

# SystemsX.ch Retreat 2016

## Career development for young scientists



This year's SystemsX.ch retreat at Schloss Münchenwiler focused on career development – a very important topic for PhD students and postdocs alike. The aim of the retreat was to give participants not only the specific tools but also the space to reflect on their own situations, values and prospective career choices.

Once again, SystemsX.ch had teamed up with hfp consulting, whose experienced facilitators – all with backgrounds in science – ran the workshops. During the highly interactive sessions, participants worked in groups or in pairs to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and to link these up with their own interests and values. Many of the participants expressed that they were at first uncomfortable talking openly about their own strengths, but gained confidence as they explored them together.

Later on in the retreat, the exercises turned to focus more concretely on the career options open to young scientists, and how to sell oneself in the competitive job market. All the while, the young scientists were encouraged to connect their identified values with their potential career choices. According to some, this provided a welcome change of perspective on their present and future place in academia.

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The large, diverse group of PhD students and postdocs also had the chance to get to know each other better outside of the workshops. The social activity one afternoon had the group split into teams and compete in a number of winemaking-related disciplines in which they had to work together to achieve a goal or solve a problem. All in all, the retreat provided space for reflection, exchange, contemplation, and last but not least, fun.