Become part of teaching and research at ETH Zurich

Become part of...

... innovation, breakthrough projects and solutions to the greatest challenges of our time. Your support enables ETH Zurich to achieve remarkable things. Donations both large and small come together like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle – and have a major impact.

Contribute your piece of the puzzle and make great things possible

Make a gift
Centre for Origin and Prevalence of Life

In the new “Centre for Origin and Prevalence of Life”, researchers are exploring the great mysteries of life. To investigate the origins of life, bridges are being built between and beyond the scientific disciplines and exceptional research projects pursued. One of these is the LIFE Mission Concept: the idea is to use a space telescope to investigate the atmosphere of planets that orbit suns outside our solar system – known as exoplanets. The space telescope will be able to pick up infrared radiation from these exoplanets, which is invisible to the human eye but holds the fingerprints of potential life on other planets. The goal is to answer the big question: “Are we alone in the universe?”

Find out more about the centre
Precision medicine

Scientists often have something in their personal history that connects them to their area of research. This is also the case for Mandy Boontanrant, who found out as a child that she was a carrier of the blood disorder thalassaemia. Happily, Mandy has so far not had any symptoms. However, the blood disorder is very widespread among people with Southeast Asian heritage especially, and currently the only way of treating it is with stem cell transplantation. With her start-up Ariya Bio, the young scientist is conducting research into highly personalised therapy, which would enable patients to receive individually tailored treatment. ETH is backing her commitment to health, with the aim of bringing this research closer to patients.

More about Mandy Boontanrant
Janine Wetter knew from a young age that she wanted to study Environmental Sciences at ETH Zurich. After all, talking about climate change is easy, but understanding it is significantly harder! Nevertheless, that is precisely her goal – in order to instigate meaningful change. So that she can invest more time and energy into her research, Janine receives support in the form of an Excellence Scholarship, making her one of around 60 students that ETH is able to support in this way each year. They all have one thing in common: their above-average talent and their motivation to find solutions to the greatest challenges of our time.

Find out more about Excellence Scholarships
Pioneer Fellowship

Thanks to start-up financing in the form of a Pioneer Fellowship, what began as a student project has become the groundbreaking “Scewo Bro”, a high-tech wheelchair that can effortlessly overcome stairs and other obstacles. The two mechanical engineering students Pascal Buholzer and Bernhard Winter joined forces with industrial designer Thomas Gemperle to found the start-up Scewo, which is now keeping a team of over 20 people busy. Every year, 10–15 ambitious Pioneer Fellows receive funding and support as they develop their idea into a marketable product.

Find out more about Pioneer Fellowships
Zurich Heart

For people who suffer from serious heart problems, a heart transplant is often the only effective method of treatment. However, it is hard to come by donor organs for the growing number of patients. Zurich Heart aims to remedy this situation: this large-scale interdisciplinary project of Hochschulmedizin Zürich aims to create an artificial heart that comes as close as possible to its human counterpart in form, function and quality, operates reliably for several years, and thereby saves lives.
Robotics

Marco Hutter, one of the key names behind ETH’s success in the field of robotics, is an example of what can be achieved with timely support. One of the first cornerstones was laid in 2007 with an Excellence Scholarship. During his doctorate, Hutter developed what began as a single leg in a Master’s project into an autonomous, walking robot that can independently navigate challenging terrain and is used for tasks such as search and rescue. Supported by a Pioneer Fellowship, Hutter teamed up with other ETH engineers to found the spin-off ANYbotics. In 2015, he was appointed an Assistant Professor.
Clean energy

The mini-refinery system on the roof of ETH Zurich’s machinery laboratory can produce renewable fuels – from nothing but sunlight and air! Researchers have succeeded in using concentrated solar radiation to split CO2 and H2O extracted directly from ambient air. This allows them to produce a specific synthesis gas that can then be processed into methanol or kerosene. What already works on a small scale on the roof of ETH represents a key step towards the production of renewable fuels that could contribute to greater sustainability in aviation and maritime transport.
Rehabilitation

