



Newsletter September 2021

500 Women Scientists Bern-Fribourg

After a summer break, we come back with more activities!

On the 17th of August, we were in an interview for [The Science Talk](#), a Youtube channel for science communication, our pod coordinator team had the chance to talk about our mission, ***Addressing Gender Inequality in Academia in Switzerland***. We introduced the 500 Women Scientists association and we explained the activities that the Bern-Fribourg pod organises and the different channels that we use for science communication ([blog](#), [twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#)). We also talked about the gender inequalities in Academia in Switzerland, where women make up 52% of students but only 23% of professors, with a special focus on the difficulties for childcare and the need for more work-life balance measurements. You can watch the video [here](#).

Due to the better situation for COVID-19, we can have our monthly meetings in person again, and we plan to continue the series of [Networking lunches](#), having the opportunity to meet and do networking with women leaders in Academia, industry, funding bodies and research institutions.

500 Women Scientist Bern-Fribourg Pod Coordinators

Claudia Kasper, Andrea Fortier and Ana I. Benítez-Mateos

TOP STORIES

Meeting science communication groups at the “Rendez-vous” at Waisenhausplatz

Science communication groups “[Science et Cité](#)”, the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences' competence centre for dialogue and “[Reatch](#)” (Research-Think-Change) organized an event where people could **meet and discuss on round tables with researchers** at Waisenhausplatz on August 27-28. The **focus** of the Rendez-vous (Forschende im Gespräch) was **on Gender - from health to economy, from art to sports**. Plenary discussions at lunchtime discussed the common view on certain professions as being “a man’s job” or “a typical female profession” and the blind spots in research concerning gender. We had the chance to talk to members of those groups about their engagement for science communication and introduce ourselves. Check out the respective websites for more information about their programmes. We would like to specifically recommend having a look at Reatch’s [Franxini project](#) - an initiative to improve political knowledge among scientists to foster a fruitful dialogue between science and politics.

Film presentation “Die Pazifistin - Gertrude Woker”

The animated documentary film "Die Pazifistin - Gertrude Woker" by Fabian Chiquet and Matthias Affolter tells the story of one of the first female professors at the University of Bern, who remains woefully forgotten despite her truly remarkable life. As a professor of chemistry, she spoke out against the use of weapons for mass destruction developed by her colleagues and became a fervent pacifist, touring the USA and Canada in a train full of like-minded women. Her political engagement made her a *persona non grata* and her career stalled. Countless letters by Professor Woker asking for more lab space and promotion were ignored but are archived. She also put in her weight to fight for gender equality. More than a hundred years ago she used the slogan “Gleicher Lohn für gleiche Arbeit” (“Equal pay for equal work”) which is still not a reality, even at universities.

After the screening, one of the directors and two representatives of University of Bern and a young female professor were discussing about the situation of women at University of Bern. With a proportion of women professors of around 27%, Uni Bern is still very far from equity. While some favourable recent developments were presented, such as the share of female and

male professors appointed in 2019 being equal, the prospect of ever reaching equity in the nearer future is dire. Frustratingly, the problem was only lamented, but no effective measures were presented. A quota was not considered desirable from the university side. The director, however, was decidedly in favor of it, as he sees it as an adequate means to close the gender gap.

Don't miss the screening at Uni Bern on September 30th, 6 p.m. - register [here!](#)

READ

The blog posts [Interviewing the supervisor](#) and [Experimenting with science communication: a beginner's guide](#) by Lucia Rotheray

SAVE THE DATE

11 November 2021: [The Future Day](#). There is a special programme called [A day as a woman in charge](#) to help girls choose their career

DON'T MISS

The recruiting process that has already started for the 2021-22 academic year [Swiss Women in Chemistry mentoring programme](#) by the Swiss Chemical Society

CONTACT US in 500wsbern@gmail.com

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