



**UZH FOUNDATION**  
The Foundation of the University of Zurich

# INSPIRATIO

Supporting with heart and mind



#12

Inclusive  
Annual report

Cover picture

## On the pulse of research

Joëlle Metzger (left) and Michèle Hubli from the Spinal Cord Injury Center at Balgrist University Hospital present the progress of their scientific work to Christian Rahn from Rahn+Bodmer Co. Their research focuses on the interactions between pain and the cardiovascular system in individuals with neuropathic pain. Neuropathic pain is a severe chronic condition affecting around half of all people with spinal cord injuries. It is caused by nerve damage and is difficult to treat due to its complexity. Rahn+Bodmer Co. is supporting this research with a donation. Read more about the story behind this commitment from page 16 onwards.

## Dear reader



Would you climb the Matterhorn alone and without any help? Probably not. Similarly, researchers cannot bring their ideas to life on their own. Science thrives on collaboration. International teams work hand in hand, connecting across the globe and sharing the fruits of their labor. But for research to flourish, it requires targeted support. In addition to fostering top talent, funding research is the key to success. Donations from individuals, foundations, and companies are playing an increasingly vital role in this effort.

As a dedicated supporter, you are an indispensable part of these activities. Together with researchers, you help build something new — whether in climate research in the Arctic, microbiology to combat antibiotic resistance, or the development of a natural form of plant protection. Your contributions make these projects possible, creating a tangible and lasting impact.

Beyond funding individual research projects, long-term partnerships with companies and foundations are essential. A prime example is the collaboration with Rahn+Bodmer Co., which has significantly strengthened the field of neuroscience (more on this starting on page 16). Another remarkable highlight is a generous bequest from the Irene M. Staehelin Foundation, which enabled the establishment of two professorships dedicated to studying systemic discrimination against women and gender-based violence (more on this starting on page 14).

The future of research funding is built on collaboration, true to the motto “Better together.” The Mercator Foundation Switzerland is already embracing this approach, and we at the UZH Foundation are also committed to developing groundbreaking ideas in partnership with the right supporters (more on this on page 19).

We all share a responsibility — and an opportunity — to make a difference. You, too, can be part of this movement. Join researchers on their journey of discovery. We look forward to many engaging and inspiring exchanges with you. Together, no mountain is too high, and no path too far.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has supported the University of Zurich — and to all who will continue to do so in the future!

Christian Wenger  
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

Annelise Alig Anderhalden  
CEO

# Highlights

## Strengthening international cooperation

To foster collaboration in global change and biodiversity research, we visited key partners in Washington alongside UZH President Michael Schaepman and a group of UZH researchers. The discussions focused on the pressing challenges of biodiversity loss and how UZH can contribute its expertise to address these issues.



## UZH-LGT Foundation Conference

In collaboration with LGT Bank, we hosted the first foundation conference at UZH. Under the theme "Impact with Foresight", more than 40 foundation representatives gathered to discuss the future of philanthropy and the foundation system. His Serene Highness Prince Max von Liechtenstein (pictured left, with Rector Schaepman) and UZH professors Dominique Jakob and Abraham Bernstein shared insights on philanthropy, foundation law, and artificial intelligence.

## New professorship for mobility

In partnership with the Emil Frey Group, UZH is establishing the "Center for the Future of Personal Mobility". At its core will be a newly created professorship in "Personal Mobility Management and Innovation", laying the foundation for the next generation of personal mobility.



## Dies academicus

At the Dies academicus on May 16, the Walter and Gertrud Siegenthaler Foundation will award three prestigious prizes to support young researchers at the Faculty of Medicine: a research scholarship, a science prize, and a return scholarship.



*Thank you for your donations, which have made these highlights possible!*



## Excellent teamwork

Viktoria Cologna and Niels Mede received the UZH Postdoc Team Award for their interdisciplinary research on global trust and populist skepticism. This award was made possible by a generous donation from a UZH alumnus to the UZH Foundation.

## Awarding of the first Innovation Grants

The UZH Innovation Hub awarded its first Innovation Grants to Céline Portenier and Malwina Kowalska. Céline Portenier is leveraging machine learning for more precise environmental monitoring, while Malwina Kowalska is developing "Plantipolis", an innovative approach to enhancing urban biodiversity. These grants were made possible through the support of the Ernst Göhner Foundation.



## Annual "Giving Back" event

On June 18, friends, alumnae, and alumni of UZH will once again gather for our annual "Giving Back" event. The program will feature exciting research insights, followed by engaging discussions with inspiring personalities.

## Gretener-Thürlemann Prize of the UZH

On December 3, the Gretener-Thürlemann Prize will be awarded for the first time at UZH. The prize honors outstanding scientists for their fundamental and groundbreaking research in the fields of medicine, chemistry and physics. With an endowment of 500,000 Swiss francs, it is the largest prize awarded at UZH.





## For Food Security and a Healthy Life

Pests and droughts threaten harvests and our health worldwide. A research team at the University of Zurich (UZH) is investigating how plants can become more resistant to external influences by strengthening their immune system. The aim is healthy agriculture without pesticides — and thus food security for all.

Climate change and global population growth pose major challenges to our food security and the health of all living beings. Addressing these challenges will require sustainably producing enough nutritious and safe food while maintaining the health of humans and animals. However, the land available and suitable for agriculture is becoming increasingly scarce. At the same time, public attitudes toward the use of pesticides have changed fundamentally and become more critical. Consumer demand for pesticide-free products is increasing, while more and more active substances are being banned in production. As a result, farmers — in Switzerland and around the world — are struggling with crop losses amounting to billions of Swiss francs because pests and climate change are destroying large proportions of their harvests.

### Pathogens and Climate Change as Threats

It is not only pests and pathogens that threaten harvests — extreme weather events such as droughts are also increasingly affecting agriculture. Every year, up to 40 percent of food crops are lost; in the last ten years alone, droughts have caused global losses in crop production amounting to 28 billion Swiss francs.

As with crops, infectious diseases in humans and animals are also on the rise. The main drivers of these threats are climate change and the increasing movement of people and goods. The World Health Organization (WHO) lists antibiotic resistance as one of the ten greatest challenges facing humanity. In both contexts—agriculture and medicine—plant molecules can be the answer.

Prof. Dr. Cyril Zipfel, Vice Director of the Institute of Plant and Microbiology at UZH, examines a sample in his laboratory.

**“The production of secreted signal peptides, which strengthen the immune system of plants or kill microbes directly, enables plants to react to their constantly changing environment.”**

Prof. Dr. Cyril Zipfel, Vice Director, Institute of Plant and Microbiology, UZH

### One Health Institute with a Holistic Research Approach

As we can see, agriculture, the animal world, and humans face similar challenges. The One Health Institute at UZH provides an ideal basis for tackling such global problems holistically. This interdisciplinary center ensures that all life forms and organisms can benefit from the solutions developed. Professor Zipfel's research project will extend its impact beyond the plant world, also contributing to the advancement of the One Health approach.

