

Creative Hub



**A look back at
eight years of pioneering
work in promoting
the creative industries**

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Preface

The time has come. Creative Hub closes the curtain at the end of this calendar year. After eight years of intensive work in the service of a good cause: the promotion of Swiss creatives. It's a pity that the end comes at a time when creative and entrepreneurial action is more important than ever.

How do you support creative professionals effectively? Creative Hub has found answers to this question that will serve as a model well beyond its time.

A focus on entrepreneurship: nothing motivates you more than success with your own project. When the first products arise from ideas, customers are gained, the first wages can be paid, and a company is born. Creative Hub's clear commitment to an economic approach enabled effective support. It's about giving motivated creative people access to the market as quickly as possible, and to accompany them on their first steps towards independence.

The success of practical knowledge: the diversity of the projects supported was impressive. What they all had in common was that the path from creative to entrepreneur was often led through unknown territory. With a large network of experienced experts, it was possible to convey the relevant inputs and experiences to every project. Coaches and coaching participants formed a community of success and had one goal: a convincing presentation in the market.

From basic to top-level promotion: promotional programs should initially be accessible to as many as possible, for example, in the form of training modules or network events. This allows them to get to know each other, impart the basics or even assess potential. However, in order to bring a business idea to final market maturity, very intensive support is required. This requires focus on only a few projects. In addition to talent and ability, the will to create something outstanding becomes a decisive criterion.

Creative Hub has understood how to set up an effective and efficient system for promoting talented creatives in a short period

of time. The fact that this was possible is due, on one hand, to the chosen approach. On the other hand, it was because of the large number of people who were involved in various functions for the association. The result is a loose network of knowledge and experience to promote creative people, which is unique in Switzerland. For this, we issue a big THANK YOU to all contributors.

The work of Creative Hub has helped many creative people to make the dream of having their own company come true. But it has also advanced the creative industry as a whole and demonstrated its importance in the economy and society. Last but not least, Creative Hub itself is a wonderful example of how success stories can be written thanks to a vision, a committed team and a convincing offer.

Without financial support from numerous partners, it would never have been possible to offer this extensive program of activities over a period of eight years. Particularly noteworthy is the Migros Pioneer Fund, which has accompanied Creative Hub from the start for almost the entire duration of its activity and made the project possible at all.

The fact that Creative Hub project is now coming to a close in no way detracts from the achievements made. As a society, however, we are called upon to answer the question of the importance and role of a lively and economically successful creative scene again.

**Creative Hub Board
Creative Hub Office**

Creative Hub – Facts & Figures

The non-profit organization Creative Hub has been helping Swiss creatives since 2013 to make innovative product and business ideas usable—economically, ecologically or socially. In addition to professional training modules and networking events, the offer also included access to a top-class network. With these three building blocks, Creative Hub established an effective access system to the market for talented creative people.

Coaching

The focus of Creative Hub's activities was on individual 1-on-1 coaching. Since the association was founded, Creative Hub has supported creative professionals in realizing promising business ideas through coaching. The core of Creative Hub was the network of experienced coaches and experts.

Figures

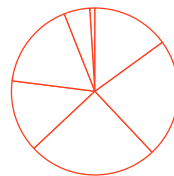
70+ coaches
284 creative projects supported
348 creative professionals supported
1100+ coaching sessions

Target Group

While the focus of promotion when it was founded was still on design, projects from all areas of the creative industries have been supported since 2016. Most of the participants in the programs were university graduates with entry-level work experience or on their way to self-employment.

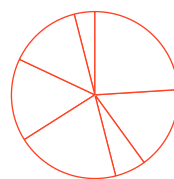
Impact

The aim of Creative Hub was to further promote the professionalization of the creative scene and to offer an effective business catalyst for innovative creative companies. Through coaching, the business skills of creative professionals could be promoted in a targeted manner, and they could be strengthened in their work. As a national promotion platform, the network concept was an important part of all the offers.



