

# Universities Report 2023

# The differential value of helping universities, people and businesses



"In 2023, we helped half a million people, supported over 7,000 businesses, and collaborated with more than 1,200 universities and academic institutions"

Societies that invest more in education are more inclusive, open, and diverse, create more opportunity for everyone, resolve conflicts better, and face future challenges more effectively. They are also able to grow more sustainably.

At Santander, we believe that investing some of our profit in education and talent is the best way to benefit society and our shareholders. Investing in talent is essential to foster competitive and dynamic economies, where individuals can choose a well-rounded education, professionals can develop throughout their career, and entrepreneurs can get the support they need to set up businesses, make them grow, and create jobs.

For the past 27 years, Santander Universities and Universia have invested in talent based on three pillars: education, employability, and entrepreneurship.

Santander Universities and Universia achieved a lot in 2023. We helped half a million people access training and professional opportunities that best fit their profiles and interests. We supported over 7,000 entrepreneurial projects, companies, and SMEs in launching and growing their businesses. And we contributed to digital transformation and sustainability through the global collaboration network we have with over 1,200 universities. This was made possible thanks to these core initiatives:

- *Santander Open Academy* and *Universia* which help people from all walks of life boost their employability.
- *Santander X*, which provides entrepreneurs with training and physical and virtual resources to learn, collaborate and develop their innovative entrepreneurial projects.
- And *MetaRed y Campus Digital*, which help universities digitalize and harness the full potential of new technologies.

In May 2023, we held the 5<sup>th</sup> Universia International Rectors' Summit, with over 700 university leaders, reflecting the transformative energy achieved through collaboration between universities for the benefit of their academic communities and broader society.

This report details Santander Universities' and Universia's activity in 2023.

I am very proud of the progress made. We will continue working to build a better world through education, employability, and entrepreneurship.

**Ana Botín**

Executive Chair Santander



# Universities Report 2023



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# Education, employability, and entrepreneurship are key for the progress of society

In today's dynamic global environment, the needs of the labour market changes at great speed. This pace of change requires people and businesses to adjust their ability to respond to new and emerging demands constantly in order to tackle the complex challenges facing our society.

**Education is a crucial pillar in providing the necessary preparation to respond to the changes and challenges we face.** Supporting universities as drivers of progress is key to stimulate the process of personal growth and creating a solid competency framework. It provides essential knowledge and skills such as critical thinking, problem solving and creativity.

The fast-paced changes to the labour market open up new professional opportunities that can only be seized with continuous training. By improving their skills, **individuals enhance their employability** and have more options to find or change jobs and improve their future prospects. This results in greater professional and personal satisfaction and an improvement in the economic situation of both individuals and society as a whole.

Anyone whose goal is to **launch their own business needs support to develop and grow their idea.** After all, creating new companies drives innovation and economic growth, as well as creating new jobs and promoting the development of our communities.

For all these reasons, **Banco Santander focuses support on three pillars: education, employability, and entrepreneurship, which are essential for individual and collective growth and lay the foundations of a prosperous, equitable future.** This unique, pioneering, and global initiative sets us apart from all other financial institutions in the world.

## 2023 highlights:

# 105

million euros invested

# 498,930

people and businesses helped

# 1,238

partner universities,  
institutions, and organizations

# 27 years

supporting education, employability,  
and entrepreneurship

**Commitment to investing 400 million euros between 2023 and 2026.**

**In 2023, we were recognised as one of the companies that is doing the most to change the world for the better, according to Fortune magazine's "Change the World" list.**