Find out more:  
[www.onehealth.uzh.ch/en](http://www.onehealth.uzh.ch/en)

**“The biological diversity of secreted signal peptides is still largely unexplored, as are their applications in agriculture and medicine.”**

Prof. Dr. Cyril Zipfel, Vice Director, Institute of Plant and Microbiology, UZH

**The Plant-Based Immune System as a Solution**

By strengthening the plant immune system via so-called secreted signal peptides, the use of pesticides could be greatly reduced, and crop failures due to pests or droughts could be minimized. UZH professor Cyril Zipfel is researching how plant peptides could not only improve the growth and resilience of plants but also offer a promising alternative to antibiotics and pesticides.

In a first step, the UZH research team is isolating natural signaling and antimicrobial peptides that plants produce in response to stress. These will then be used as natural tonics in a further step—either preventively or as soon as the disease occurs, such as in combating bacteria and fungi—with the aim of activating the plants' immune system at a molecular level. This enables plants to protect themselves against pests and environmental influences on their own: a natural self-protection that strengthens the plant from the inside out.

Initial studies also show that these peptides not only trigger positive properties in plants but also in humans and animals, naturally improving immune responses. Thanks to these findings, innovative solutions in medicine, such as more targeted therapies or new types of medication, could be developed in the future.

**Support Now**

Would you like to get involved? Join UZH in making the inner strength of plants blossom. Get in touch with us:

[www.uzhfoundation.ch/en/plant-derived-peptides](http://www.uzhfoundation.ch/en/plant-derived-peptides)



Prof. Dr. Zipfel and his team are investigating how to strengthen the immune system of plants.



# Fighting Super Germs with a Natural Substance from Insects

Antibiotic resistance claims up to five million lives worldwide each year—and this number is steadily rising. Without the development of new treatments, we may soon face a future where effective antibiotics are no longer available. The University of Zurich (UZH) has already laid the groundwork for a promising new drug, which is now being advanced for use in precision medicine.



Microscopic image of a methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*.

**Thanatin: A Natural Substance with Potential**

In 2018, Professor Oliver Zerbe and his team of researchers from UZH and ETH Zurich made a groundbreaking discovery: they found that a protein called thanatin, produced by stink bugs, halts bacterial growth, causing the bacteria to die. Based on this breakthrough, the researchers are now developing a novel approach to combat multi-resistant pathogens.

Further studies have shown that thanatin-based molecules not only effectively target resistant bacteria but also slow the development of resistance. Unlike conventional antibiotics, these specific compounds focus on certain classes of bacteria, thereby protecting the microbiome. They are also non-toxic, minimizing the strain on internal organs when administered.

At UZH, the necessary expertise and patents are in place to advance these substances. In collaboration with teams from medical microbiology, plant microbiology, and the One Health Institute, Professor Zerbe is working to further develop this thanatin-based platform to address all bacteria classified as critical by the WHO.

The overuse and misuse of antibiotics in human and veterinary medicine, as well as in agriculture, have led to the emergence of increasingly resistant pathogens. The World Health Organization (WHO) has compiled a list of particularly resistant bacteria and has highlighted the issue of “super germs” as one of the greatest challenges of our time. This crisis impacts all regions and social classes, though young children and the elderly are particularly vulnerable.

If targeted research investments are not made, the future of antibiotics could be bleak, with devastating consequences for those affected.

**“This new class of innovative antibiotics will be gentle on humans while effectively combating multi-resistant bacteria.”**

Prof. Dr. Oliver Zerbe, Head of the Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) Laboratory at UZH

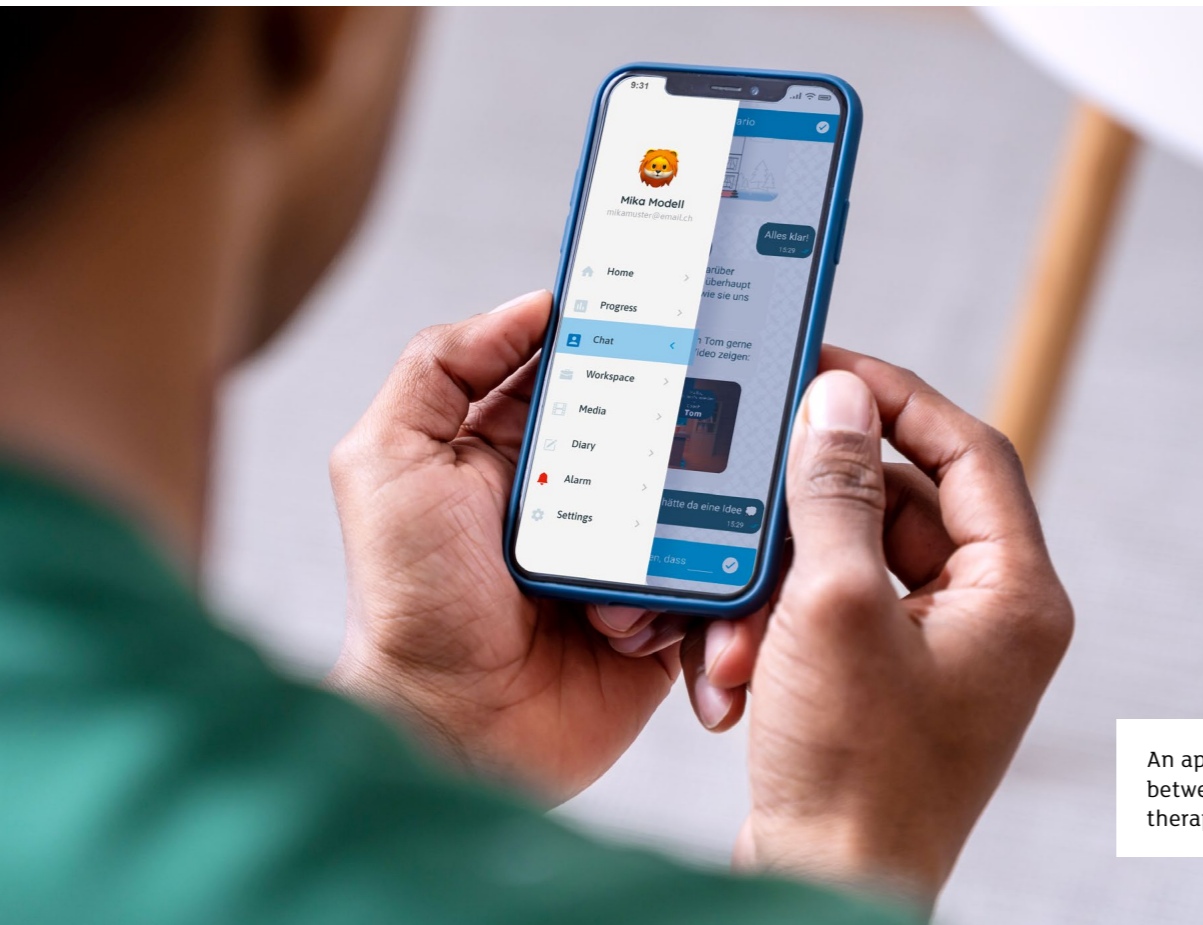
**Support Now**

Our experts at UZH are on the verge of developing the next generation of antibiotics. Would you like to contribute to this vital work? Your donation can make a difference.

