**Press Release**

W.A. de Vigier Awards 2021

**6 Startups Receive CHF 100,000 Each**

Solothurn, June 16, 2021. **From amongst 217 submitted projects, today the jury selected six rather than the typical five winners, and awarded each of them a prize of CHF 100,000. The winning projects range from home-tests for STDs, to sustainable materials for outdoor clothing as well as special micro-chips for managing exploding data traffic.**

„Thanks to a donation from our former president Dr. Daniel Borer and his family, the W.A. de Vigier Foundation handed out an extra prize this year! It’s one of the foundation’s goals to award more startup companies. The Borer Family will donate an extra W.A. de Vigier Prize in upcoming years, and we’re very grateful for their generous commitment to supporting even more young Swiss entrepreneurs“, says Regula Buob, Managing Director of the W.A. de Vigier Foundation.

**These are the six winners (in alphabetical order)**

***cellvie AG from Matzingen (TG) - Leveraging the Therapeutic Potential of Mitochondria***

When the blood flow to a part of the body is interrupted, cells get damaged or die, even if blood flow is restored. Such cell injuries manifest themselves for example in heart attacks and strokes, killing millions of people every year. Harvard spinoff cellvie transplants viable mitochondria, the cell’s powerhouse, into distressed cells. It’s like jump- starting a car, allowing the cells to re-establish their energy metabolism and survive. The Harvard spin-off’s mitochondria therapy will first be applied in organ transplant patients.

***dimpora AG from Zurich (ZH) – Natural, High Performing Materials for Outdoor Clothing***

Current outdoor clothing is chemically harmful for the very environment outdoor enthusiasts love so dearly. In addition to that, these chemicals are unhealthy for the wearer. ETH spinoff dimpora provides outdoor brands with a biobased material that is as waterproof and breathable as its non-natural alternatives. This material allows the industry to pivot from old, resource intense and chemically harmful processes and products to a sustainable, healthy solution.

***LEDCity AG from Zurich (ZH) – Smart LED Lighting Systems to Lower Energy Use***

Up to 40% of energy costs in commercial buildings are related to lighting. LEDCity equips light sources with sensors and AI-optimized algorithms to regulate lighting automatically. The startup’s plug and play system runs on a decentralized control unit, which means that no expensive management system is required. LEDCity’s solution drastically lowers energy use, cuts operating costs by up to 90% and reduces environmental impact.

***Lumiphase AG from Zurich (ZH) – Optical Communication Chips to Manage the Exploding Data Traffic***

Our world is becoming increasingly digital and data traffic is exploding. The infrastructure behind data centers and telecom networks is hitting a wall, and the industry needs a disruptive solution. Lumiphase develops novel optical communication chips that are very inexpensive, super compact and highly efficient. They allow the industry to replace today’s costly and power-hungry connections with a new generation of electro-optical links, ultimately enabling a new paradigm in datacenters‘ architecture and leading to more flexible, efficient and sustainable use of computing resources.

***Testmate Health from Chavannes-de-Bogis (VD) – At-Home Test for the Four Most Common STDs***

The wait-time for test results identifying the four most common sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) is three to seven days. Testmate Health is the first rapid at home self-test that provides results in minutes, in an anonymous, convenient and easy manner. Results are scanned and uploaded to a paired app that guides patients towards appropriate follow-up if necessary.

***Volumina Medical SA from Epalinges (VD) – Minimally Invasive Breast Reconstruction After Cancer***

Reconstructive surgery after breast cancer is currently costly, risky, highly invasive and results are temporary or don’t look natural. EPFL spinoff Volumina Medical created AdiPearl, an injectable implant with the capacity to regenerate damaged tissues for breast reconstruction in a single minimally invasive procedure. AdiPearl will improve the quality of life by bringing to breast cancer survivors a safe, effective, quality, and cost efficient breast reconstruction solution.

**About the W.A. de Vigier Awards**

The W.A. de Vigier Award is the oldest prize for young entrepreneurs in Switzerland and, with annual prize money of up to CHF 500,000 (five times CHF 100,000), is one of the most highly endowed startup prizes in Switzerland. Over the past 32 years, the foundation has distributed over CHF 11 million of seed money. The results are about 100 flourishing startups, successful IPOs, multiple company exits and above all, many newly created jobs.

The following aspects are relevant for the evaluation of the projects: The entrepreneurial personality, the degree of innovation, the value for society as a whole, the technical and financial viability, market prospects and the potential for job creation.

**Contact details for questions**

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