

# Preface

## Editorial Note

*Dear Reader,*

you are holding in your hands the newest edition of JUnQ (or more likely you are looking at it on your screen). In this issue we wanted to focus on science under difficult conditions and encountered some difficulties ourselves on the way.

Let's face it, although scientists from Europe and the US like to complain about cuts in funding, our situation could be far worse. In this issue of JUnQ we wanted to explore how science is impacted by difficult conditions like war and poverty. Ludwig Kammesheidt provides us with an insight into cooperations with developing countries from Asia and Oceania launched by the BMBF (German Ministry of Education and Research) on page XX. In his essay on page XXII, Eike Harden takes a look into the life of some famous scientists during the Thirty Years' War and on page XXVI we are exploring the role of the German Physical Society during World War II.

It was less easy for us to find researchers who are actually working under difficult conditions, and were willing to give us an interview. We talked to people from Iran, who were afraid that sharing their view on the situation of the Iranian scientific community and how sanctions impact scientific work in Iran might have severe ramifications for them or their family members. We were writing emails to researchers from Cambodia to gain a deeper understanding of how researchers in developing countries deal with their limited budgets and how they think the situation could improve. But after a few replies they stopped writing us and we were not able to contact them anymore. Trying to get a more general overview regarding the situation of developing countries we turned to the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). And while there is a lot of data available on money spent on higher education, basic research as well as research and development all over the world (OECD Science, Technology and Industry Scoreboard 2013 or Main Science and Technology Indicators, Volume 2013 Issue 2), the data is lacking or simply not available in many developing countries.

This of course makes sense, most developing countries are not members of the OECD and there are probably a lot of countries that rather spend money on other areas than statistics about their research budgets. But for us it was nevertheless frustrating to find there is so little information on our cover topic. So making a JUnQ issue about science under difficult conditions turned into making a JUnQ issue under difficult conditions.

Well, I guess when you think about it, it was only a matter of time before the Journal of Unsolved Questions runs into questions it can not provide an answer to; or at least an idea for a solution. After all, the Unsolved Questions are what we are all about.

Speaking of unsolved questions, Wolter Seuntjens has looked at the praying gestures of Mother Mary and Mary Magdalene in many paintings from different bible scenes (page 18) and asks himself (and us) is there a special meaning in how these two biblical figures pray?

Natascha Gaster, Jorge S. Burns and Michael Gaster look into the problem of co-author overflow and ask if the new ICMJE (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors) recommendations will help to keep authorship to people who contributed significantly to scientific articles (page 16).

We also have a follow-up on the topic of our last issue (Quality in Science). In our section „Views on Life, the Universe, and Everything“ Prof. Dr. Rainer Stark shares his views on the „Quality of Quality Systems“ (page 28).

Here at JUnQ we are going again through a phase of change. Older members are finishing their PhD and starting to leave us. It is also with this issue, that our editor in chief Andreas Neidlinger is going back to just being a regular editor to focus more on his PhD thesis and I want to thank him for all the hard work he has put into the journal in the last years. But it's not all bad news. New members in the editorial board are bringing in fresh ideas and we cannot wait to see how JUnQ is going to evolve in the future. For the next issue Kristina Klinker and myself will be taking over the role of editor in chief. We hope we can carry on Andreas' spirit and continue to emphasize the importance of negative results in the scientific process.

We are also very happy, to welcome new members to our editorial board. Philipp Heller, Marita Metzler, Nicola Reusch and Katharina Stockhofe will join us and will aid us in our quest to develop and improve JUnQ.

I hope you will enjoy our newest issue and I wish you pleasant reading,



— David Huesmann