Thank you for your support!

[www.uzhfoundation.ch/en/supergerms](http://www.uzhfoundation.ch/en/supergerms)





An app supports patients between their in-person therapy sessions.

## Rethinking Therapy: New Paths for Mental Health

Emotional disorders place a significant strain on those affected, as well as on their families and communities. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), depression is projected to become the leading cause of disease worldwide by 2030. In Switzerland, annual costs of approximately eight billion Swiss francs are already associated with depression. The Psychiatric University Hospital Zurich (PUK) is dedicated to finding innovative solutions to counter these trends.

The number of inpatient treatments at the PUK has risen considerably in recent years, and to maintain the efficiency of therapeutic care despite this growing demand, the hospital is developing a therapy app for personal smartphones. This app will combine in-person therapy sessions with digital support. Studies have shown that integrating a digital coach into therapy can be as effective as traditional therapy methods—often with additional benefits. Inpatient stays can be shortened, and therapy sessions can be completed more efficiently, allowing the PUK to care for a larger number of patients without compromising quality.

The new app stands out from other digital mental health services in several ways. Therapists actively con-

tribute to the program by providing therapeutic content, exercises, and personalized interventions through the app, ensuring that patients receive targeted support between sessions. Moreover, the app utilizes the latest artificial intelligence (AI) and automatic speech processing technology, which allows it to adapt to users' individual needs. AI-based language processing enables context-aware communication, resulting in deeper and more personalized interactions. The AI works within a well-defined therapeutic framework, supporting the collaboration between therapists and patients. Initial feasibility studies have shown promising results and provided valuable feedback, which will be used to further enhance the app.

### Forward-Looking Perspectives

The app is designed with a modular structure, making it flexible for use in various settings—whether inpatient, day clinics, or outpatient facilities. This flexibility may help reduce clinic visits for patients, which is particularly advantageous for individuals with limited mobility or those living in remote areas. By offering therapy sessions in a more flexible format, the app makes it easier for many patients to access the treatment they need.

Looking ahead, the app will continue to evolve. Advancements in AI-based language processing, in particular, are opening up new opportunities to make therapy even more personalized and effective. The PUK's

goal is to make mental health treatment more efficient, accessible, and flexible by combining proven psychotherapy with digital tools, ultimately revolutionizing the way mental health care is delivered.

#### Support Now

Would you like to contribute to the development of the therapy app? Help us improve mental health care. Get in touch with us:

[www.uzhfoundation.ch/en/therapy-app](http://www.uzhfoundation.ch/en/therapy-app)



## Language Acquisition in Retirement: Project Progress

As we age, language and communication skills naturally decline. Yet communication remains crucial for older adults, helping them maintain social connections, independence, and overall well-being. The VARIAGE (Variation in Second Language Use and Development Across Retirement) research project explores how learning a new language during the transition to retirement affects cognitive abilities.

The planning phase was completed in September 2024, and the project is now in full swing. English lessons have begun for 52 participants, aged 63 and 64. To accompany



**“Research is close to my heart. Improving my English while also participating in a study is very worthwhile to me.”**

Participant in the VARIAGE project

the lessons, examinations related to communication and cognition are being conducted based on 30 different factors. The project will run until 2028, during which time the language course will be completed, and the collected data will be thoroughly evaluated. The goal is to identify risk factors for cognitive decline and develop new strategies to help maintain cognitive health.

**A heartfelt thank you to all the donors who have made this valuable research possible!**

# The Arctic in Transition: Growing Industry, Dwindling Darkness

The Arctic remains one of the least developed regions on Earth, but that is changing rapidly due to climate change. As sea ice melts, new sea routes emerge, and previously inaccessible resources attract growing economic interest. Thanks to a generous private donation, the UZH has been able to analyze comprehensively, for the first time, how increasing human presence is affecting the Arctic.

Historically, permanent settlement in the Arctic has been nearly impossible due to the extreme cold, long periods of darkness, and the remoteness of many parts of this polar region. However, as temperatures continue to rise—the Arctic is warming at about four times the global average—these conditions are shifting. To ensure sustainable development in the region and avoid environmental pollution, human activities must be carefully monitored. For years, we have lacked a comprehensive overview of these changes.

Cengiz Akandil’s doctoral thesis, supervised by Professor Gabriela Schaepman-Strub at the Institute of Evolutionary Biology and Environmental Sciences at UZH, provides that missing data. Together with an international research team, Akandil analyzed satellite images of artificial light at night to study light pollution, which can help determine where new infrastructure and industrial activity have emerged in recent decades. The results are striking: between 1992 and 2013, the Arctic’s brightness increased by five percent annually. In total, more

than 800,000 square kilometers—an area nearly as large as Germany and France combined—are now affected by light pollution, with 85 percent of this light originating from industrial activities, not residential areas.

## Dangers for the Environment

These changes pose serious consequences for the fragile Arctic ecosystem. Artificial light, for example, complicates the adaptation of reindeer to winter twilight, making it harder for them to find food. The delicate ecological balance is also disrupted by slowed plant growth and the spread of invasive species. Meanwhile, oil and gas extraction, as well as expanding mining activities, are contributing to environmental pollution.

Despite these challenges, the study also offers hope. It provides a scientific foundation that can help indigenous communities, governments, and other stakeholders make responsible decisions to protect the Arctic’s unique natural environment for the long term.