**Education**

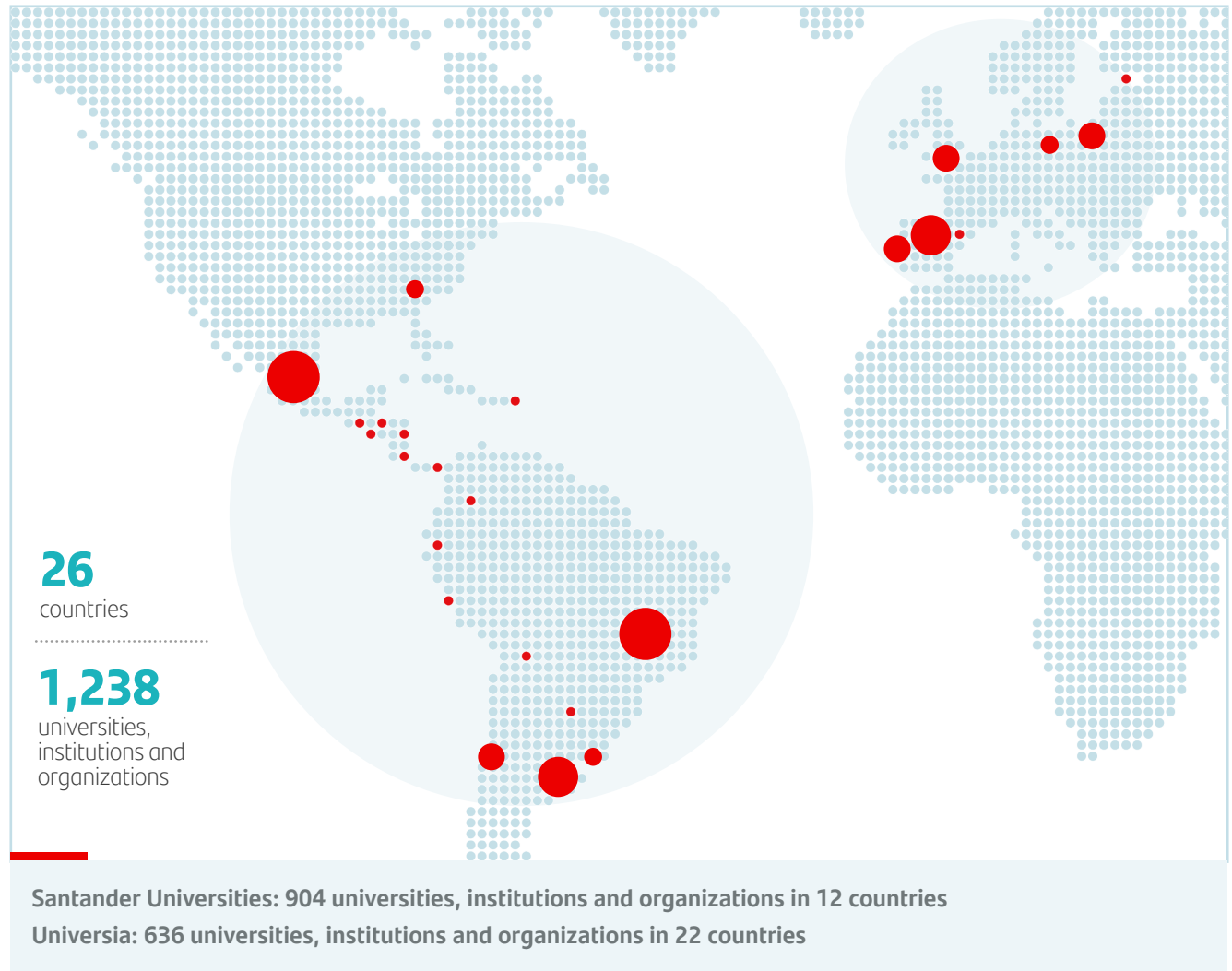
# A unique, global network of universities

The university ecosystem is the foundation for the progress of society. **Supporting universities is crucial for our communities to develop.**

Universities are a key player in the progress of society. We support them with initiatives that enable their growth, the development of peer-to-peer relationships, their adaptation to societal changes and demands, and their engagement with their student body.

With our educational support, we accompany universities through the transformation processes they undergo to adapt to the needs of the present and the future, particularly with the digitization of the institution itself and the entire academic community.

**We work with a unique, global network of universities**, which strengthens the power and quality of our course offerings which we build in collaboration with our partner universities.

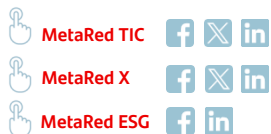


# MetaRed

Within MetaRed, a collaborative project that builds networks of information and communications technology (ICT) managers, Ibero-American universities find a space for joint reflection on the challenges they experience in terms of **digital transformation** (MetaRed TIC), **university entrepreneurship** (MetaRed X) and **sustainability** (MetaRed ESG).

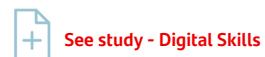
Its members include heads of private and state-owned higher education institutions in Ibero-America. This collaborative environment allows universities to share their experiences and learn from their peers and subject matter experts.

The **chairs of MetaRed TIC, MetaRed X and MetaRed ESG gathered for a special event** in 2023. The main goal of this initiative was to discuss the actions taken the previous year and to define the strategy for each network.



