



Bericht über das Studienabschlussstipendium der Maria-Ladenburger-Stiftung

I am an international student from Iran, pursuing my Master's degree in Microsystems Engineering here at the University of Freiburg. For my Master's thesis at Hahn-Schickard, I am developing a digital PCR Point-of-Care disk based on centrifugal microfluidics. This research combines molecular biology and engineering, to build a rapid, life-saving diagnostic tool, the kind of science that makes medical testing accessible when every second counts. But as I entered the final phase of my studies, my academic journey was met with devastating trials. In November, my father was diagnosed with a brain tumor. My wife and I made an emergency trip to Iran to be by his side. Tragically, despite all medical efforts, my father passed away two months ago. Navigating this profound grief was made infinitely harder by the brutal reality in Iran. Because of the Islamic government's aggressive censorship and severe internet blackouts, our family was completely cut off from the world. Compounded by the war situation my people have been facing in recent months, we were left in deep anxiety, unable to communicate with them or get reliable updates on my father's health. When we returned to Freiburg, we were emotionally shattered and facing a severe financial crisis. The emergency travel had emptied our savings. My wife and I were both working in a local café at the time, but the winter slowdown slashed our income. We faced immediate debts and basic survival costs. Because of my nationality, local banks denied me basic student loans. I felt completely stranded, watching my academic future slipping away just steps from the finish line. Yet, even in our darkest moments, I refused to let my dreams fade, and I pushed through to maintain a 1.6 GPA. That was when the Maria Ladenburger Foundation stepped in. By awarding me the final-phase graduation scholarship, you gave me a lifeline. Your generosity allowed me to clear my debts, cover our essential living costs, and lift an overwhelming burden from my shoulders. Because of you, I did not have to abandon my degree. Instead, I have been able to stand in the lab every day, fully focused on my scientific research. To the donors here tonight: please know that your contributions protect human dignity. In thinking about your impact, I am reminded of the beautiful words written by Maria Ladenburger in April 2016: „I often wonder, what will my children and grandchildren say about the times I lived and was young... If my children or grandchildren ask me at some point, what did you do to make the world develop in one direction, which you thought was right, then I want to be able to say at least that I have used the opportunities I had.“ I want to look at Maria's family and say: because of your courage and your choice to turn tragedy into a beacon of hope, Maria is changing the direction of the world. She changed the direction of my world. She gave a future back to a student who was about to lose everything. May her beautiful soul rest in eternal peace, and may you find comfort in knowing how vibrantly her light continues to shine through lives like mine. I deeply thank the Maria Ladenburger Foundation, the Association of Friends, and my academic supervisors for believing in me. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for helping me honor my father's memory by allowing me to finish what I started. Thank you very much.