## From Idea to Implementation

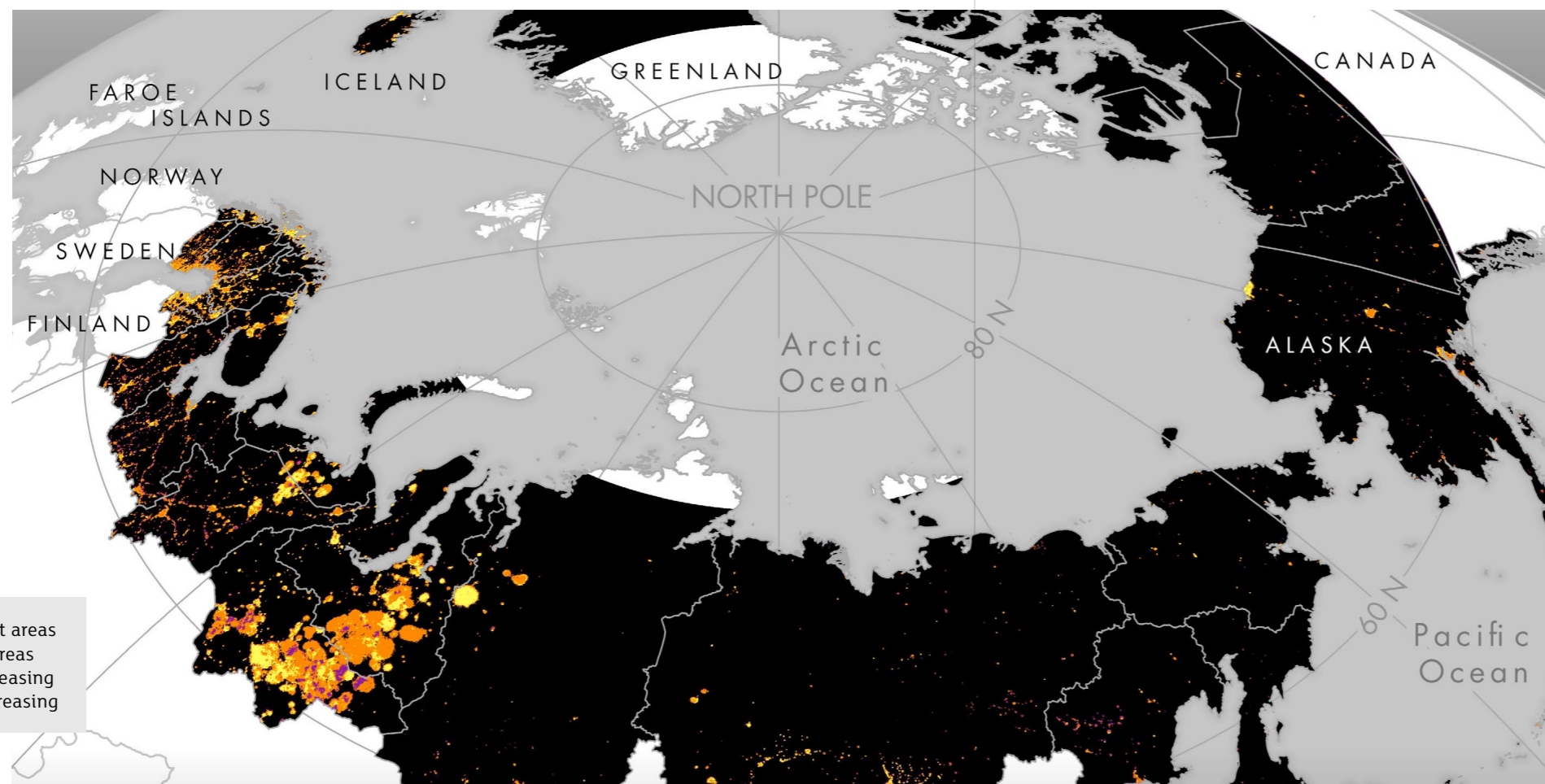
The idea to investigate human activities in the Arctic was conceived by Gabriela Schaepman-Strub five years ago. Cengiz Akandil developed the project as part of his doctoral research. Thanks to generous financial support from Urs and Barbara Stampfli, the project was able to proceed

**“Few things are as important as the development and protection of our planet. We are pleased to contribute to this research.”**

Dr. Urs und Barbara Stampfli

successfully. According to Gabriela Schaepman-Strub, this project highlights the challenges of conventional funding: “The research was based on an uncertain idea that needed time and flexibility to develop. Thanks to private support, we were able to move forward with confidence and ultimately bring it to fruition.”

**Pan-Arctic map** showing unlit and lit areas with significantly increasing or decreasing light-emitting human activity from 1992 to 2013. (Image: Cengiz Akandil, University of Zurich; Natural Earth)



## Learn More

How has human activity in the Arctic changed? For detailed insights into the results and their significance, please see:

[www.uzhfoundation.ch/en/arctic](http://www.uzhfoundation.ch/en/arctic)



# A Lifelong Commitment to Justice

Through a bequest from the anthropologist Irène M. Staehelin-Schindler, a research center with two professorships is being established at the University of Zurich (UZH). These two positions focus on gender roles, religion, discrimination, and violence against women. Throughout her life, Irène Staehelin was deeply engaged with these pressing societal issues. Who was this extraordinary woman, and what motivated her to leave such a profound legacy?

Irène Staehelin had an insatiable thirst for knowledge. She had a particular fascination with human evolution, and the injustices in the world deeply moved her. She was always aware of her own privileges and felt a deep sense of responsibility to use these privileges for the greater good. As the wife of Dr. Jenö C. A. Staehelin, a former Swiss diplomat and UN ambassador, she could have led the conventional life of a diplomat's wife, representing Switzerland alongside her husband. However, she had her own aspirations that extended far beyond that.

After studying art history and philosophy at UZH, Irène Staehelin trained as a photographer, a profession for which she had developed a natural flair early on. In the 1990s, she traveled to South Africa for the first time to photograph the rock paintings of the San, the indigenous people of the region. She became acquainted with the San people and was appalled by the discrimination they had endured throughout history. Driven by her sense of justice, Staehelin felt compelled to help the San people address their trauma.\*

To gain appropriate access to the local people as a white person in South Africa, and to have her efforts taken seriously, she began studying anthropology at Boston University (USA) at the age of 50. She completed her studies with a Master of Arts in Anthropology and a Graduate Certificate in African Studies.



Irène Staehelin  
1945–2019

*\* The San are the oldest people in the world. They were exploited and displaced for centuries. Irène Staehelin eventually founded the San Heritage Center "Khwa ttu": [www.khwattu.org](http://www.khwattu.org)*

*Image credits: Private collection*

## The New Research Center

The new research center, "Evolutionary Anthropology and the Study of Religion and Women in Society," will combine two professorships from different disciplines. One will focus on the evolutionary development of culture and human gender roles, while the other will explore discrimination and violence against women, particularly in the context of the socio-historical roles of the three major monotheistic religions and the systematic oppression of women associated with them.



Irène Staehelin  
at work

## On Gender and Religion

Even before that, Irène Staehelin had been deeply focused on the inequalities between the sexes, reflecting on both the biological and social differences between men and women. Through her anthropology studies, she came to understand that social gender differences—particularly the oppression of women—are not universally interpreted in the same way, and that these distinctions are heavily shaped by religious beliefs. This led Staehelin to explore the question of which aspects of gender differences are truly dictated by religion, and to what extent religion serves as a pretext to deny women the same rights as men.