The **MetaRed Working Groups represent the essence of collaborative working**. They meet both in person and online: **MetaRed TIC** has teams focusing on Cybersecurity, Digital Maturity, Educational Technologies, Suppliers and Women in CIT; **MetaRed X** works on Entrepreneurial Indicators and Ecosystems, Best Practices and Training; and **MetaRed ESG** is centred around Sustainability, SDGs, Best Practices, Training and ESG Indicators.

2023 saw the publication of second editions of both studies on the *Maturity of Ibero-American Universities*, and on *Digital Skills*.



2023:

**+1,000**  
participating  
universities

**10**  
Ibero-American  
networks

**+7,700**  
participants



**+450**  
rectors

## Santiago García

Rector of Universidad Panamericana and Chair of MetaRed X Mexico



"MetaRed promotes and gives visibility to the efforts of universities with regards to entrepreneurship, in an collaborative environment where ideas are exchanged. It has become a relevant platform that helps to promote the enterprising mission of universities in Ibero-America".

## Esther Sánchez

Rector of Universidad Nacional de Cuyo and Chair of MetaRed ESG Argentina



"MetaRed ESG is a bridge, a helping hand that encourages Ibero-American universities to work together to face the challenge of incorporating sustainability into university policy and to keep moving towards the 2030 Agenda. We have to achieve this agenda in an urgent, sustained and fair manner".



# Campus Digital

Campus Digital makes universities processes more agile and personalises the daily communications of all university groups.

We offer universities an **innovative model to support and communicate with students through an easy and straightforward digital experience.**

The services on Campus Digital include digital credentials, tuition fee payment, class timetables, access to academic records, discounts, job offers, scholarships and training content.

As of today, we have 6 countries with the digital services of Campus Digital for Ibero-American

universities. Argentina was the last to join a group already consisting of Brazil, Chile, Spain, Mexico and Portugal.

Three large educational groups, one in Brazil and two in Mexico, are now part of the project, representing more than one million students.

We have new tools and services to manage campaigns and communications from the application, and universities can make personalised use of the features offered according to their needs.

2023:

6

countries

1,3

million users

206

universities



**Laymi Karian Márquez**

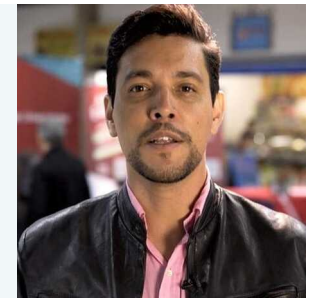
Student. Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco University, Mexico



"I have the information I need at my fingertips. It's an efficient and very useful application, which has helped me a lot to learn about everything that's happening at my university".

**Robson Medeiros**

Financial Director at UNIFAAT University Centre, Brazil



"Thanks to Campus Digital we have made all the services we have at the university accessible to students".

# 5<sup>th</sup> Universia International Rectors Meeting

The 5<sup>th</sup> Universia International Rectors Meeting took place in Valencia, Spain, under the slogan "University and Society". This event is now **one of the largest meetings of rectors in the world**, and an unprecedented forum for debate about the role of universities as a driving force for sustainable societal and economic development.

In an increasingly competitive and changing global world, universities play a key role enabling people to refresh and develop their professional skills throughout their lives. Universities have a vital mission as drivers of change through the promotion of innovative initiatives, and creation of new businesses. In order to tackle social challenges more successfully, collaboration between universities, and between universities and governments, industry and society as a whole, is crucial.

The findings of the meeting were published in the **Valencia Declaration**, which identified several spheres of action where universities can develop value propositions to bring about more sustainable social and economic progress for society, from education to research and innovation.

 [More information](#)

[See](#)  
"Valencia Declaration" 



 [See video](#)

**+700**  
academic leaders

**14**  
countries

**+4,500**  
students and entrepreneurs  
connected



**Ana Botín**  
Executive Chair of Banco Santander

"Banco Santander's continued support for universities, with a pledge to invest an extra 400 million euros between 2023 and 2026 in education, employability and entrepreneurship. There is no better social investment than education".

 [See video](#)



**Mavi Mestre**  
Rector of Universitat de València  
Chair of Academic Committee' meeting

"Spaces like the Universia International Rectors Meeting are extremely important for exchanging ideas, points of view, and experiences. Through such meetings we will be able to build more engaged universities and more prosperous societies".

