

**Sparkling Science project launch:
Colonialism today!? What does that have to do with me?**

“Sparkling Science 2.0” is a citizen-science initiative funded by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF) aimed at actively involving school students of all ages as well as civil society in research processes. Ensuring that students and adults are more involved in research processes will contribute significantly to deepening the dialogue between research and society and improve students’ skills in the areas of scholarly work and lifelong learning. The cooperation between research, schools and society also makes a significant contribution to promoting a trend reversal in Austria in terms of heightening the social appreciation of research and innovation. The NHM Vienna is currently involved in three Sparkling Science projects. Organised jointly by Educult, an institution providing empirical research and consulting in the areas of culture and education, trafo.K, a Vienna-based agency devoted to art-education and critical knowledge production, Viennese secondary-school students and the NHM Vienna, the project explores the connections between a natural history collection, its exhibition at the Natural History Museum Vienna and colonialism. While the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy never attained the status of a colonial power, natural history exhibits that are on display in Austria today were also acquired during colonialist times and in colonised territories. In recent years, the researchers at the NHM Vienna have devoted increasing attention to the colonial origin of the museum’s own collection.

The objective of the Sparkling Science project “Colonialism today!? What does that have to do with me?” is to explore with students the links between colonial contexts and current issues such as biodiversity or global inequality.

The students’ attendance at the Maori repatriation ceremony serves as the kick-off event for the project. In the course of the coming two years, the students will also explore the current Brazil exhibition and reflect on Brazil’s colonial past and the impact still felt today. Building on these reflections, the project intends to give rise to new ideas. The second part of the project is dedicated to the interactive possibilities of communicating the colonial connections of a natural history exhibition in the museum. In this context, the students will be invited to develop their own new ways of conveying educational content at Deck 50 – the NHM Vienna’s innovation and experimentation venue – and to create a guideline for dealing with colonial contexts together with the museum’s team of educators.

More information:

[https://www.sparklingscience.at/de/show-project.html?--typo3_neos_nodetypes-page\[id\]=1319](https://www.sparklingscience.at/de/show-project.html?--typo3_neos_nodetypes-page[id]=1319)