Irène Staehelin's profound dedication to confronting inequality and the discrimination of women and minorities defined her tireless commitment to justice and humanity. Her character was marked by humility, empathy, and a sensitive approach to marginalized people. With the establishment of a research center and the funding of two professorships at UZH, Irène Staehelin's life's work continues. Her core values, which shaped her as a person, will thus live on.

**The UZH and the UZH Foundation would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to the Irene M. Staehelin Foundation for its generous donation and the trust it has placed in us.**

### Leave Your Mark with a Legacy

Would you like to support UZH through your legacy? With a bequest, you can benefit departments, faculties, and institutions, or support research and teaching for a specific purpose. Get in touch with us:

[www.uzhfoundation.ch/en/legacy](http://www.uzhfoundation.ch/en/legacy)





## Committed from generation to generation

Companies can make a significant social impact through donations to the University of Zurich (UZH), and one of the key examples of such a commitment is Zurich-based asset management bank Rahn+Bodmer Co. The bank has been supporting UZH for decades, cultivating a spirit of gratitude and continuing its commitment across generations.

At first glance, a bank and a university may seem to have little in common. However, there are clear parallels between Rahn+Bodmer Co. and UZH. Both institutions are deeply rooted in the city of Zurich and combine a long history with a clear focus on the future. As Switzerland's oldest private bank, Rahn+Bodmer Co. (founded in 1750), and UZH have both weathered significant historical events, including world wars and economic crises. Both institutions stand for long-term thinking and stability, remaining steadfast in a rapidly changing world.

**“Thanks to the support of Rahn+Bodmer Co., I am able to gain important insights in pain research for spinal cord injuries.”**

Joëlle Metzger, Spinal Cord Injury Center at Balgrist University Hospital

About 25 years ago, Rahn+Bodmer Co. began actively supporting research in Switzerland, starting with the Paul Scherrer Institute. Over time, the bank's commitment to research expanded, developing a shared interest in basic research with several foundations and clients. This eventually led to Rahn+Bodmer Co.'s first contributions to UZH, which included both client-funded legacies and the bank's own donations. The bank understands that research requires patience and a willingness to take risks. Not every research project yields immediate

results for society, but understanding what doesn't work also takes science a step further. This long-term approach aligns with the bank's philosophy of thinking in terms of generations, promoting topics that may take years to show a direct impact.

### Helping to Shape the Future

Not only the bank but also Dr. Christian Rahn, one of the five partners and owners of Rahn+Bodmer Co., is personally dedicated to supporting research. His deep interest in science has led him to attend conferences and engage in conversations with researchers, which has given him a better understanding of complex scientific issues. “I have a thirst for knowledge and go through the world with my eyes wide open,” says Dr. Rahn. His drive to actively shape the future is reflected in his concerns about challenges such as demographic change and the rise in neurodegenerative diseases. He also sees the use of artificial intelligence in research as particularly promising, as AI can help intelligently connect existing knowledge and avoid redundant research—paving the way for new opportunities and accelerating progress.



Joëlle Metzger attaches electrodes to measure pain processing in the brain.

*From left to right:* Dr. Christian Rahn (Rahn+Bodmer Co.) with Joëlle Metzger and Prof. Dr. Michèle Hubli, both from the Spinal Cord Injury Center at Balgrist University Hospital.

**“This commitment is an expression of our gratitude; we want to give something back to society.”**

Dr. Christian Rahn, Partner at Rahn+Bodmer Co.

### Giving Something Back to Society

Rahn+Bodmer Co.'s commitment extends beyond banking. All of the bank's partners see it as part of their responsibility to create value for society, whether through personal involvement in foundations or as private donors. “It is our expression of gratitude; we want to give something back to society,” explains Christian Rahn. The bank views its support for UZH, where many of its employees were educated, as a gesture of appreciation for the local community. This culture of long-term commitment and gratitude is passed down from generation to generation within the bank, a value that will continue into the future.

### Rahn+Bodmer Co. supports the Center for Neurosciences Zurich (ZNZ)

The ZNZ is a joint competence center of the University of Zurich (UZH) and ETH Zurich, aimed at creating synergies between approximately 1,000 neuroscientists in research and teaching. The center includes research groups from UZH, ETH, and the university hospitals and clinics in Zurich. Rahn+Bodmer Co. has committed to modeling neuronal diseases using stem cell technology, which is expected to lead to more successful treatments for neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. The bank's contributions also include grants for talented young researchers, such as Joëlle Metzger, whose work at the Spinal Cord Injury Center focuses on understanding the interactions between the pain and cardiovascular systems in patients with neuropathic pain following spinal cord injury. Rahn+Bodmer Co.'s commitment also includes the funding of a professorship, which will be filled in the coming months.

*Joëlle Metzger with a patient:* In her research, Joëlle Metzger investigates the interactions between the pain and cardiovascular systems in patients suffering from neuropathic pain due to spinal cord injury. Her goal is to develop new therapies that could improve the quality of life for these individuals.

## The Key to Change Lies in Collaboration

Tackling major global issues requires more than individual efforts—it demands collaboration. The Mercator Foundation Switzerland has been at the forefront of this approach, practicing a collaborative approach for several years. As the foundation of the University of Zurich (UZH), we too are convinced of the potential of collaboration and are eager to integrate more such partnerships into our foundation's work.

The world is facing challenges like climate change, social inequality, disease, and conflicts, all of which are marked by rapid change and growing complexity. Despite our best intentions, however, many solutions often seem insignificant in the grand scheme. Why? Because the scale of these problems often exceeds the capacity of any one individual or organization to address them effectively. What is needed is a shift toward cooperation across institutional, professional, and social boundaries. In the spirit of “Better Together.”

The Mercator Foundation Switzerland has set a remarkable and bold example in this regard. Its secret to success is collaboration, bringing together a wide range of players—science, civil society, politics, and business—on a shared platform. By pooling expertise, resources, and perspectives, the foundation ensures that it isn't acting in isolation but rather leveraging synergies and shared goals. This approach fosters the development of broad-based strategies and solutions with greater impact and long-lasting effects.

**“When foundations join forces in funding consortia, they multiply their resources—and thus their impact.”**

Andrew Holland, Managing Director  
Mercator Foundation Switzerland

### Diversity as a Creative Driver

This cooperative model brings with it even greater advantages. It opens up space for experimentation and encourages innovative, interdisciplinary approaches. In areas like democracy or climate policy, it's clear that real innovation often emerges only through partnerships. One such example is the launch of the “Digitalization & Democracy” funding program in January 2025, in partnership with the Hasler Foundation. This program supports cross-sector research projects addressing the intersection of digitalization, particularly AI, and democracy.

