VELUX STIFTUNG

SHORT REPORT 2022

Discover. Transfer.
Change. Impact.

FOUNDATION PROJECTS

Knowledge transfer, raising awareness for relevant but neglected topics, improving research conditions, and enabling new ways of collaboration are all at the heart of Velux Stiftung.

DAYLIGHT ACADEMY

The Daylight Academy is an international membership organisation bringing together scientists from all backgrounds along with other daylight professionals. The aim is to strengthen daylight research and its applications for the benefit of society and nature.

A selection of this year's activities:

– Stimulating exchange at the **Annual Conference on "Implementing Daylight Research in Society – Chances and Challenges"** for researcher, practitioners and policymakers.

– Transferring knowledge at the **Interdisciplinary Summer School on "Measuring light and illumination"** to students, researchers and practitioners.

– Raising awareness through the **Daylight Awareness Week**, a series of online talks called on **"The Journey of Light: from Space to our Cells"**.

Scan me!
For more information on the Daylight Academy

DAYLIGHT AWARD 2022

The Daylight Award honours and supports **daylight research** and **daylight in architecture**, for the benefit of human health, well-being and the environment. The award puts specific emphasis on the interrelation between theory and practice.

The Daylight Award is given every second year in two categories. The two personal prizes, each to the sum of EUR 100,000, are jointly presented by VELUX STIFTUNG and its non-profit, private charitable sister foundations, VILLUM FONDEN and VELUX FONDEN in Denmark.

The laureates of 2022 were:

Yvonne Farrell & Shelley McNamara, Ireland
Founders of Grafton Architects for Daylight in Architecture

Anna Wirz-Justice, Switzerland
Neurobiologist at the Centre of Chronobiology, University of Basel for Daylight Research

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS

FORESTS, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

The first year of the funding program for forestry was characterized by setting goals and its thematic focus as well as establishing a scientific committee to support the review process. The program will support scientific projects and science-practice networks that aim to:

– Develop solutions in sustainable forest management to mitigate climate change, promote biodiversity and ecosystem services while supplying sustainable timber.
– Transform theoretical and abstract values of forest products or services into incentives for change.

First funding decisions will be taken in March 2023 by the foundation board.

OPHTHALMOLOGY IN LOW- AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES

Most people suffering from visual impairment live in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Nevertheless only limited funds are available to tackle the specific challenges.

In the second year of the ophthalmology funding program, the criteria of the call for proposals were adapted and sharpened. The spotlight was set on strengthening institutional research capacity which goes beyond the training of students and teams.

It aims to develop the capacity of research departments in universities and research institutions to fund, manage and sustain themselves and their research.

The foundation organized and participated in several workshops and networking events about research funding in LMICs as well as research capacity strengthening. The learnings of these activities will be reflected in the next call for proposals in 2023.

OPEN SCIENCE

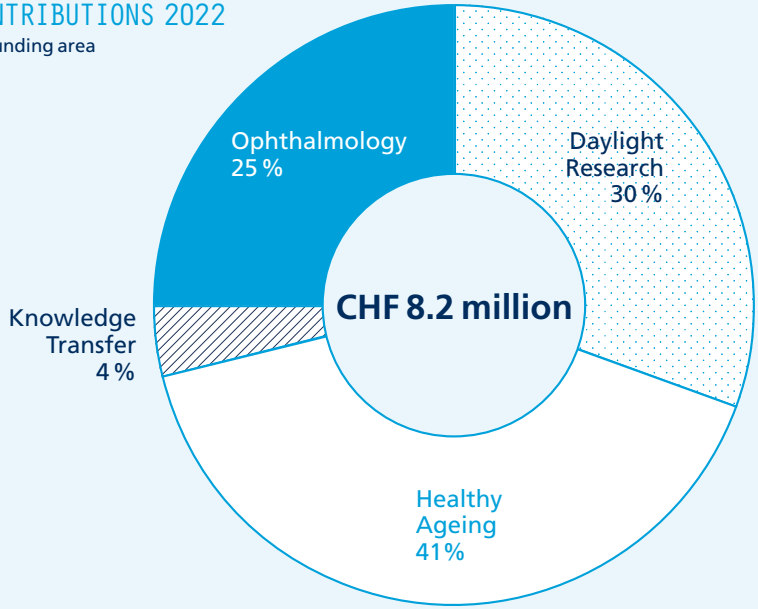
The foundation deepened its discussion on how to integrate the values of Open Science in its funding operations. Open Science aims to increase the quality and efficiency of research by promoting accessibility and reproducibility as well as collaboration. These values are very much in line with the mission of Velux Stiftung. We want to support researchers to actively transfer their insights to relevant audiences in order to contribute to sustainable change and impact.