Goals of the Participants

- 25% Improve Marketing
- 23% Develop the Business
- 17% Professionalize the Business
- 15% Move toward Self-Employment
- 14% Clarify the Sustainability of an Idea
- 5% Scale the Business
- 1% Other



Impact

- 24% With the help of Creative Hub, I was able to improve the quality of my project
- 19% By visiting Creative Hub, I have enough self-confidence to implement my project
- 16% With the imparted content, my project could be made ready for market
- 16% The Creative Hub network established important contacts for my project
- 15% I benefited from the exchange between program participants
- 6% Without Creative Hub, my project would have been difficult to implement
- 4% Other

The Timeline of Creative Hub

2013

Founding

In June 2013, Creative Hub was presented to the public for the first time at Design Miami in Basel. The mission was to help designers advance their product, service and business ideas and bring them to the market.

But how did Creative Hub actually come about? In 2013, the topic of targeted promotion of art and design in the direction of entrepreneurship in other countries had long been running. Favorable conditions finally accumulated with Claudia Acklin, co-founder and former managing director of Creative Hub:



“Many years ago I had the luxury of being able to freely develop a new bachelor’s degree at the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts. The only two conditions at the time: It should not compete with the existing courses and should be held in English so that it would also be of interest to international students. To do this, I went to the limits of design, to where it intersects with entrepreneurship. The young design managers, whom we trained from then on, thought and implemented design and processes in a corporate context. But even if that was new for Switzerland at the time, art and design were never far from entrepreneurship. It became important for designers and artists when they started their own business or founded a micro-company with colleagues. It was therefore only logical that a few years later we launched a pilot project that aimed to support graduates

with the launch of their products. The project was successful, and I must have told a few people about it; possibly at a so-called round table, to which Beco, the Berne Economic Office, invited the Design Cluster of the canton of Bern once a year. The Swiss Design Prize, the Federal Office of Culture and the Bern Design Foundation were all present. From there, the spark must have jumped over to Engagement Migros.”

The Migros Pioneer Fund, at that time still under the name Engagement Migros, was a founding partner of Creative Hub. Migros founder Gottlieb Duttweiler made the idea behind this unique commitment to society one of the company’s guiding principles back in the middle of the 20th century. Since 2012, the Migros Pioneer Fund has been tracking down pioneering ideas and supporting pioneers: with bold plans and concrete solutions—not only financially, but also with advice and support. It was the same at Creative Hub back in the summer of 2013. Britta Friedrich, Head of Projects at the Migros Pioneer Fund, looks back:



“The Migros Pioneer Fund has supported Creative Hub from the start and for a total of seven years. Launched in 2012 under the name Engagement Migros, the new Migros funding vessel—in addition to the Migros Culture Percentage—was intended to open up additional funding areas. At that time, design was one of the first subject areas of the Migros Pioneer Fund and was developed in close cooperation with the Federal Office of Culture and the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia. The experience gained in setting up and supporting Creative Hub also had a significant impact on the later design

of the Creation & Market funding priority. [...] Although we knew, at least since the early 2000s and not least thanks to Richard Florida, about the economic importance of design and creativity, at that time the creative process was primarily promoted. Creative Hub embarked on a new path: Its aim was to strengthen designers in Switzerland entrepreneurially, to help them enter and establish themselves on the market in order to make them more resilient and economically more independent.”

The vision at the time was a national promotion platform that supports creative entrepreneurs effectively and in a targeted manner. Claudia Acklin recalls:

“Design was one of the focal points that people wanted to focus on at the time. [...] The aim was to establish a national organization that should be present in all regions of the country. Not an easy undertaking in a country that is also federalist in terms of culture. That means, coordination between stakeholders and the development of a network were everything... In no time at all and by means of many trips to all three parts of the country, we were not only able to gain a good and balanced advisory board for the Creative Hub, but also make an attractive offer. We were not only looking for ideal support but also material support from coaches from the fields of design and entrepreneurship all over Switzerland.”

