

María López Iglesias was born in Mieres, Spain in 1963 into an Asturian family of seven siblings. Her father's work as a doctor led her to move from Mieres to Salamanca at a young age, however, she later moved to Alicante where she has since lived and spent her entire professional life.

María studied at the San Juan Bosco School in Salamanca and subsequently at the Jesús-María Ceu School in Alicante.

María studied 'Information and Tourism' at the Tourism Department in Alicante between 1981-1984, and later complemented her studies by completing a course in 'Protocol' at the International School of Protocol of the Miguel Hernández University of Elche in Alicante (UMH) between 2002-2003.

María has held various professional positions throughout her life including the title of 'Assistant Manager' at both the Hotel Meliá Alicante, as well as at the Hotel Sidi San Juan. As her career progressed, she relocated into the banking sector where she became branch manager of Mapfre Bank in Alicante.

In 1996, María left her position at Mapfre Bank in order to create, together with her husband, the 'Jorge Alió Foundation for the Prevention of Blindness' where she immediately adopted the role as Executive President, a position she has held ever since.

As acting Executive President, María López has developed a well-coordinated organisation built upon six key pillars, each of which implements the basic principles of the Foundation:

- **Health Division:** prevention of eye disease campaigns aimed at different groups of the population, eye care campaigns, glaucoma, the elderly
- **Teaching and Training Division:** collaboration with two universities (University of Alicante and UMH) to provide optometry and ophthalmology training, organisation of ophthalmology conferences (such as the '98 Spanish Ophthalmology Society conference), and the coordination of another fifteen continuous training ophthalmology conferences. In addition, the Foundation also prepares events for partnerships between public and private institutions located in Alicante, nationally and internationally.
- **I+D+I Division:** participation in epidemiological study on cases of visual impairment, presented at various national and international scientific congresses. .
- **Culture Division:** collaboration in cultural and social activities with other institutions and foundations such as the European Defence Agency and the Alicante Artists Association. In 1998, the Miradas Visual Arts Contest was created with the aim of promoting awareness of the prevention of blindness within our society. It has since then received more than 1000 artworks in successive editions. Artworks from the competition have been featured on the cover of the Journal of Refractive Surgery (JRS) every month since 2005.
- **International Cooperation Division:** the greatest achievement of the Jorge Alió Foundation is the development of a humanitarian ophthalmological care service in the city of Nouadhibou, Mauritania where, over the course of 14 expeditions, an ophthalmological care unit has been created. The creation of this care unit was

followed by the establishment of the Basic Ophthalmological Care Unit (UBASO) in 2010, and the establishment of the Noadhibou Vision Centre in 2017. They are both currently managed by the Nouadhibou Vision Foundation, of which Miradas is a member.

- **Volunteering Division:** this division has an agreement with universities, entities (such as the Rotary Club of Alicante), and other companies to carry out projects with the participation of volunteers. These activities include the Mauritania project (mentioned above) and campaigns for the early detection of visual anomalies.

María López has received several awards and distinctions including the award for 'Women working in the Social Field' from the Popular Party Institute for Women (2006), member of the 'Paul Harris Society' of the International Rotary Club (2009-2010), the 'Grand Laureate Cross' of Alfonso XIII (2018), and the 'Dame Commander of the National Monarchist Sisterhood' of Spain (2019).

On behalf of the Foundation she directs, María López has received numerous distinctions such as the 'Diploma of the Saharawi Association' of the Province of Alicante for her collaboration and solidarity with the Saharawi people (2001), appointment as 'Cooperator of Merit' of the Barraquer Institute for her work carried out in the sector of International Cooperation (2007), the Dr. Balmis 'Medal of Honour' in the Scientific Field, awarded by the Scientific, Literary and Artistic Athenaeum of Alicante (2005), the Gold Medal from the International School of Protocol of the Miguel Hernández University of Elche in Alicante (2006), the 'San Alberto Magno Award' of the University of Alicante for the collaboration in different programmes of the Faculty of Sciences (2009), Recognition from the Faculty of Science of the University of Alicante for collaboration in internship programmes for students of the School of Optics and Optometry, Postgraduate, and Master's Scholarships (2009), and the 'SIMA Award' from the Marfan Syndrome Association for collaboration in eye prevention campaigns for this body (2010), among others.

María López speaks English and French and loves culture and social topics. She is a member of many social associations such as Amurada, and cultural associations such as Espejo de Alicante and Numen. Her hobbies include languages, protocol training, playing the piano, cycling, shooting and water sports.

María is mother of two children, Fernando and María, who are also members of the Board of Trustees of the Jorge Alió Foundation.