As a research funder, Velux Stiftung stands at the beginning of the scientific process and therefore decided to sign DORA, the declaration on research assessment. The value of different research output categories is now integrated in the assessment process. The foundation has encouraged non-traditional forms of knowledge transfer in the past and will extend this focus more consequently in its selection of projects.

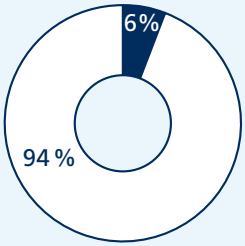
FUNDING STATISTICS

Scan me!
See all approved projects in 2022

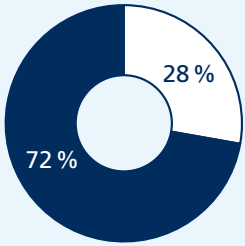
CONTRIBUTIONS 2022
by funding area



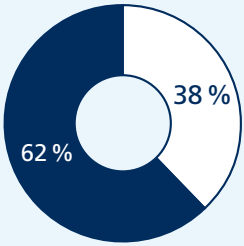
DAYLIGHT RESEARCH
CHF 2,518,941



HEALTHY AGEING
CHF 3,344,277



OPHTHALMOLOGY
CHF 2,032,525



The total funding awarded adds up to **CHF 8,225,743**. The foundation received 74 requests with a total volume of CHF 22,6 million out of which 27 project applications were funded. The **high success rate of 36.5 %** in 2022 is mainly due to several projects with smaller funding requests than usual.

In the two funding areas Daylight and Healthy Ageing research, 60 % of the contributions supported applications from Switzerland. In the funding area Ophthalmology with its programmatic focus on low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), 82 % of the contributions went to applications from LMICs.

FOUNDATION

Velux Stiftung is an independent charitable foundation supporting research in the areas of daylight, forestry, healthy ageing, and ophthalmology. The foundation is active worldwide and supports innovative projects that generate lasting progress for the benefit of humankind.

BACKGROUND

Velux Stiftung was founded 1980 by Villum Kann Rasmussen, a Danish engineer and entrepreneur. He developed a novel window construction that could be installed in sloping roofs, which he named "Velux" ("Ve" for ventilation, and "Lux" for light). In 1941 he started his own company, V. KANN RASMUSSEN & CO., focused on the development and manufacturing of efficient window systems that let more daylight into people's indoor life.

The philanthropic legacy of Villum Kann Rasmussen comprises four additional non-profit foundations in Denmark and one charitable foundation in the United States:

– VILLUM FONDEN, DK (1971)
– VELUX FONDEN, DK (1981)
– Employee Foundation of the VKR Group, DK (1991)
– V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation, USA (1991)
– KR Foundation, DK (2014)

FOUNDATION BOARD

–
Ms Lykke Ogstrup Lunde, Chair

–
Ms Mirjam Eglin

–
Mr Villum Ogstrup-Pedersen

–
Mr René Schürmann

MANAGEMENT

–
Mr Lukas von Orelli, Director

–
Ms Kirstin Kopp, Associate Director

–
Ms Beatrice Merkli, Office Manager

–
Ms Marion Bétizeau, Senior Scientific Officer

–
Ms Stephanie Remke, Scientific Officer

Daylight Academy

–
Ms Lydia Moreno, Program Manager

–
Ms Viola Lorenz, Junior Project Manager

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Get more information about VELUX STIFTUNG

FINANCE

The investment policy of Velux Stiftung aims to generate market rate and competitive financial returns while having a neutral and preferably a positive environmental and/or social impact.

