



## Swiss Foundations Strongly Support Science

**Swiss Foundations Strongly Support Science**  
Philanthropy for science is the trend. The number of foundations specifically supporting science and higher education is increasing even faster than the already growing foundation sector. In the last twenty years, more and more foundations have declared the promotion of science their core purpose. According to a study by the Center for Philanthropy Studies at the University of Basel (CEPS), there are 2,305 foundations in Switzerland supporting the sciences, making up almost a fifth (18.8%) of all non-profit foundations. With 43.1%, the majority of foundations is funding the field of medicine, followed by the humanities (28.6%) and the natural sciences (20.3%). Two-thirds of all foundations are focusing on a single research discipline and half of them even restrict themselves to a single type of grant. Besides the promotion of research (72.5%), these are mainly the promotion of teaching and contributions to students (35.6%) as well as funding of publications (15.5%). Due to the large number of foundations, the private promotion of science has become broader and more diverse than the public funding. Foundations as strategy accelerators  
The study also asked representatives of universities about the significance of private science promotion for universities. The results clearly show that private endowments are not nearly close to replacing the large public grants: On average, the private grants cover only 6% of a university's total expenditure. However, private funds help universities to implement their strategies and to promote innovative and interdisciplinary projects that otherwise could not be financed by means of regular funds. Universities that have successfully raised large grants in the past have an advantage in the stiff competition for funding. In addition, well-structured projects with a measurable success also have better chances to receive funding.  
Universities in need of development  
Despite the major grants in the three-digit million range that Swiss universities have received in past years from private donors, it is still necessary to further develop and professionalize fund raising. "In order to protect the financial autonomy of universities in the future, it is essential to apply principles such as transparency and sustainability to private fund raising," says director of studies Prof. Georg von Schnurbein from CEPS.  
Further information  
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