Citizens Consider(ed)
Research-based Teaching with Citizen Science

Melanie Brand, Citizen Science Zurich (UZH/ETH)

UZH students: Romy Nigg, Sarah Sbalchiero, Maya Schärer

CitSci Helvetia Lausanne, 06 June 2025

Meet the Citizens Consider(ed) team:

Dr. Eva Riedke, Anthropology, University of Constance

Sophie Tichonenko, (Photo)Journalist & CEO KARLA Magazine, Constance

Melanie Brand, Citizen Science Zurich, UZH & ETHZ

In a nutshell

- Project duration: 19 months, funded by «The Lake Constance Arts & Sciences Association»
- Project aim: develop and implement a co-teaching concept for BA citizen science seminars at two universities in Germany and Switzerland
- Teaching goal: in groups, students develop their own citizen science projects and conduct an instance of participatory research
- Topic: The intersection of AI and sustainability in everday life

What we are doing

Step-by-step development:

Phase 1: Thematic input on citizen science, AI & sustainability

Phase 2: Forming groups and project ideas

Phase 3: Contacting and meeting research partners

Phase 4: Conducting instance of participatory research

Phase 5: creative dialogue-inviting format, e.g. comic, performance, object, flyer (group) & report reflecting experience (individual)

-> project examples

Use of artificial intelligence in biodiversity research

Project goal + vision

“TreeKI” in the school classes

Citizen science

Citizen Scientists:

- Primary school pupils
- Primary school teachers

Co-creative:

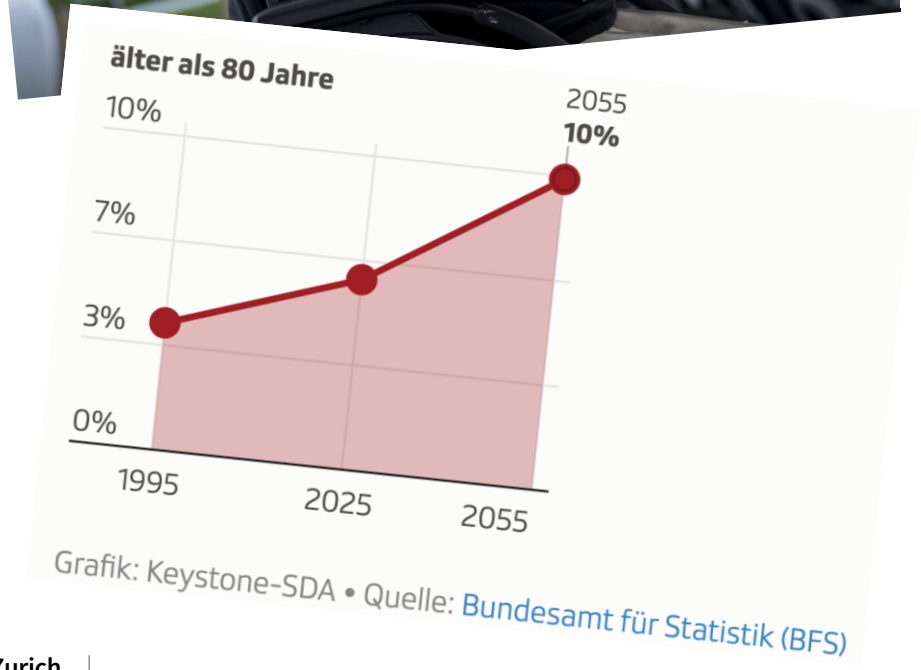
Helping to shape the integration of “TreeKI” into school classes

Flyer

Teaching material

Educational goals

- Pupils can be involved in lesson planning and research (as “little researchers”)
- The abstract world of AI is made accessible for children
- Pupils develop critical but also optimistic thinking about AI and biodiversity

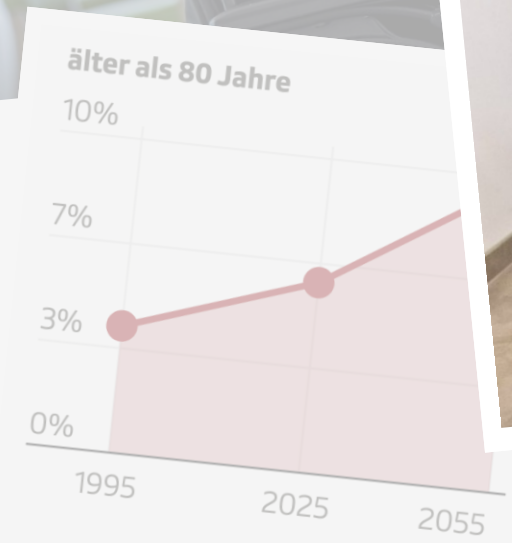


Grafik: Keystone-SDA • Quelle: Bundesamt für Statistik (BFS)

