

Editorial



Farnaz Moser

Promotion of Science among Youngsters: Today's Crucial Mission for Tomorrow's Society



Reto Naef

Science and technology play an important role in sustainable human and societal development and Switzerland has a long tradition of scientific success. Many Swiss and Swiss-based scientists have contributed to breakthrough discoveries and won Nobel prizes. Switzerland is recognized worldwide for the quality of its research and excellent science and engineering education. Swiss scientists are the most productive in the world based on the number of scientific publications and their strong impact. Swiss science-based industries are competing very successfully with their innovative products in the global market.

Everything seems to be in good shape – but is it really?

A recent report by the Swiss Federal Council underlines the shortage of experts in mathematics, science and engineering in Switzerland. Not enough young people in Switzerland perceive the natural sciences as fascinating subjects offering attractive potential for professional careers. It has been obvious for many years now that we have to increase our efforts in early science education if we would like the Swiss science success story to continue, ensuring the long-term prosperity of Switzerland and helping the rapidly growing population of our planet to face environment, health, energy and nutrition challenges.

A partnership between schools, universities and other academic institutions, the cantons, federal government and private actors in the economy, backed with adequate resources, is crucial to develop coherent scientific and technical educational programmes for children and young people in Switzerland and stimulate their interest and enthusiasm in these fields. Science outreach aims to increase public awareness of science and allow students of all ages to engage in and enjoy science. In this issue of CHIMIA various public and private institutions involved in outreach activities relating to the molecular sciences present their programmes. They show that organising science outreach activities is a pleasant and rewarding way to bring science to the notice of youngsters and the general public. Local and personal efforts in these domains are also highlighted within this issue. We hope that the information disseminated in this way will stimulate the initiation of other activities as well as new collaborations between organisations and people sharing the same objectives.

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The Editorial Board of CHIMIA warmly thanks Dr. Farnaz Moser and Dr. Reto Naef for organising a very interesting set of articles on 'Molecular Sciences' Outreach Activities', highlighting the efforts made across Switzerland to interest and encourage young people to participate in the molecular sciences.