From August 2013, Creative Hub, which was based in Bern but was active on a national level, offered various promotional programs, workshops and events that were tailored to the needs of designers and their markets. After a kick-off event in Bern, the new experts present realized that targeted, national promotion of the creative industries has potential!

The First Calls

The Creative Link program was at the heart of Creative Hub’s promotional activities. The program offered individual, free 1-on-1 coaching on business topics for designers who wanted to promote and capitalize on a mature product or service idea. The first season of Creative Link started in August 2013 with 10 participants, and 11 more seasons followed over the next six years. The program was advertised twice a year until 2019 and over 200 creative professionals benefited from this program. kollektiv vier, today a renowned, internationally active design studio, was one of the first supported projects:

“We really appreciated the expert coaching provided by the Creative Link. We got knowledge and concrete tools with which we could work and still work with today. For example, the founding agreement among us founders. We are still working with this contract today. We adapt it every year and it gives us the framework to talk in detail about our goals, wishes and needs.”



Fig: kollektiv vier, shower curtain GARDEN EDEN - Participants in Creative Committed & Creative Link (Photo: Primula Bosshard)

[→ Link to the project](#)



Fig: Søren Henrichsen (Søren Henrichsen Design Studio) with his cuckoo clock HANSRUEDI - Participant in Creative Link (Photo: Niels Ackermann)

[→ Link to the project](#)

The promotion of economic thinking in the creative industries was essential for many designers, for example, for Søren Henriksen:



“Creative Hub and its coaching helped me to translate my entrepreneurial wishful thinking into reality. I focused on fewer products, but sold them well. This enabled me to stick to my budget and achieve new goals such as Maison et Objets in Paris. Creative Hub was one of the few institutions that understood ‘creative’ business development. Being creative is good, but that’s not enough if you can’t make a living from it!”

Georg Fontana, product designer, Creative Hub coach from the very beginning and board member of Creative Hub, sees great advantages in the coaching offer of Creative Hub:

“Thanks to the large selection of coaches, Creative Hub enables participants to bring their product ideas to market maturity. The participants get the opportunity to test their ideas 1 to 1 with experienced coaches from different industries and to develop them further. From there, one can draw on extensive know-how and network. The coaches also give the participants an insight into their professional lives and share their experiences. The participants can benefit from Creative Hub on various levels and develop themselves further.”



Fig: First workshop day of Creative Committed on 14.11.2014 in Bern with Claudia Acklin (Photo: no credits)



Fig: Radix-Glas by Rahel Koller (Glaslabor) - Participant in Creative Committed & Creative Link (Photo: Lea Moser)

[→ Link to the project](#)

The second pillar of the Creative Hub promotional program was the Creative Committed program. While Creative Link was aimed more at advanced projects, Creative Committed was the ideal introductory course for creative entrepreneurs: a course for people or teams who were building their own brand around a product or service idea, rethinking their business activities or wanting to expand their product range. The originally 9-month (later 6-month) workshop was led in small groups (spread over one day per month) from idea to business model to business plan and ended with an assessment by experts. A total of 9 seasons of the Creative Committed program were advertised until 2019. Over 100 creative professionals attended the program. Rahel Koller, founder of the Glaslabor, was one of the first to take part in the Creative Committed program:

“For me, as an absolutely inexperienced person in the creative industries, this course was exactly the right thing to help me get an idea of what I was getting into when I wanted to design, manufacture and market my own products. The exchange with the other participants showed me in a good way that I am not the only one who wants to get a little idea off the ground. From these first points of contact with the industry or, perhaps better, this community, new contacts and initial sales opportunities arose. Since then, as the owner of the small label Glaslabor, I have persistently followed my own path.”

2014

Access to the Network and Know-how for Swiss Creative Professionals

After the successful start, interest in the promotional programs and the entire network of Creative Hub grew continuously. In order to respond to the needs of the community, from 2014 Creative Hub offered subject-specific workshops for the broad creative community in addition to the two main promotional programs. The workshops were open to the public and could be attended for little money. Various experts gave input on topics such as online marketing, web shops and crowdfunding.

