a long-term research project with specialist colleagues at one of the Fraunhofer Institutes in Germany. The stay may be divided up into blocks.

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- The Humboldt Foundation and the Fraunhofer Society for the Advancement of Applied Research jointly grant up to three Fraunhofer-Bessel Research Awards annually.
- Nominations may be submitted by the heads of institutes or senior academics at institutes belonging to the Fraunhofer Society.
- Nominations may also be initiated by award winners of the Humboldt Foundation working abroad, provided that the nomination is made jointly with a colleague working at a Fraunhofer Institute in Germany. Direct applications are not accepted. The award is valued at 45,000 EUR

Alexander von Humboldt Professorship

- Academics of all disciplines from abroad, who are internationally recognised as leaders in their field and who are expected to contribute to enhancing Germany's sustained international competitiveness as a research location in consequence of the award, are eligible to be nominated for an Alexander von Humboldt Professorship.
- The Alexander von Humboldt Professorship, which is financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research through the International Research Fund for Germany, enables award winners to carry out long-term and ground-breaking research at universities and research institutions in Germany. The award funds, totalling 5 million EUR for academics in experimental disciplines and 3.5 million EUR for researchers in theoretical disciplines, are made available for a period of five years.
- Nominations may be made by German universities; non-university research institutions may also submit nominations jointly with a German university.

Anneliese Maier Research Award

- Nominations for the research award can be made for researchers from abroad from the fields of the humanities and social sciences whose scientific achievements have been internationally recognised in their research area and from whose research collaboration with specialist colleagues in Germany a sustainable contribution is expected towards the further internationalisation of the humanities and social sciences in Germany.
- In addition to researchers who already number among the established leaders in their subject, the award is also aimed at researchers who are not yet so advanced in their scientific careers but who are already internationally established researchers from whom a sustainable shaping of the humanities and social sciences in Germany can be expected through the prospects of long-term collaboration.

Max Planck Research Award

- Excellent scientists and scholars of all nationalities who are expected to continue producing outstanding academic achievements in international collaboration – not least with the assistance of this award – are eligible to be nominated for the Max Planck Research Award.
- On an annually-alternating basis, the call for nominations addresses areas within the natural and engineering sciences, the life sciences, and the social sciences and humanities.
- The Max Planck Research Award **2015** will be conferred in the area of humanities and social sciences in the subject

Cont'd

- Every year, the Humboldt Foundation and the Max Planck Society grant two research awards to one researcher working abroad and one researcher working in Germany. These two awards will be bestowed independently.
- The Presidents/Vice Chancellors of universities and the heads of research institutions in Germany are eligible to make nominations .
- Direct applications are not accepted. As a rule, each award is endowed with 750,000 EUR and may be used over a period of three to a maximum of five years to fund research chosen by the award winner

Research Group Linkage Programme

- In the framework of its alumni programme, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation offers the opportunity to form institutional partnerships, combining various activities that lead to a long-term collaboration between foreign alumni of Alexander von Humboldt Foundation programmes and German academics.
- The aim of the programme is to build a sustainable basis for long-term international academic collaboration, also integrating (doctoral and post-doctoral) junior researchers who are potential candidates for an Alexander von Humboldt Foundation research fellowship.

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- Joint research projects can be sponsored to the value of 55,000 EUR over a period of up to three years.
- The funding may be used to finance reciprocal research visits lasting up to three months, conferences and workshops, consumables, printing costs, and, to a limited extent, academic auxiliary staff and equipment for the institute abroad.
- Up to 15% of the funding may be utilised as an administrative lump-sum for the German partner institute.

Humboldt Alumni Award for innovative networking initiatives

- The Humboldt Foundation singles out the best network initiatives of its alumni.
- the Humboldt Foundation has grants awards to Humboldt alumni for initiatives designed to promote academic and cultural ties between Germany and these creative minds' own countries or strengthen cooperation in the respective countries and regions.
- The 2014 Humboldt Alumni Awards were presented in June 2014 at the Humboldt Foundation's annual meeting in Berlin.
- Humboldtians from Poland, Cuba and **Cameroon** were selected for the awards:

Humboldt Alumni Award for innovative networking initiatives 2014

- With his network initiative “Intra-African/German Network of Academic Writing Excellence in the Humanities:
- Mentoring Junior Scientists for Successful Humboldt Applications”, Cameroonian linguist Daniel Atengwa Nkemleke wants to make information on funding options for research stays in Germany available to young researchers in the humanities field.

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- A mentoring platform is also to be set up – with digital and analogue offerings to advise individuals in connection with applications for fellowships.
- The initiative plans to involve researchers in the fields Languages and Literature, History, Legal Studies, Philosophy, German Philology, and the Performing and Visual Arts from five African countries – Ghana, Cameroon, Kenya, Nigeria and Tanzania – and Germany

Humboldt 2014 Alumni Award



Become an Humboldtian

- The AvH Foundation promotes academic cooperation between excellent scientists and scholars from abroad and from Germany.
- Whether you are a young postdoctoral researcher at the beginning of your academic career, an experienced, established academic, or even a world authority in your discipline - AvH research fellowships and research awards offer you sponsorship tailored to you and to your career situation.
- If you would like to become a member of the Humboldt Family, only one thing counts: your own excellent performance

Support during Research Stay

- Being an Humboldtian is something special.
- That is why we care for every one of you individually and flexibly. We want you and the family accompanying you to feel at home in Germany so that you are able to focus completely on your work. Academic success for the guest and the host and a worthwhile stay from a private point of view are the objectives. The Humboldt Foundation's portfolio of measures for their fellows and award winners includes German language courses, networking meetings and study visits for fellows, annual meetings, and symposia for research award winners. Our German fellows going abroad on a research stay also receive individual mentoring and support.

June 2014 in Berlin



Prof Nkemele & the German President



Mr/Mrs Atechi at the AvH Headquarters, Bonn 2013



In Bonn, 2013



The AvH president and German president



German Chancellor, Angela Merkel



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