

Press release of April 6, 2020, Lausanne/Zurich, Switzerland

1 Million Swiss francs for science: with its Science Booster channel, wemakeit.com has helped scientists in Switzerland raise funds from the public to turn their unconventional ideas into reality.

Over the past ten years, crowdfunding has become a popular way for projects to collect financial help. It is now an integral part of how the public supports artists and entrepreneurs. Many initiatives that would otherwise never have seen the light of day were made possible through generous support from family, friends and complete strangers.

Artists, entrepreneurs? How about scientists? Before wemakeit.com opened the Science Booster channel in January 2017, there were very few campaigns promoting science projects. Mirko Bischofberger and Luc Henry initially launched the initiative to see whether the public would be interested in helping academic researchers specifically, and learn more about their work in the process as a reward. Céline Fallet, Managing Director at wemakeit is thrilled by the results of this collaboration. «[With the Science Booster, Mirko and Luc have managed to build up and establish this new topic on our platform. Science projects are now an integral part of the wemakeit project portfolio. They have done great pioneering work.](#)»

1 Million Swiss francs raised over three years

Over the past three years, about 7000 people have supported 75 science projects for a total of over 1 million Swiss francs. It is an important milestone which confirms that the public is curious and keen to help professionals, but also amateurs, share their passion for science while making new discoveries.

The very first project to launch in February 2017 was modest in size. But it set the tone: 18-year old high school student Chiara raised a little over CHF 1'500.- for her thesis (Maturaarbeit) from about thirty of her acquaintances, to study the potential of urban gardening in the city of Luzern. Since then, university professors, science educators and passionate amateurs joined the crowd, leading to an astonishing diversity of people behind each project. «[We never expected ideas would come from such different people, and address such a variety of scientific topics](#)», says Mirko Bischofberger.

An exciting adventure in science communication

To help scientists fund and communicate their ideas, Mirko and Luc have been coaching the projects submitted to the Science Booster program to maximise their chances of success. After spending several years in research, science policy and communication, they realised that in a majority of cases, science projects receive large budgets and require long-term commitments. Support from the Science Booster team gave projects from within and outside academic institutions a chance to actively engage with the public in an original way and rapidly raise smaller funds to test unconventional scientific ideas.

«We now want to learn from these first three years», says Luc Henry. «We have partnered with researchers in communication from the University of Zürich to run a survey and find out what are the motivations of backers, and what they have learnt through supporting one or more science project on wemakeit.com. We will share the results as soon as we have them.»

A partnership to make science accessible to all

To kick-start the Science Booster initiative, generous support was provided the Gebert Rüt Foundation through its «Scientainment» program, allowing the 50+ successful campaigns to receive an additional CHF 375,000.- distributed as matching funds over the past three years. «The Science Booster is an extraordinary success story,» says Marco Vencato, Deputy Director of the Gebert Rüt Foundation. «One million francs represents a threefold leverage of the funding we provided, but more importantly, crowdfunding has shown to be a powerful tool to engage a new and broad public with science and innovation.»

You can discover projects or launch your own crowdfunding campaign here: science.wemakeit.com.

For additional information, please contact the project initiators:

Mirko Bischofberger (DE/EN) // +41 78 936 10 93

Luc Henry (FR/EN) // +41 76 693 23 00

science@wemakeit.com

About wemakeit

wemakeit was founded in Switzerland in February 2012 and has quickly developed into one of the largest crowdfunding platforms in Europe. It offers creatives the possibility to introduce their project ideas to a large online community and to finance it with the help of a big crowd of backers. In addition to offices in Zurich, Lausanne and Bellinzona, wemakeit is also present in Vienna and reaches an international community with its platform available in four languages (de/en/fr/it). Launched as a cultural initiative, wemakeit is now open for crowdfunding projects from all sectors. To date, 333'924 supporters have financed over 4'250 projects with 52.2 million Swiss francs.