Lela Scherrer, fashion designer and board member of Creative Hub, emphasizes the importance of this exchange for young talents:



“Coaching by experienced designers, who have been active in the market with their creative work for a long time and who assert themselves, is something extremely valuable for both young and experienced designers. Critical questioning and reflection on creative as well as entrepreneurial processes by design professionals ideally belong periodically to everyday life.”



Fig: The summer sledge U-Sled by Pierre Naveau (ALPN Design) - Participant in Creative Link (Photo: Marco Quandt)

[→ Link to the project](#)

In addition to imparting knowledge and individual coaching, another main concern of Creative Hub was to provide young creative professionals with access to networks and visibility and to raise awareness of the topics of the creative scene among the general public. For this, Creative Hub was able to continuously win new network and event partners: it was always a principle of Creative Hub to work with like-minded people in order to bundle resources and

use interfaces. Creative Hub cooperated in various formats with various platforms such as Design Day Basel, Designers' Saturday, Forward Festival and many others.

And with the Stammtisch, or round table, Creative Hub also brought designers closer to one another. The new event format started in autumn 2014 with the aim of promoting and strengthening networking among creative people. The format enabled an informal exchange between creative professionals in order to establish new relationships and expand the network. The round tables were held regularly in various Swiss cities from November 2014 onwards. Around a dozen round tables have been held in various cities in Switzerland over the past few years. Pierre Naveau, founder of ALPN Design and participant in various Creative Hub programs, very much appreciated this offer:

“When I started the ALPN design project, I was self-employed for the first time. The get-togethers were like fresh air for me: the opportunity to share experiences and get inspiration.”



2015

Creative Platform: Analog and Digital Platforms for Creative Work

The awareness of the relevance of e-commerce, especially among small entrepreneurs with niche products, has existed since the association was founded. To provide even greater support in this area, Creative Hub launched a digital showcase on its website in May 2015. The showcase presented products by young designers and linked directly to the designers' web shops. Creative professionals could come directly to their customers with furniture, jewelry, textiles, lights and bags from independent production without any intermediary trade.

But Creative Hub didn't just want to show creative work in the digital space. Various platforms for Swiss creative work should offer the creative community the opportunity to show their work to the general public, but also to network in a targeted manner and to come into contact with

fellow campaigners. Under the name Creative Platform, Creative Hub has presented annual exhibitions of products with market potential from the promotional programs at sales outlets and trade fairs since 2015. On December 6th 2014, the launch and opening celebration for the Creative Platform program took place in the stilhaus Rothrist under the motto Product and Personality. With this, Creative Hub drew attention to independent labels that were still looking for an audience beyond large trading houses and mass-produced goods.

Other Creative Platform events followed, for example at the Bauarena Volketswil, the Designgut Winterthur, Designschenken Luzern, the Design Days Geneva and many more.



Fig: First Creative Platform at the stilhaus Rothrist. Opening Event of Product and Personality on 6. December 2014 (Photo: Regula Staub)

2016

Interim Management and Matchmaking Events

In 2016 there was a change in the management of Creative Hub: At the end of February 2016, Claudia Acklin said goodbye as managing director and handed over the management to an interim managing director. One focus of the interim management was the connection between actors from business and the creative scene. Various matchmaking formats were developed in which Creative Hub brought creative professionals together with entrepreneurs. At the Designer meets Entrepreneur format, highly qualified partners met each other with different skills for a joint project implementation. The aim was to create complementary project teams made up of designers and business people. Designers and entrepreneurs with exciting project ideas or who were interested in participating in a start-up by contributing their own skills were invited. More than 30 designers and entrepreneurs took part in

the first event on June 23, 2016. The event was fully booked in a very short time and brought together new and established talent. Further Designer meets Entrepreneur events followed over the years.



