Last year, Birkbeck’s supporters donated more than £2.4 million and volunteered over 3700 hours of their time to the College. Your generosity ensures that students can study here regardless of their financial situation, allows them to access the help they need to complete their courses and enables our academics to carry out research that can change the world we live in.

Thank you for helping us to make Birkbeck the institution that it is today; an institution that is proud to have achieved international reach and excellence but that remains true to its mission of educating working people.

The stories of just some of the determined students and incredible projects you have supported can be found in the following pages. I hope they will leave you feeling as proud and inspired as they do me.

Professor David Latchman CBE
Master
YOUR SUPPORT IN NUMBERS
800 DONORS gave a total of more than £2.4 million

£469,000 was the largest gift we received

391 ALUMNI gave to our telephone campaigns

£656,000 was left to us in the wills of 10 former staff and students

260 DONORS raised more than £37,000 for the Wohl Wolfson ToddlerLab in our crowdfunding campaign

3700 HOURS of expertise were given by our alumni and corporate partners across six volunteer programmes

To donate to Birkbeck, please visit bbk.ac.uk/donate. To find out more about giving your time, please visit bbk.ac.uk/alumni/help
WITHOUT THIS KIND SUPPORT MY LOW INCOME WOULD MAKE STUDYING VERY DIFFICULT

Ishtiaq Bostan
BSc Marketing
Ishtiaq had wanted to work in business for a number of years but found that he was missing out on jobs because he didn’t have a degree. In October 2016, he enrolled on Birkbeck’s BSc Marketing. He says:

“I knew what a commitment studying would be and I’d been putting it off until I found out about Birkbeck – being able to work and study at the same time suits me really well.

I’ve just started the final year of my course and have been lucky enough to receive a bursary every year. It’s helped me to pay for the books I need to study and helps with travel as well. Without this kind support my low income would make studying very difficult.”

Many Birkbeck students need similar support. Last year, donations to the College provided bursaries for 1982 undergraduate students like Ishtiaq, helping them to focus on their studies without worrying about their finances.

To support students like Ishtiaq, donate online at bbk.ac.uk/donate
RESEARCH WITH INTERNATIONAL IMPACT
Around the world, disease and malnutrition prevent millions of children from fulfilling their potential. Thanks to funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, researchers from Birkbeck’s BabyLab are strengthening the case for interventions that will give them a better start in life.

The study, known as the BRIGHT Project, is the first study in the world to use brain imaging techniques on babies in Africa. It is following 200 Gambian infants over their first two years of life, periodically monitoring their brain activity as they interact with researchers, watch simple videos and listen to sounds.

The team hopes to be able to link infants’ performance on these tasks to the impact that malnutrition and disease have had on their brains. In doing so, they will not only provide unequivocal evidence of the early and potentially detrimental effects that living in poverty can have on the brain but will draw further attention to the need for policies that will combat these effects.

For more information, visit globalfnirs.org/the-bright-project or follow them on Twitter: @bright_project
IT WAS SO HELPFUL TO TALK TO SOMEONE ONE-ON-ONE

Yitang Hsieh
MA Arts Policy and Management
At our Careers Clinics, students meet with alumni for one-to-one advice on CVs, job applications and interview skills. Yitang worked as a concert promoter in Taiwan and came to Birkbeck to take the next step in her career. She found these sessions invaluable.

“It’s hard to know where to start when you’re in a new country and I wasn’t finding the advice I was looking for at careers fairs. When I heard about the Careers Clinics, I thought they’d be perfect for me.

I’ve come away from them with some really great tips on finding a job at a classical music agency and it was so helpful to talk to someone one-on-one. Now that I’ve finished my Master’s, I’ve got the headspace to put it all into action.”

Last year at Birkbeck’s Careers Clinics, 29 alumni helped 105 students with everything from starting out in the world of work to changing careers.

To support students like Yitang, register your interest in volunteering at bbk.ac.uk/alumni/help
HELPING WOMEN TO RECLAIM THEIR CITY
With increased media focus on violence against young women in Delhi, Pavni Kohli has embarked on a PhD to further our understanding of the lives of young women in India’s capital, the city where she grew up.