In line with its charitable purpose, Velux Stiftung follows the ESG investment principles. Therefore, all investments must comply with the principles of the UN Global Compact, a United Nations initiative encouraging businesses worldwide to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies in the areas of human rights, labour, the environment, and anti-corruption. Furthermore, Velux Stiftung excludes investments in controversial weapons, tobacco or coal.

By the end of 2022, the carbon divest strategy has been fully implemented. Fossil fuel investments are reported at <1.0 %. This exceeds the original goal of a maximum of 3 % linked to fossil fuels. Additionally, a total of 10 % of our assets are invested in climate change mitigating illiquid investments with the consequent impact-oriented investment policy since 2008.

The foundation's assets are managed in mostly active mandates which are selected by the investment committee. The investment managers are monitored and evaluated regularly. Managers who invest in companies breaching the ESG principles on a continuous basis are excluded from the investment universe of Velux Stiftung if they cannot justify the action.

The total assets by the end of 2022 were MCHF 225 and the return on investment was -15.8 %.

INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

–
Ms Lykke Ogstrup Lunde, Chair

–
Mr Lukas von Orelli, Director

–
Mr Per Skovsted, Chief investment officer VELUX Foundations, Denmark (until 30.06.2022)

–
Mr Fredrik Skoglund, Chief investment officer VELUX Foundations, Denmark (from 01.11.2022)

–
Mr Thomas Overvad, Chief investment officer VKR Holding A/S, Denmark

Scan me!
For more information on
our ROI and asset allocation

Project period:
2021-2025
Funding amount:
CHF 2,095,084
Funding area:
Daylight Research
Project type:
External project

Harnessing daylight for a healthy life

PROJECT PORTRAIT

Integrative Human Circadian Daylight Platform

The impact of daylight on our physical and mental health is often overlooked. An interdisciplinary research platform has been launched to understand better how light influences us. The Integrative Human Circadian Platform connects basic science with application-oriented and clinical research. This innovative structure allows for rapid progress in investigating and translating the insights and benefits of daylight for human health.

Manuel Spitschan
Lead Circadian Visual Neuroscience, Assistant Professor of Chronobiology and Health, Technical University of Munich, Germany

Mirjam Münch
Lead Environmental Circadian Lighting, PhD, University of Basel, Switzerland

Corrado Garbazza
Lead Circadian Health Clinic, MD PhD, University of Basel, Switzerland

Christian Cajochen
Director of the Integrative Human Circadian Daylight Platform and Professor of Chronobiology, University of Basel, Switzerland

Daylight is an environmental factor that often goes unnoticed and is taken for granted. Today, most people spend 90 % of their time indoors where sufficient exposure to daylight is not given. Yet, at the same time, research has revealed that the right light (in terms of wavelength, intensity and distribution) and timing are essential and influence our health and well-being.

Leveraging daylight for human health

There is ample evidence that exposure to daylight sets our internal body clocks which regulate our circadian rhythms. Being out of synch with the natural light-dark cycle can lead to sleep problems and affect cognitive function, eating habits and hormone release.

Some of these health conditions can be alleviated with exposure to daylight. There is evidence of the effectiveness of light treatments, e.g., for mood disorders and circadian sleep-wake rhythm disorders. Nevertheless, the exact mechanisms for the effects of light still need to be fully understood. While we do not know all the potential applications of daylight for human health yet, it is crucial to translate the available knowledge on daylight and human health into applicable treatment solutions.

The recently launched research platform, enabled by funding of Velux Stiftung, aims to address this question. It consists of three collaborative modules with overlapping interests that are at the same time different in their goals and approaches. One module will study the biological mechanisms triggered when light hits the eye and takes a basic science approach. Another module will bring existing knowledge on daylight into real-life application, specifically for older people. The data and insights collected outside the lab will feed back into the basic science approach. The third module aims to develop clinical applications based on the current knowledge about the effects of light on human health.

"Light has a profound influence on humans. Understanding how to harness it to support health and well-being across the lifespan is a key priority."

Manuel Spitschan, Lead CVN Module