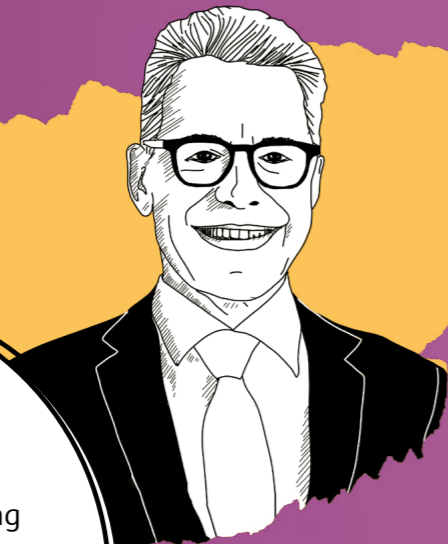
For the UZH Foundation, this collaborative approach holds great promise. Many research fields at UZH are so vast and interdisciplinary that they can't be funded by a single foundation. This is where partnerships come into play, with multiple funding organizations pooling their resources to effect sustainable change. We at the UZH Foundation are excited about this approach and look forward to establishing more collaborations in the future.

**“Whether it's climate change, social inequality, or conflicts: the key to finding answers to these challenges lies in cooperation. Let's develop big ideas together!”**

Annelise Alig Anderhalden, CEO UZH Foundation

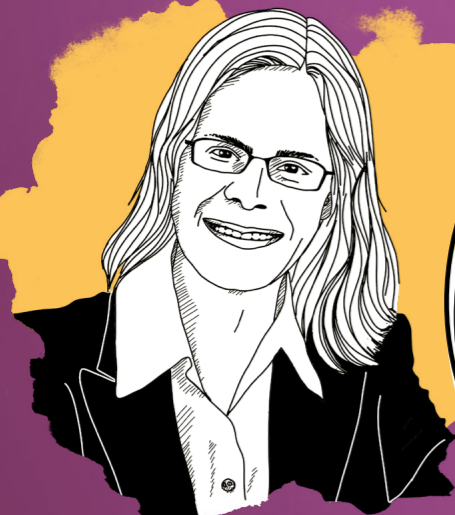
# GIVING Back

Help Shape the Future  
of Tomorrow



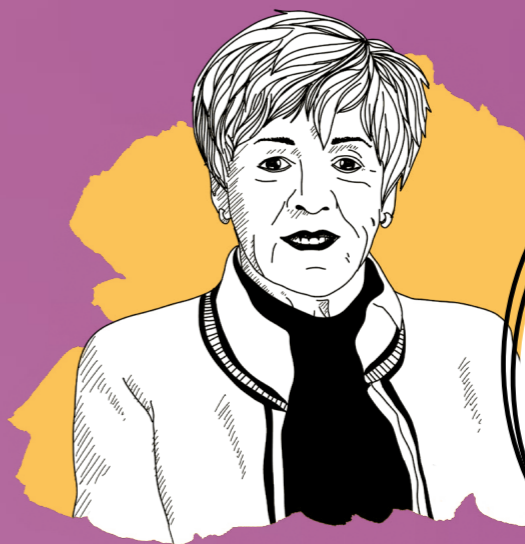
“Science and innovation fascinate me. By supporting UZH,, I am helping to ensure the university’s pursuit of **excellent research.**”

Mathis Berger  
UZH-Alumnus



“I support UZH so that researchers can pursue their scientific interests and **find answers to the pressing questions** of our time.”

Susanne Raas  
UZH-Alumna

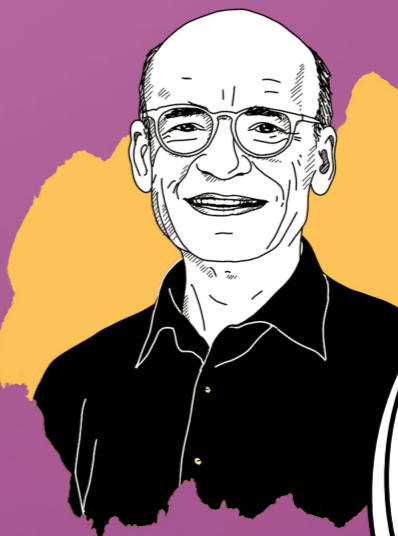
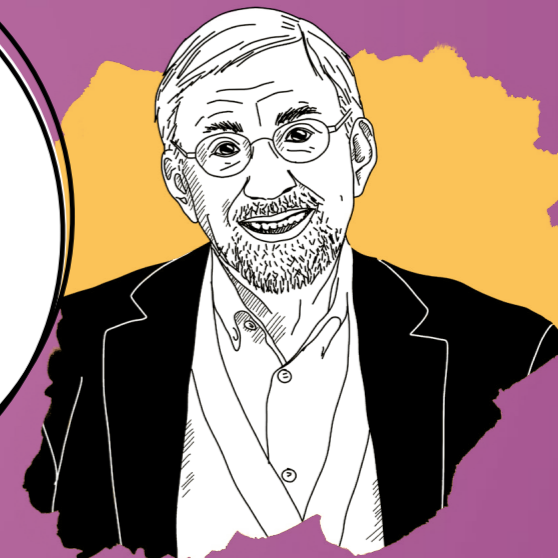


“I am very **grateful for the opportunities I have been given in life.** It just feels right to give something back by getting involved.”

Ursula Bachmann  
former Tourism Specialist

“I am committed to UZH so that young researchers can develop new ideas. We need **innovative and sustainable solutions** for the challenges of our time.”

Dr. Fritz Haselbeck  
former Entrepreneur



“As a former student and professor, UZH feels like a **second home** to me. That's why I support the university with an annual contribution.”

Prof. em. Dr. Bernhard Schmid  
Institute of Evolutionary Biology, UZH

Donate Now and Become  
Part of *Giving Back.*

[www.uzhfoundation.ch/  
en/givingback](http://www.uzhfoundation.ch/en/givingback)



# Committed to Zurich as a Research Location

The Board of Trustees of the UZH Foundation consists of nine dedicated volunteers from business, politics, education, and culture. These individuals bring their expertise, extensive experience, and vast networks to support the foundation's goals.

Three Questions for Eveline Saupper,  
Vice President of the Board of Trustees

## What was the deciding factor for you joining the UZH Foundation Board?

The University of Zurich makes a significant contribution to research and teaching, playing a crucial role in the advancement of our society. What particularly impressed me was that the Foundation actively supports UZH in this mission. Thanks to its vast network, the UZH Foundation can make possible many initiatives that might otherwise fall through the cracks.

## What have been the highlights for you so far?

Under the leadership of Annelise Alig, the UZH Foundation has developed a strong and dedicated team. Working with them has been both a pleasure and extremely rewarding. The insights we gain into UZH's research are consistently fascinating and inspiring. I am especially proud that in 2024, we achieved the second-best fundraising result in the Foundation's history, with 51 million francs in donations.