Bericht zum Pflegepersonal

Bis 2030 fehlen der Schweiz 20'000 Pflegekräfte

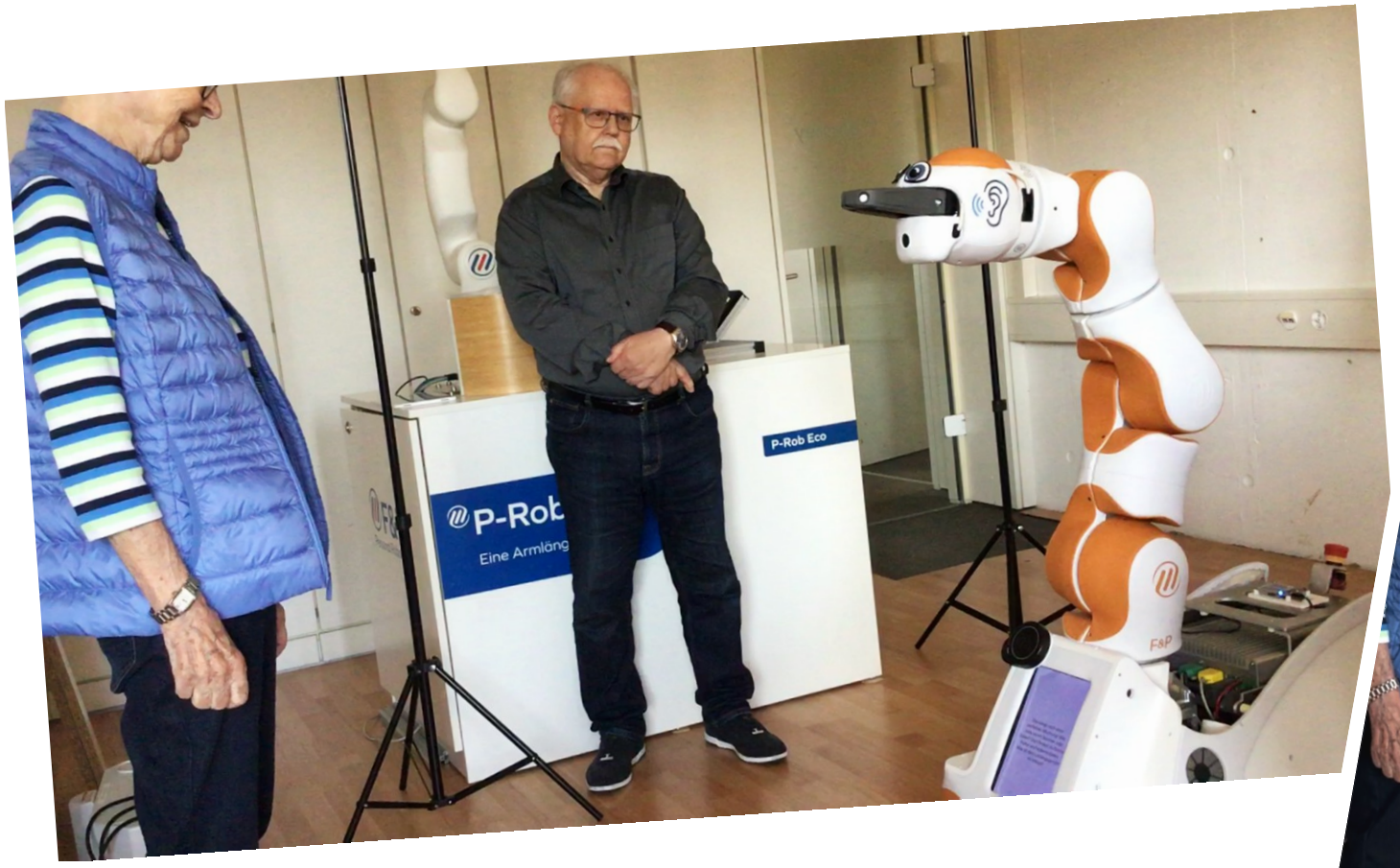
Quelle: Tagesanzeiger



Grafik: Keystone-SDA • Quelle: Bundesamt für Statistik (BFS)

Schweiz 20’000

Quelle: Tagesanzeiger


P-Rob
Eine Armläng
P-Rob Eco
F&P


P-Rob Eco

Why we are doing this

- Skills at BA-level: building foundation for participatory research capacities
- Working in heterogeneous groups: plurality of perspectives, concerns, motivations, restrictions…
- Critical thinking: questioning conventional academic ways of knowledge production
- Reflection: how can participatory projects be beneficial for everyone involved?
- Project team: digital toolkit for research-based teaching with citizen science

What we have learnt

- Integration into syllabus is crucial (ECTS)
- Balance between structure and openness
- Context matters:

structurally (breaching of conventional teaching) and

methodologically (research with vs. research about)

- Networking with like-minded lecturers