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More than 3,500 children visit the Focus-Abengoa Foundation thanks to its cultural and educational volunteer program

- University of Seville students, previously trained by the Focus-Abengoa Foundation, guided the visits
- The objective for the 2011-2012 academic year is to double the number of students that come to workshops and guided visits

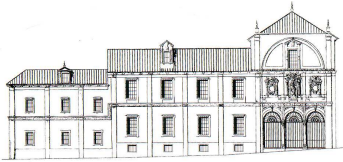
Seville, 4 November 2011. The Focus-Abengoa Foundation, in collaboration with volunteer students from the University of Seville, has been organising children's workshops and guided school visits of the Velázquez Centre and Foundation's headquarters in the Hospital de los Venerables, for the last two years. These activities have been taking place since last year following the creation of the Velázquez Centre. Last year the initiative involved a total of 3,500 children from schools across the province of Seville, who had the opportunity to see the exhibitions on show and to learn from the university volunteers.

For the 2011-2012 academic year, the Focus-Abengoa Foundation plans to redesign its activities and educational visits in order to provide a more tailored experience for students. The main objectives of the educational program are to educate and inform students about its collections in an entertaining and fun way, while stimulating their creativity, curiosity and critical expression.

The workshop visits are designed for children between 4 and 6 years of age and consist of a tour of the Velázquez Centre ending with an activity workshop in which the educators encourage the children's creative abilities through painting, as done in Velázquez's time, as well as making saucers and plates from clay, emulating the Santa Rufina's profession as a potter, and which the children take home as a keepsake. Students in obligatory secondary education have the opportunity to take a guided visit that includes a tour of the Velázquez Centre and the Hospital de los Venerables, during which they are encouraged to participate.

For the volunteers, "the Foundation offers the opportunity to enrich yourself through these school visits, both personally and professionally, which also shows you how you can help children and young people to learn and improve themselves", says Jorge Romero, an art history student and a volunteer in the school visits program last year. Jorge goes on to say that, "pupils don't think of it as just another outing, since for many of the children is it their first experience of a museum and being responsible for their learning though the exhibition is a great opportunity for the volunteers".

This year the Focus-Abengoa Foundation plans to develop the workshop and guided visits with a trained educator, who will hold a degree in art history, teaching or teacher training,



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and who will be accompanied by a volunteer, who has received free training from the Foundation. There will also be a dedicated coordinator from the Foundation.

In addition to educating students, during the 2011-2012 academic year the Foundation plans to restart the program of guided visits using mature culture volunteers. This project has already been tried out in previous years and will once again be included as part of the cultural program for this year.

The Foundation's volunteer education work has now extended to include visits to the Campus Focus-Abengoa on the Casa Quemada estate, alongside Abengoa's major solar energy project. In this initial phase, visits will be for students in obligatory secondary education and at baccalaureate level. The whole of the tour of the Campus Focus-Abengoa is designed to educate visitors about our environment, explaining the different values and the most important content.

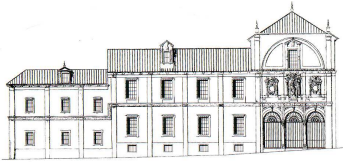
A commitment to educating and training students and the general public is one of the defining characteristics of the Focus-Abengoa Foundation, which has given rise to numerous projects, such as the workshop visits that aim to contribute to teaching about art and culture, and which can revitalise artistic works providing new ways of showcasing them.

The educational activities include instructive organ auditions for school children. Indeed, this was the first initiative that the Foundation used to launch its educational program and which, significantly, is supported by José Enrique Ayarra, titular organist of Seville cathedral and the Hospital de los Venerables

The Focus-Abengoa Foundation is constantly coming up with initiatives that promote culture, research, education and scientific-cultural dissemination. Based on the assumption that societies cannot progress without education, the Focus-Abengoa Foundation takes a multidisciplinary approach to this subject. Its grants, workshops and forums are all used by the Foundation to promote flexibility, the plurality of options as well as the right conditions for accessing education in all forms and at every level.

Focus-Abengoa Foundation

The Focus-Abengoa Foundation was created in 1982 as a result of the cultural work begun in 1972 by Abengoa with the publication of the works *Temas Sevillanos* (Themes of Seville) and *Iconografía de Sevilla* (Iconography of Seville). A collection of documents, books and engravings on the Kingdom of Seville and by Sevillian authors was created during the same period. This initial cultural work showed Abengoa's directors the importance of the company's involvement in activities that directly benefit society, beyond the firm's core technology work, which led to the creation of the Seville Cultural Fund



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Foundation. The Hospital de los Venerables, a 17th century monument and the headquarters of the Focus-Abengoa Foundation in Seville, has housed the Diego Velázquez Research Centre, a leading institution for studying and disseminating the Baroque era and the Sevillian period of this universally renowned artist, since the acquisition of Velázquez's *Santa Rufina* by the Foundation in 2007.

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