

# This is (not) Rocket Science!

Citizen Scientists as Mission Control  
Technisches Museum Wien

***This is (not) Rocket Science!*** forms an institutional platform for researching and helping to shape future issues in space science. The starting point is that today's children and young people will be directly affected by today's *space science* in adulthood. That is why they are already becoming *Citizen Scientists*: they are researching in their very own interest, formulating their needs, creating visions, questioning forecasts, and thus becoming self-empowered experts of their own future. During workshops, in discussions or design units at Technisches Museum Wien, they become familiar with thematic focal points, visit players of *space science* in Austria or meet young scientists. ***This is (not) Rocket Science!*** puts a critical perspective on issues such as democratisation, commercialisation, equal treatment, and space protection. The project is open-ended and the research results will also be communicated to the general public: there will be a blog accompanying the project and a large exhibition on *space architecture* (to be realised in 2027) will include project results.

The cooperation with the Bildungsgrätzl in Vienna's 15th district makes it possible to work with children and young people of all ages (from kindergarten to secondary school) and from different socio-economic backgrounds from a peripheral area of Vienna. The cooperation with the Federal Institute for the Blind brings in special expertise: Here, the young Citizen Scientists are already experts in designing their own living worlds and implementing them in everyday life.

Impulse questions for the research process with the children and young people are: What will commercial space travel bring? Will there be habitats and biospheres on the Moon and/or Mars, who is allowed and wants to live there? Is some kind of colonisation of space imminent? Will we be able to export our collective memory and if so, what of it? Will we also export pollution into space? Who will be allowed to research, design, build, co-design and control? Where are the women in space travel? What do we want to know from satellites, what information should they send us? What can we learn from work processes in space travel, how does collaborative work function? Finally, what does "quality of life" actually mean on Earth or elsewhere?

Answers to these and other questions form the core of the project, which aims to explore socio-technological questions for the future. With the expertise of children and young people, new scientific research questions and fields of action are developed and communicated both within the scientific community and publicly.