Fig: Designer meets Entrepreneur Event at Le LAB in Lausanne on 5. October 2016 (Photo: Regula Staub)



Fig: The Mymic protective mask designed by Laure Gremion and Team Mymic - Participants in Creative Business Coaching (Rendering: Camille Bechet)

[→ Link to the project](#)

After the great success of Designer meets Entrepreneur, another matchmaking format was launched: Designer meets Co-Founder. Designers met possible co-founders. In the Creative Hub environment, there have always been many designers who have developed great business ideas and products. Often, however, they need a complementary co-founder who takes care of sales, marketing and administration, for example. The designer Laure Gremion was one of the participants and remembers:

“I had a lot of fun participating in this event. I find the concept and the format absolutely brilliant! It’s a golden opportunity to meet entrepreneurs and expand our network. It was also great that Creative Hub was organizing this event in the French-speaking part of Switzerland! Thank you again 1000x for coming to us!”

Fig: Creative Business Cup Swiss Final at the Criterion in Zürich on 31. March 2019 (Photo: Alain Appel)



Design Seed Consulting: Design as a Cross-Industry Discipline

Outside of the creative scene, design has also become a bigger topic. Design Seed Consulting launched by Creative Hub in 2016 supports classic start-ups outside the creative scene by integrating design into their strategy. In cooperation with Pibiri & Reich, Creative Hub offered workshops in which young companies were viewed from a design perspective. With a user-centered and holistic approach, understandable, accessible and desirable products and services would be created. The offer comprised various workshops on the subjects of Strategy & Identity, Corporate Design & Marketing Communication and Product & Service Design. The Design Seed Consulting program brought classic start-ups together with the design scene in order to create collective added value. Pibiri & Reich on Design Seed Consulting:



“The biggest misunderstanding when creating beautiful products is the belief that the focus is on the object and not the person. But human centered design is a discipline that not only affects the creative industries. The aim of Design Seed Consulting was to bring corresponding inputs into other industries.”

2017

Securing Transitional Financing and Partnership with Creative Business Cup

Creative Hub had successfully mastered its own start-up and development phase. More than 80 Swiss design start-ups were already supported on their way to independence through coaching, training, workshops and joint marketing of innova-

tive products until the beginning of 2017. Recognizing this achievement, the Migros Pioneer Fund kindly extended the funding phase at Creative Hub by three valuable years. An important milestone for the interim management: Because, as Creative Hub is a non-profit organization, it was a constant challenge to establish financial sustainability in the medium to long term.

In the next phase, Creative Hub set out on its way to independence, with the aim of finding new sponsors, revenue models and a suitable form of organization so that the offer could serve design and creative professionals in the long term. The Migros Pioneer Fund continued to support Creative Hub financially and in an advisory capacity in order to continue promoting creative innovation.

Swiss creative innovation was also promoted beyond national borders: With increasing globalization, the world was getting smaller and smaller; and Switzerland would soon be too small for many creative professionals. In order to make it easier for creative start-ups to gain access to the international market, Creative Hub created various platforms abroad and established partnerships with international creative organizations.

In 2017, for example, Creative Hub became the national partner of the Creative Business Cup in Switzerland. The Creative Business Cup is a global network and competition for innovative companies from the creative industries. The aim of the Creative Business Cup: to bring together creative start-ups from all over the world, to network them with investors and to promote international exchange.

Creative Hub, as the national partner of Switzerland, has chosen a winner every year since 2017 in a national preliminary round. The national winner then took part in the global final in Copenhagen. At the global Creative Business Cup Finals, the national winners from over 80 countries competed and pitched their business concepts in front of an international jury of experts.

2018

Change in Management and Realignment

After two years in management, the interim managing director ended his work as planned and handed over management to Regula Staub at the beginning of 2018, who was already introduced in 2017. As a qualified art historian with a master's degree and a qualified textile designer, she had been a member of the Creative Hub family from day one and therefore knew the network very well. In February 2018, Jakob Blumer joined the team as an assistant, and in June he took on the role of deputy managing director.

