



**unine**  
Université de Neuchâtel

## OUR PROGRAM EXTENDS TO THE WHOLE CANTON

The microbes returned to school in 2022. In total, 15 bachelor students, as well as doctoral students, conducted workshops in 20 classes from 3rd to 7th grades in 10 schools in Val-de-Ruz, Val-de-Travers and Boudry. For the first year since the formalization of our program by the Service of compulsory education, the teachers answered the call with enthusiasm (we thank them!) and thus exceeded the number of students registered. It was a challenge to satisfy as many classes as possible, but it also demonstrated the interest of our approach. This was also the first year that we opened the program to the doctoral school. As a result, a group of PhD students were able to set up activities specifically focused on the topic of cyanobacteria for pupils in Boudry, an important public issue in this region since the incidents of summer 2020.



The other topics covered ranged from ecological networks to tree-related microhabitats, ecosystem services and soil biodiversity at several scales, with a focus on microbial biodiversity via various examples including the famous blob. These themes may seem complex for children aged 6 to 12, but our students succeeded in popularizing them brilliantly, producing quality "turnkey" guides at the end of the semester. These guides were part of their evaluation; however, they were designed to allow anyone interested to reproduce the activities and will soon be available on our website.



The year 2022 has seen several collaborations come to life. First of all, the arrival of Prof. Clara Zemp from the conservation biology laboratory in our team has brought a new expertise to biodiversity issues. Similarly, Prof. Laure Klotzer's environmental psychology students have been able to exchange with our team on several occasions, allowing them to enrich their pilot activities in high schools around the theme of relationships between humans, pets and wild animals. Finally, our collaboration with Tania Chytil, producer of RTS Découverte at Radio Télévision Suisse, gave the program a nationwide reach in the form of three video clips whose scientific content and storyboard were written by our students. This series of clips entitled "La nature va à l'école" (Nature goes to school) deals with three themes - the wasp, the hedges, the blob - each highlighting a subject of importance for biodiversity but little known by the public.



Our program also joined the University of Geneva's "pedagogical innovation" platform during the summer, offering an implementation guide to academic teachers wanting to set up a similar program. This initiative shares our desire to spread the idea of a more open science between academia and society throughout Switzerland. It is with the same enthusiasm that we went to present our program at the seminar organized by the Swiss service-learning network Ben:edu, as well as at the annual congress of the Swiss Society for Microbiology (SSM).



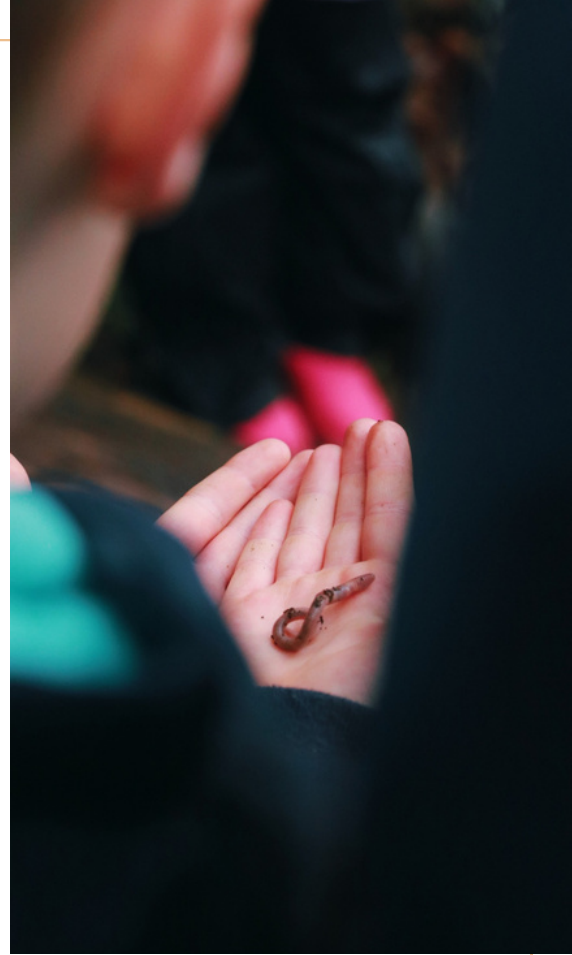
*Hey! You can also find us on social media!*



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## AND 2023 ?

The activities of 2023 are looking very promising thanks to a collaboration with the Botanical Garden of Neuchâtel around the exhibition "Traces de vie" (Traces of life), in which the Laboratory of Microbiology participated through the installation of the "bacterioscope", a tool that allows to observe living bacteria continuously. This exhibition traces the origins of life on Earth and its possibility of existing on Mars. Our collaboration will take several forms: first, guided tours for local classes, and then workshops on registration for local children aged 4-6 and 7-11 as part of the Atelier des musées (there are still places available, look for "Dans la peau d'un·e scientifique" !).



We are looking forward to tell you more about this new collaboration in our next newsletter due this autumn. Furthermore, our program reinforces its multidisciplinary nature by opening up to students of the Master's degree in journalism who have chosen the Content Creation and Communication of General Interest (MA3CIG) orientation.

Finally, this year we also have several sponsors who help us make this program a reality. We thank them for their support. And note that you can also participate, so don't hesitate to contact us at [microbes.ecole@unine.ch](mailto:microbes.ecole@unine.ch) !

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