 [See video](#)



**Employability**



# Santander Open Academy

## Life-long learning enables the development and improvement of professional skills and access to the labour market.

At Santander, we make training available to everyone to help improve employability. We all need to adapt as technologies and the labour market evolve.

2023:

**491,894\***

people helped

In 2023, 11 countries developed specific training programmes in line with their communities' needs.



Santander Open Academy

Through Santander Open Academy (formerly Santander Scholarships), our global learning and professional development platform, we offer access to training to improve people's professional skills and employability.

**We have expanded and developed our offerings with scholarships, courses and on-demand content**, which we regularly update according to the most sought-after skills currently in the labour market.



**Peter Dewey**

Santander Scholars Programme. University of East Anglia (United Kingdom)

"The scholarship was of **great help at a time when I faced financial and health-related challenges**. I was able to focus on recovering and continuing with my education, whilst having more breathing room financially".



**Salua Babeli**

Santander Equality Programme (Spain)

"**Receiving this scholarship was a surprise, I didn't think it could happen to me.** It has allowed me to continue studying what I want and be with my children. Not having to leave school... that has been a very big help".



**Amankay Romero**

Santander Young Leaders for Education Programme (Chile)

"The scholarship has provided a great opportunity to **access an international community** where I could share my ideas, build on them and turn them into projects".

\* This figure includes people helped through scholarship programs (28,849) and courses to promote employability (463,044).

### Featured global programmes

- **15,000 places to learn English online** and improve access to the labour market, offered in partnership with the British Council.
- **20,000 places to master Excel**, from basic knowledge to advanced levels.
- **More than 3,000 Erasmus Santander Scholarships**, of up to 1,000 euros, for university students in Germany, Spain, Poland and Portugal.
- **1,000 places for training in sustainability and climate change**, in partnership with Cambridge Judge Business School (CJBS).
- **1,000 places to learn about the three pillars of business management and leadership**, in partnership with London School of Economics and Political Science.
- **1,000 places to learn Mandarin, French, and German**, launched with 8Belts.
- **300 places to help drive innovation in teaching**, in partnership with Harvard Business Publishing Education.
- **50 places in Santander W50, a program to promote female leadership**, in partnership with the London School of Economics and Political Science.



**María Barrie**

Santander | SW50 Leadership Programme

"Santander W50 is an **exceptional and high-quality programme**. It has helped me to **develop my strengths**, recalibrate my priorities and think seriously about my leadership style".



See video



**Claudia Mondragón**

Santander | Innovation in Teaching Harvard Business Publishing Education

"I have gained a **panoramic view of the most advanced and efficient teaching techniques currently available**. It has helped me become a benchmark in education at my university".



See article

### Featured programmes by country

- **Germany - Santander Scholarships for Erasmus**, 850 scholarships offered in addition to the Erasmus scholarship.
- **Argentina - Santander Scholarships for undergraduates**, financial support to help high-performing students access university.
- **Brazil - Santander Bootcamp**, a course with 75,000 places, offering training in software development; and **Santander Coders**, a course with 120,000 places, offering specialised training in programming technology and languages.
- **Chile - Santander Scholarships for Undergraduate International Mobility**, for students to complete a school term at another university.
- **Spain - Santander Scholarships for Financial Support**, 1,000 euros to help students with university expenses; and **Santander Scholarships for Erasmus**, scholarships of 500 to 1,000 euros to supplement the Erasmus scholarship.
- **Mexico - Santander Scholarships to Support Permanence**, providing financial support to enable students to stay at university.
- **Poland - Santander | Python, SQL & BI with UEW**, training in analytical communication, SQL language for data analysts, and programming in Python language; and **Santander | Investing in the stock market SGH & GPW**, a course focused on training in investing, how the capital market works, and how to assess risk.
- **Portugal - Santander Scholarships for university support**, scholarships of 700 to 1,000 euros to help students stay at university.
- **United Kingdom - Santander Scholars Programme**, support for 100 undergraduate students, providing £30,000 funding (£10,000 per year) for three years alongside training and professional development opportunities.
- **Uruguay - Santander Scholarships for International Experience by Udelar**, for students with the best academic results to enable them to complete an intensive course in Spain.



**Stephany Silva**

Santander | Bootcamp for Software Developers, Full Stack Online Bootcamp (Brazil)

"**Getting a place on this course has changed my life**. I joined a community that was welcoming and I met people who gave me a lot of support. The training I received was **high-quality** and it helped me to get a job at Santander as a programmer".