Regula Staub decided to realign it in autumn 2018 and looks back:



“The tasks in spring 2018 were challenging. Within a few months, a six-figure funding amount would need be acquired in order to secure the future of Creative Hub in the medium term. In two intensive months, with over 100 contacts, 36 discussions and numerous trips across Switzerland, six new partners were finally found and the necessary funding amount was just barely exceeded. The motivation to make Creative Hub fit for the future and to restructure it accordingly was therefore great. In the late autumn of 2018, the board was reassembled and the focus was on further development of Creative Hub promotional programs. With further development, an optimization of Creative Hub offers was sought, whereby the experiences from the past 5 years would flow into the promotional process. There was potential for modification. All offers were carried out

as before until spring 2019, but in the background the office was working flat out on the relaunch, the development of a new call for proposals and the associated operational and visual adjustments. In principle, the realignment and optimization of the promotional program was linked to the desire to cooperate more intensively with similar institutions within the Swiss funding landscape. For example, Creative Hub succeeded in entering into and successfully implementing collaborations with the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland (Swiss Cultural Challenge), the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (Digital Ideation) and Design Biennale Zurich.”

2019

The New Program: Creative Business Coaching

Committing itself to promoting broad support in the Swiss creative industries since it was founded in 2013, the focus in 2019 was shifted to promoting excellence, analogous to the development and change in the creative industries. A few outstanding business ideas were promoted even more specifically and intensively. The aim was to bring the more or less raw business ideas to market maturity and retail in a process accompanied by coaches and experts and through networking with relevant economic actors.

With this decision, the previous promotion offers Creative Link and Creative Committed were discontinued.



Fig: Pitch Day of Creative Business Coaching on 12. July 2019 (Photo: Daniel Frei)

The newly launched Creative Business Coaching program offered tailor-made coaching support over the course of a year. The selected projects were supported along their way with up to 16 coaching sessions, networking opportunities, trade fair cooperations and a wide range of additional offers. Varia Instruments, coachee from the first promotional series, really appreciated this offer:

“Creative Hub’s promotional offer is very flexible and was therefore able to respond individually to our wishes and needs. The opportunity to work on our concerns with professionals helped a lot and gave us many valuable advantages in a complex market. We enjoyed the coaching on various topics. This helped us and strengthened us where we had some catching up to do. These experiences are valuable and help us again and again, until today!”



Fig: DJ Mixer RDM40 by Varia Instruments -Participant in Creative Business Coaching (Photo: Florian Spring)

[→ Link to the project](#)



The Migros Pioneer Fund closely accompanied the realignment, as the collaboration between the Pioneer Fund and Creative Hub, which was limited to six years, ended with it. At the same time, the end of this fruitful partnership for Creative Hub also meant that new partners had to be found for the long-term continuation of the offer. Britta Friedrich explains:

“Creative Hub’s offering has been continuously developed and adapted. Programs were set up, expanded or replaced. In 2019, Creative Hub reacted to the changing market environment with a repositioning. Instead of broad promotion, the focus was now on providing long-term support for selected creative professionals in the development and implementation of their business projects as part of comprehensive mentor and training programs. The focus here was on increasing the effectiveness of the programs. At the same time, this strategic switch offered the opportunity to check whether a long-term establishment of a design promotional program is possible. While the latter unfortunately did not come true, the reorientation towards the promotion of excellence can be rated as a success: a total of 16 actors have benefited from the extensive accompanying program of the last two years and are now well equipped to establish their ideas on the market.”

2020

Maintaining the largely free offer of Creative Hub required strong partners. Despite an intensive search in 2019 and 2020, no partners could be found who could replace the departure of the Migros Pioneer Fund as a funding partner and give Creative Hub long-term prospects. The federal funding structures in Switzerland and the situation surrounding the corona pandemic made the situation more difficult. Consequently, Creative Hub decided to discontinue the

offer at the end of 2021. The available funds would still be used for supported projects. The offer would be maintained or optimized until the end of 2021.