## What do you wish for UZH?

There are many exciting projects underway that offer true value to society, as well as a number of passionate donors who actively support this research. I wish for continued success in these ventures and for UZH to remain at the forefront of global research and innovation.



## A Board of Trustees with Diverse Competencies



**Christian Wenger**  
Corporate Law, Start-ups, Innovation



**Michael Schaepman**  
Geography, Biodiversity, Remote Sensing



**Eveline Saupper**  
Tax and Corporate Law, M&A



**Felix R. Ehrat**  
Corporate Governance, Corporate and International Law



**Cyrill Schneuwly**  
Real Estate, Finance



**Felix Gutzwiller**  
Public Health, Medicine



**Alex Rübel**  
Community, Environment, Nature, and Culture Management



**Jennifer Maag**  
Auditing, Finance, M&A



**Daniel Hug**  
Finances, Controlling

# Thank you very much!

Numerous foundations, private individuals and companies supported research and teaching at the University of Zurich (UZH) last year with their donations to the UZH Foundation. In the annual report, we list institutional and private donors of CHF 10,000 or more. In total, 853 private individuals, 64 foundations and 46 companies supported UZH in 2024.

We would like to thank all donors for their commitment!  
Our thanks go also to those who prefer to remain anonymous.

## Foundations and other organizations

- Antidote Health Foundation for Cure of Cancer
- Balgrist Foundation
- Bärbel and Paul Geissbühler Foundation
- BAREVA Foundation
- Baugarten Foundation
- Careum Foundation
- Colbianco Foundation
- DIE HUSSON HALABI YASSIR Foundation
- Dr. Eric Slack-Gyr-Foundation
- Dr. med. Adolf und Adelheid Gretener-Thürlemann Foundation
- Dr. med. Arthur und Estella Hirzel-Callegari Foundation
- Ernst Göhner Foundation
- Evangelical Reformed Church of the Canton of Zurich
- Excellence Foundation Zurich
- Fondation Botnar
- Fondation Dora
- Gebauer Foundation
- Geistlich-Stucki-Foundation
- ACCENTUS Charitable Foundation
- EMPIRIS Charitable Foundation
- Georg und Bertha Schwyzer-Winiker Foundation
- Goethe Foundation for Art and Science
- Hans und Marianne Schwyn-Foundation
- Hans-Eggenberger-Foundation
- House of the Swiss Cancer League
- Helmut Horten Foundation
- Irene M. Staehelin Foundation
- Catholic Church in the Canton of Zurich
- KLOSTERMANN Foundation
- Kühne Foundation
- LLUI Charitable Foundation
- Margrit Weisheit Foundation
- MIRTO Foundation
- Central Europe Foundation
- Monique Dornonville de la Cour Foundation
- Nestor Foundation
- NOMIS Foundation
- Palatin Foundation
- Promedica Foundation
- ResOrtho Foundation
- SCS Swiss Child Support Foundation
- Bank Vontobel Charitable Foundation
- Fehlmann Family Foundation
- Foundation for Natural Sciences and Technical Research
- Sanitas Health Insurance Foundation

- UBS Foundation of Economics in Society
- Uniscientia Foundation
- VELUX Foundation
- Veronika and Hugo Bohny Foundation
- Vontobel Foundation
- walter haefner foundation
- Werner Siemens-Foundation
- Zurich University of Applied Sciences

## Private individuals

- Legacy Doris Schindler-Lüdtke
- Gaudenz Bernhard Ruf
- Kurt Schwarz
- Laurent Giacometti
- Natasha Mueller
- Peter R. Isler
- Rudolf K. Sprüngli
- Sead Dizdarevic
- Susanne und Hans Peter Gilg

## Companies

- Adecco Group AG
- Align Technology
- Camlog Biotechnologies GmbH
- Dentium Co. Ltd.
- EBP Schweiz AG
- Institut Straumann AG
- Rahn+Bodmer Co.
- Thommen Medical AG
- UBS Business Solutions AG
- UBS Fund Management (Switzerland) AG
- UBS Switzerland AG
- Wüest Partner AG

Total donors  
in 2024

46  
Companies

64  
Foundations and  
other organizations

853  
Private individuals

Inspiratio #12 UZH Foundation

# Consolidated financial statement

## Balance sheet

in CHF	31. December 2024	31. December 2023
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	10 488 396	41 824 268
Other current receivables	1 025 061	554 513
Accrued income	6 852	43 680
<b>Current assets</b>	<b>11 520 309</b>	<b>42 422 461</b>
Financial assets	133 275 995	89 165 140
Intangible assets	66 795	133 867
<b>Fixed assets</b>	<b>133 342 791</b>	<b>89 299 008</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>144 863 100</b>	<b>131 721 469</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Accounts payable	525 513	501 306
Other current liabilities	16 423	34 050
Accrued expenses	31 378	42 072
<b>Current liabilities</b>	<b>573 314</b>	<b>577 428</b>
<b>Restricted fund capital</b>	<b>140 960 599</b>	<b>127 790 293</b>
<b>Debt (including restricted fund capital)</b>	<b>141 533 913</b>	<b>128 367 721</b>
Foundation capital	50 000	50 000
Committed capital	2 140 663	2 165 224
Free capital	1 138 523	1 138 523
Retained earning previous years	1 138 523	1 138 523
Result current year	0	0
<b>Equity</b>	<b>3 329 187</b>	<b>3 353 747</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>144 863 100</b>	<b>131 721 469</b>

## Commentary on the financial statements

### Profit and loss statement

In 2024, we recorded a stable inflow of donations of 32.7 million francs. While the area of contract management (donations accepted jointly with the University of Zurich) declined, the donations received from our acquisition activities grew. We were particularly pleased to raise several large donations that enabled us to finance new professorships and research centers on a long-term basis. In the area of sub-foundations, we primarily received donations to existing funds. The funded projects were expanded and funds were disbursed accordingly. This led to an increase in direct project expenditure. The slight increase in the number of staff at the office. This is now fully reflected in administrative expenses. The imple-

mentation of the new investment strategy, supported by predominantly good performance in the capital markets, led to a gratifying financial result with a net return of 6.96 %.

### Balance sheet

On the assets side, there was a shift from current assets to non-current assets in the 2024 reporting period. The level of investment was significantly increased in line with the strategy, with financial assets invested on the basis of maturities in the capital market. On the liabilities side of the balance sheet, earmarked capital increased due to new donations for long-term funding projects, supplemented by the return generated on financial assets.