# Universia

Finding the right job to maximise your knowledge and skills is as important as having the skills in the first place. Every individual should have the opportunity to find roles at companies that will help them develop at every stage of their career.

With Universia, **we help universities and training centres connect their junior talent to companies** so that they can secure employment.

Universia has become a leading platform for university students and young professionals who are looking for a job in industries including software, engineering, health, finance, and administration.

## 2023:

**636**

universities in 22 countries

**190**

jobs websites implemented in universities

**+ 37,000**

job offers offered

**+ 2,700**

young people have joined the labour market through Universia



We offer guidance to enhance employability, along with AI-based tools, enabling students to effectively craft their CVs and cover letters.

In 2023, we worked together with leading companies to develop challenges to help them to identify talent. We also continued connecting new talent to job opportunities through various employability initiatives.

In Spain, two initiatives stand out: **Metaworking**, a gamified competition aimed at STEM profiles that uses video games as a tool to assess professional digital skills; and **Top Talent**, where young people learn about companies and job opportunities in their region.

With **Jobs Together**, companies and universities meet to share best practices and discuss ideas on how to improve the employability of junior talent.

**Brazil** hosted a new edition of **Preparadão**, one of the biggest job fairs for students. More than 2,000 people and dozens of Brazilian companies attended the event.

**Blanca Costa**

Senior Manager for Education and Knowledge at Fundación Repsol

"Collaborating with Universia to develop our university challenge has allowed us to reach all Spanish universities, **encourage knowledge exchange and create great job opportunities for young talent**".

**Ricardo Rejas**

General Secretary of Universidad Camilo José Cela

"Our participation in Universia's Jobs Together makes it easier to get to know universities and businesses and to **identify opportunities to collaborate to make progress towards promoting employability among our students**".



# Fundación Universia

Through Fundación Universia, we seek to drive **diversity, inclusion and equality in educational and workplace environments**. We are committed to supporting the progress of people with disabilities and other groups at risk of exclusion on their path towards educational development and increased employability.

We are international leaders in the subject areas of diversity, equality and inclusion, with active participation in international forums run by the United Nations, the International Labour Organization and UNESCO.

Guided by our commitment to equal opportunities, we promote continuous global and digital learning by offering **training programmes, scholarships, internships, job opportunities, and mentoring**.

2023 saw the publication of the **6<sup>th</sup> Study on the Inclusion of People with Disabilities in the Spanish University System**. The study showed that 60% of students with disabilities believed that they will have more difficulties finding a job when they finish their university degree than their peers.

[See study](#)

Given the shortage of technological talent, we have launched privately and state-funded training programmes in digital skills to improve the employability of STEM profiles students with disabilities.

We also have the **Plan Circular**, providing access to digital skills training, which is certified by the European Investment Fund.

2023:

**475**

scholarships for university students with disabilities

**50**

people with disabilities hired by companies, with full and productive employment

**160**

people helped through the Plan Circular



**Mar Roca**

Fundación Universia Scholarship

**"The scholarship I received has been really helpful. During my PhD, I was able to travel to the German Airspace Centre to develop technology to monitor and map the Mediterranean seabed".**



**Olamar Benavente**

Fundación Universia Scholarship

**"Fundación Universia has been by my side for all four years of my university degree. I needed assistance with reading, attending lectures,... and I could pay for this special assistance thanks to the scholarship".**



**Entrepreneurship**

# Santander X

We help business owners and small to medium-sized enterprises to create opportunities, become stronger and grow.

At Santander X, we have **programmes for entrepreneurs at all stages of their business journey**, offering access to the training, support and resources they need to develop and scale.

With challenges and awards intended to raise the profile of the top projects in the countries, Santander X's growing global community of entrepreneurs also provides an opportunity for individuals to connect with other businesses and stakeholders in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

We support **entrepreneurial projects, startups, scaleups and SMEs** through programmes and initiatives adapted to their needs.

2023

## 7,036

entrepreneurship and business initiatives helped



Santander X

**Santander X Explorer** launched two further editions. For 14 years, we have offered online training in entrepreneurial skills to transform ideas into viable business.