A research grant funded by a generous donor has helped her to pursue this goal. She says:

“Fear propagates more fear. I wanted to look beyond that fear and understand the true relationship that women have with the city. While families and society want to keep these women at home and shelter them from danger, I found that young women were determined to go out and claim their city.”

Pavni’s research is giving young women a voice in a debate traditionally dominated by men and raises awareness of the challenges that these women face in living freely in their own city.

*To support students like Pavni, donate online at bbk.ac.uk/donate*
TAILORING OUR MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT
Studying can be incredibly stressful, particularly for students balancing their studies with work, family and other commitments. For students living with mental health conditions, the pressure can be even more intense. This year, thanks to the Alumni Innovation Grant, we were able to trial a new programme to help our students to cope.

The Mind Body Matters Programme harnesses the beneficial effects that exercise is known to have on mental health conditions and provides an eight-week gym membership to students with depression or anxiety. It recognises that talking therapies are not right for everyone and complements the traditional offering of Birkbeck’s Counselling Service.

The programme has been hugely successful in supporting students to continue with their studies, with almost all participants finding it has helped them to adopt more positive steps for looking after their mental health. One student said: “I couldn’t leave the house previously, but it helped create a routine that was really helpful and increased my resilience.”

To support projects like this, donate online at bbk.ac.uk/donate
THANK YOU;
WITHOUT YOU, NONE
OF THIS WOULD
BE POSSIBLE

Sharmaine Malik
MSc Education, Power and Social Change
Sharmaine became passionate about the idea of education for all when working for an international education company based in Dubai. Upon her return to London, her professional experiences inspired her to apply for Birkbeck’s MSc Education, Power and Social Change, a course that she could not have taken without the support of a postgraduate bursary. She says:

“The MSc has challenged me to critically analyse and research issues that are often sensitive, controversial and disruptive to the status quo. It has allowed me to deepen my understanding of how injustices and inequalities exist and prevail, and, more than that, has given me the knowledge to help to remedy these issues, support those most in need and foster positive societal change. The bursary has paved the way to me achieving that long term goal and so I want to say ‘thank you’; without you, none of this would be possible.”

Sharmaine was one of 77 Master’s students supported by donations to Birkbeck last year.

To support students like Sharmaine, donate online at bbk.ac.uk/donate
IF MONEY WAS A BARRIER, THE WORLD WOULD MISS OUT ON SO MANY NEW IDEAS

Christine Ozolins
MSc Cognitive Neuroscience and Neuropsychology
Christine had to leave school at 15 but always wanted to return to education. She enrolled on our BSc Psychology in 2012 and soon realised that she wanted to keep studying.

Thanks to the generosity of a former Birkbeck student, who left a gift to the College in her will, we were able to offer Christine the Kenway Legacy Scholarship to continue her studies. In April, she will graduate from our MSc Cognitive Neuroscience and Neuropsychology with distinction. She says:

“I’d love to build on my Master’s research at PhD level by working on an EEG neurofeedback intervention to decrease stress and increase resilience in junior doctors. I believe my research is unique and if money was a barrier to study, for me or anyone else, the world would miss out on so many new ideas.”

Gifts in people’s wills help us to secure the College’s future, so that students like Christine will always have the chance to study at Birkbeck.

To support students like Christine, donate online at bbk.ac.uk/donate
We are proud to teach students as motivated, talented and ambitious as those you have read about here. If we are to continue to attract students like them, we need to offer them not only a world-class education but world-class facilities in which to study, away from the stresses of their busy lives. This year, we will begin work on a state-of-the-art teaching centre on the Euston Road, which will provide our students with just that.

The building will boast one of Birkbeck’s largest lecture theatres and classrooms that are equipped with lecture-capture technology, meaning that students can revisit their lectures wherever and whenever they want. At the heart of the building, a large breakout space will allow students to come together in a way that no other Birkbeck building does, giving them a place to prepare for their lectures, exchange ideas and push one another to be their best. We look forward to welcoming students to the building in the 2020–2021 academic year.

*To support projects like this, donate online at bbk.ac.uk/donate*