## Profit and loss statement

in CHF	31. December 2024	31. December 2023
Grants received – Contract management	17 101 531	20 736 574
Grants received – Acquisition	12 838 926	4 550 182
Grants received – Sub-foundations	2 629 248	7 139 764
Undesignated donations received	117 107	103 793
<b>Grants received</b>	<b>32 686 813</b>	<b>32 530 313</b>
Contribution UZH	742 500	742 500
Various income	889 587	820 128
<b>Operating income</b>	<b>34 318 900</b>	<b>34 092 941</b>
<b>Direct project expenses</b>	<b>-26 216 510</b>	<b>-21 215 976</b>
Personnel expenses	-671 106	-722 307
Other operating expenses	-83 955	-91 649
<b>Fundraising expenses</b>	<b>-755 061</b>	<b>-813 956</b>
Personnel expenses	-891 067	-844 440
Other operating expenses	-111 471	-107 146
Depreciation and amortization	-90 212	-85 632
<b>Administration expenses</b>	<b>-1 092 750</b>	<b>-1 037 218</b>
<b>Operating result</b>	<b>6 254 579</b>	<b>11 025 792</b>
Financial income	8 123 244	4 958 760
Financial expenses	-1 232 078	-1 153 318
of which asset management costs	-367 982	-348 675
<b>Net financial result</b>	<b>6 891 166</b>	<b>3 805 442</b>
<b>Annual result (before change in fund and organizational capital)</b>	<b>13 145 745</b>	<b>14 831 234</b>
Withdrawals from funds	28 567 812	21 281 745
Allocations to funds	-41 738 117	-35 943 638
<b>Fund result</b>	<b>-13 170 305</b>	<b>-14 661 894</b>
<b>Annual result (before change in organizational capital)</b>	<b>-24 560</b>	<b>169 340</b>
Fund withdrawals committed capital (unrestricted funds)	178 760	150 796
Fund allocations committed capital (unrestricted funds)	-154 200	-320 136
<b>Fund result committed capital (unrestricted funds)</b>	<b>24 560</b>	<b>-169 340</b>
Result current year	0	0
<b>Change in other organizational capital</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Balance (after allocation to organizational capital)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Learn more  
[www.uzhfoundation.ch/en/finance](http://www.uzhfoundation.ch/en/finance)



# Return and Sustainability Targets in Harmony: Our Investment Strategy

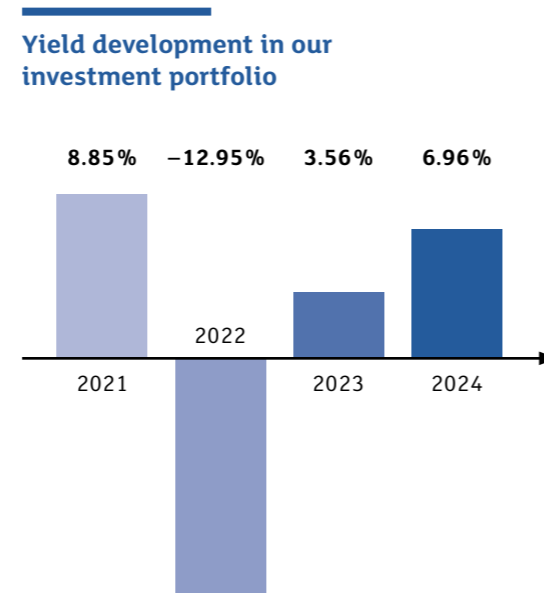
The UZH Foundation's Investment Committee oversees asset allocation, investment risk, return development, and the implementation of sustainability goals within our portfolio. The investment strategy and tactics are continuously refined to meet evolving needs.

The UZH Foundation invests its available financial resources with a focus on security and achieving sustainable returns through an ecologically and socially responsible investment strategy. These funds are managed in accordance with donor agreements to ensure the Foundation's obligations are met on time. External asset managers, appointed by the Foundation Board upon the request of the Investment Committee, manage the assets. Compliance with asset management guidelines is periodically monitored by internal committees and supplemented by an analysis conducted by an independent investment controller.

## Sustainable Investing

Sustainability criteria are a fundamental aspect of our investment strategy. The goal is to contribute to the objectives of the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement while safeguarding the legitimate interests of all stakeholders. Asset managers who work with the UZH Foundation for listed portfolios are tasked with aligning them with a 2.0-degree warming pathway by 2030 and a 1.5-degree warming pathway by 2050 at the latest. For private market investments, where less detailed information on global warming potential is typically available, qualitative climate-related sustainability criteria and processes are applied. In addition to the warming pathway, other environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors are also considered.

The implementation of this sustainable investment strategy, supported by favorable capital market performance, resulted in a positive financial outcome with a net return of 6.96% in 2024.



**“With our sustainable investment strategy, we can professionally manage UZH's donations and benefit from developments in the capital markets.”**

Dr. Felix R. Ehrat, Board of Trustees and Chairman of the Investment Committee of the UZH Foundation

## Account details for donations in Swiss francs

Zurich Cantonal Bank, 8010 Zurich  
IBAN: CH17 0070 0110 0039 2046 3  
BIC (Swift): ZKBKCHZZ80A  
Account number : 1100-3920.463  
Clearing-Nr.: 700  
ZKB postal account : 80-151-4

Please note name, address and the purpose of your donation on the bank transfer. This will enable us to issue you with a donation receipt. If you prefer a payment slip, we will be happy to send you one.



You can also donate online via this QR code

## Audit report

As a charitable foundation, the UZH Foundation is tax-exempt. It pursues neither profit nor self-help gain. Quality and transparency are important cornerstones of its actions, which is why its activities are based on the principles of the Swiss Foundation Code. The Investment Committee monitors the investment strategy defined by the Board of Trustees. An independent auditing company audits the bookkeeping and the annual financial statements. The annual financial statements were prepared in accordance with the accounting regulations of Swiss GAAP FER 21. The UZH Foundation is subject to the foundation supervision of the Canton of Zurich. You can find the auditor's report at

[www.uzhfoundation.ch/en/auditreport](http://www.uzhfoundation.ch/en/auditreport)

## Imprint

**Publisher** UZH Foundation  
**Concept and editing** David Iselin, Sarina Tobler, Laura Furlanetto, Dominik Heitzmann, UZH Foundation  
**Proofreading** Supertext AG, Zürich

## Design

**Design** KlingGrafik GmbH, Thalwil  
**Photography** Andreas Eggenberger, Frank Brüderli, Benno Gut, Cengiz Akandil, Alexander Sauer, Michael Derrer Fuchs, David Iselin, Thomas Poppenwimmer, Joy Asico-Smith, unsplash, PixelVista  
**Illustrations** (pages 20 and 21) Nadine Werjant

**Printed by** Neidhart + Schön Print AG, Zürich  
**Paper** Amber Graphic FSC, aus verantwortungsvollen Quellen  
**Print run** 4,500 copies (German)

© UZH Foundation 2025

## **UZH Foundation**

Moussonstrasse 15  
CH-8044 Zürich

Phone +41 44 634 34 00  
[info@uzhfoundation.ch](mailto:info@uzhfoundation.ch)  
[www.uzhfoundation.ch](http://www.uzhfoundation.ch)