[See video](#)

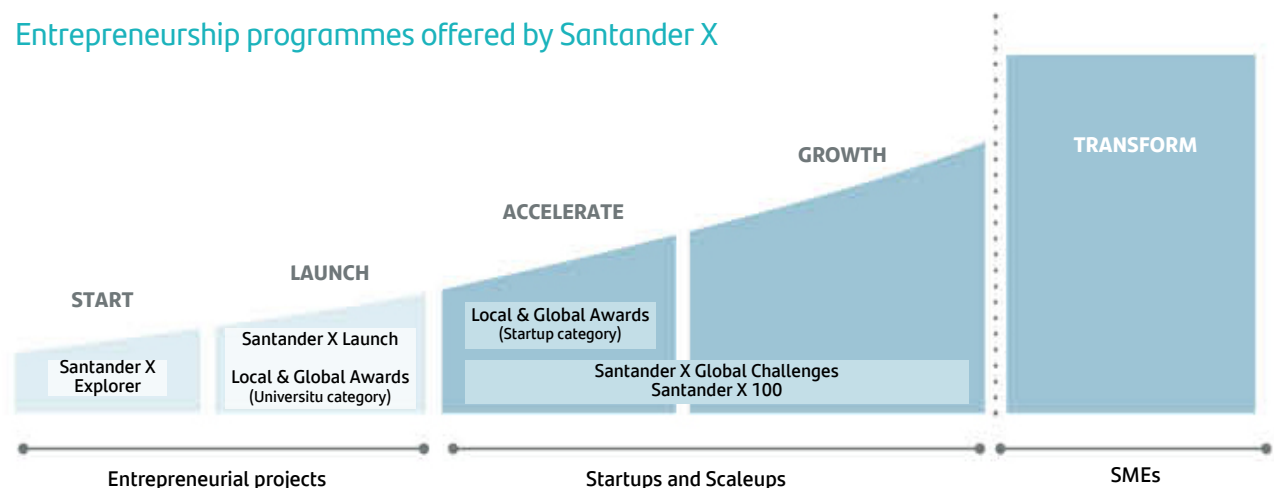
We launched new editions of **Santander X local awards** in 9 countries, and **receiving more than 3,800 submissions** globally. The winners competed in the **Santander X Global Award**, where they had the opportunity to win 60,000 euros in prize money and access to the Santander X 100, our exclusive community which connects members with the resources that they need to grow.



Winners of 'Accelerate' category - Santander X Global Award


[See video](#)

## Entrepreneurship programmes offered by Santander X





Over the course of the year, we hosted **three global challenges in 11 countries** to identify innovative solutions tackling some of the most important issues facing society. The winners received 120,000 euros in cash prize and access to Santander X 100. **Over 1,000 companies have participated.**

**Santander X Global Challenge | The AI Revolution**, run in partnership with Microsoft, sought innovative Artificial Intelligence companies looking to have a positive impact on society.



**Santander X Global Challenge | Cyberprotect the Future**, identified cutting-edge ideas to tackle cybersecurity challenges.



**Santander X Global Challenge | Transforming the Digital Economy**, a challenge for innovative solutions to help transform the economy using the Internet of Things (IoT) and SMART technologies.

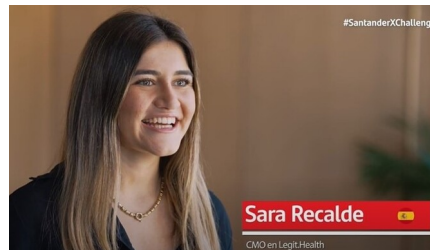


We also held an event, at the Web Summit in Lisbon which was attended by more than 35 companies from Santander X 100.



**Leonardo Von Prellwitz**  
Head of Growth en Calypso AI

*Santander X Global Challenge | Cyberprotect the Future*  
"Participating in this challenge has led us to rethink how we approach the market and has opened up doors to help us keep progressing".



**Sara Recalde**  
CMO at Legit Health

*Santander X Global Challenge | The AI Revolution*  
"This recognition is further testament to our work in health and AI. **We want to be a part of this community to help us scale our business**".



**Alan Ventura**  
CEO and Cofounder of Biogrip Revolutionary Bionics

*Santander X Global Challenge | The AI Revolution*  
"Wining **this award enables us to advance our technological development** to improve the connections between the prosthesis and the human body with a view to restoring people's sense of touch".



"In Santander Universities and Universia we focus support on three pillars: education, employability, and entrepreneurship, which are essential for the growth of our communities and lay the foundations of a prosperous, and equitable future.

This unique, pioneering, and global initiative sets us apart from all other financial institutions in the world."

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**Javier Roglá**

Global Head of Santander Universities  
CEO of Universia