Even everyday tasks, such as climbing stairs, can present a significant challenge for people with physical disabilities. Intelligent assistive technology such as the Myosuit are intended not only to provide assistance, but also to offer independence and improved quality of life. Like a second layer of muscle, the Myosuit wraps around the body and offers strength and stability to people with muscle weakness in the knees, hips and ankles – sensors detect the wearer's movements and provide the necessary support at the right moment. With the Rehab Initiative, ETH is providing an important boost with a view to ensuring that research is better oriented towards the needs of people and that scientific insights find their way into practical applications faster.
Thank you

Your support is vital to strengthening our university’s capacity for action: it allows us to drive forward important projects faster, develop innovative solutions for the future and provide support to especially talented students and researchers. Every piece of the puzzle is valuable when it comes to achieving great things overall.

Professor Joël Mesot
President of ETH Zurich

Questions and answers

Why is the ETH Foundation launching this campaign?

ETH Zurich enjoys widespread renown, but few people are aware that they can also support ETH philanthropically. We are launching this campaign to draw attention to the ways in which people can support us, because additional
resources are increasingly vital to delivering top-class research and teaching and to achieving even more than is possible with our basic financing alone.

The image of a jigsaw puzzle symbolises the idea that, by making a donation, you become part of innovations that benefit the whole of society. Whether it’s a small donation or a bequest, every contribution is valuable and goes towards achieving great things.

Who is the campaign aimed at?

We want to appeal to people who feel a connection with ETH, who care about promoting young talent or a specific research topic, or who simply share our conviction that education and research are the key to solving many of the challenges of our time.

You are all invited to contribute your own pieces of the puzzle and play your part in shaping the future together with ETH.

How exactly can I donate, and what to?

Firstly, we’re seeking funds for talent and scholarship programmes in order to provide targeted support to especially talented and financially disadvantaged students as well as up-and-coming young entrepreneurs. Secondly, we also want to provide additional funding to reinforce and expand strategically important areas of research - from health to energy and artificial intelligence.

Donations to our “Poly Fund” that are unrestricted in their purpose are also very important. With these, you give the ETH Executive Board the greatest possible flexibility when it comes to deploying funds where they’re most urgently required.

You can find an overview of current funding projects here. We would be happy to advise you on an individual basis if you have specific wishes with regard to funding.

Is my donation tax exempt?

Yes, donations to the ETH Zurich Foundation are tax exempt within the scope of the statutory regulations. We will be delighted to provide you with a donation receipt.

Donations from Germany and the US are also tax exempt if they are made via the corresponding foundation. More information here.
How much of my donation is actually invested in the projects?

One hundred percent of the donated amount goes towards the chosen causes. The members of the Board of Trustees of the ETH Foundation kindly offer their services on a voluntary basis, and the costs of running the office are financed by capital gains from the assets under management.

Why is ETH collecting donations at all – is it not funded by the federal government?

Donations give ETH the scope to act quickly in strategically important areas and to implement comprehensive projects that would not be possible with our basic financing alone. Donations play a significant role in funding talent-promotion programmes – such as the Excellence Scholarship and Pioneer Fellowship programmes – as well as making it easier for ETH to attract and support the best talent.

All of this is vital to ensuring that ETH can maintain its position as one of the world’s leading universities.

What do I personally get out of supporting ETH?

Donations are always a gift, which means nothing is granted directly in return. In addition to thanks and appreciation, however, you can take pleasure in knowing that your donation has had a meaningful impact on the future. Moreover, your name will appear in the annual report and on our website.

Regular donors are also invited to occasional events where they can see the impact of their commitment for themselves.

Is there also a "real" puzzle?

Yes, there is a 1000-piece jigsaw puzzle with the motif of the ETH main building that you can buy in the ETH Store or online. A great cause twice over, because CHF 5 of the sales price goes towards promoting teaching and research at ETH Zurich.