International Platforms

The optimization of the programs also consistently included the creation of new opportunities and platforms for Swiss creative professionals. Thanks to the constantly growing international network of Creative Hub a cooperation with the Yangtze River Delta International Cultural Industries Expo 2020 in Shanghai, for example, could be realized in 2020. China is playing an increasingly important role in the global (creative) market and China offers many opportunities, especially for creative professionals. Together with swissnex China, Presence Switzerland and Pro Helvetia, Creative Hub therefore presented a selection of highlights from the Swiss creative industry at the Yangtze River Delta International Cultural Industries Expo 2020. Due to the corona pandemic, the exhibition combined digital and analog formats. Regula Staub explains:



Fig: The project Bring Your Own Mask (BYOM) curated by HyperAktiv at the Yangtze River Delta International Cultural Industries Expo 2020 in Shanghai (Photo: MATERIALISE)

[→ Link to the project](#)

“Over the years, the network has expanded across national borders. For example, the office has set up an international advisory board. The feelers were not only stretched across Europe, but also far to the East, to Shanghai. For example, after my trip to China in 2019, a cooperation with swissnex China, Presence Switzerland and Pro Helvetia was initiated, which enabled some Swiss start-ups to participate in the Yangtze River Delta Creative Cultural Expo in 2020.”

included in the coaching program. Creative Hub is leaving the Swiss promotional scene, but has shaped it over the long term as a pioneering project and trailblazer. In retrospect, Regula Staub rates it as extremely gratifying that the creative industry is enjoying a different status than it was eight years ago and that the thread was taken up by other institutions:

“Creative Hub helped to establish awareness of the economic and cultural importance of a lively creative industry. It favors unconventional solutions and strengthens the innovative strength of the economy as a whole. This is now proven and corresponding promotional offers are a matter of course.”

2021

After eight years of sponsorship, Creative Hub ended its activities on December 31, 2021. Three seasons of Creative Business Coaching could be carried out. The program was very well received, over 150 applicants responded to the announcement of the program, and 16 teams were



Fig: Read On, the iPhone-Case with integrated reading glasses – Team Read on, Participant in Creative Business Coaching (Photo: Nina Maria Glahé)

[→ Link to the project](#)



Conclusion

What conclusion can be drawn from eight years of support? What are the dos and don'ts of successful support? Various experts and network partners look back and take stock:

Nathalie Nyffeler, professor at HES, responsible for innovation and entrepreneurship, sees the focus on entrepreneurship in the creative scene as the great unique selling point and the merit of Creative Hub.



"The Creative Hub initiative, in which I have participated since its launch, plays a key role in the Swiss entrepreneurial landscape as it supports the development of innovative and entrepreneurial projects from the Swiss creative domain. Too often, innovation is understood only in a technological dimension, whereas young designers and artists propose innovations centred on uses, which are indispensable in today's world. It would therefore be appropriate that federal innovation support programmes take better account of the creative industries."

With this focus and its national presence, Creative Hub assumed a special position. The focus of coaching was always the person; coaching was individually tailored to the needs of the creative professionals. That was a big success factor of Creative Hub. Beatrice Bösch, CFO of the Creative Hub and board member, says:



"For the past eight years I have been part of the Creative Hub

team. For us, as a promotional initiative, it was a great satisfaction to see how many creative people managed to start their own businesses thanks to the individual coaching provided by Creative Hub. Contact with the network partners and the coaches with practical experience was not only extremely valuable for the motivated creative people, but also always interesting for me and gave me a lot of satisfaction."

This offer was unique of its kind. With the end of Creative Hub, there could be a lack of suitable promotional programs, especially for creatives with professional experience. Eva Pauline Bossow, Head of Transfer at the Zurich Centre for Creative Economies and expert at Creative Hub, sees this as follows:



"The range of project ideas was very wide from the start and Creative Hub played an important role as a professional partner and coach for young entrepreneurs in the creative industries throughout Switzerland. Unique in this independence and soon a blind spot. Basically, I experienced two groups at Creative Hub: the young, freshly trained, and the middle-aged (40+) with professional experience. Especially for the second group, which can no longer fall back on university offers, there is now no offer in the area of Cultural & Creative Entrepreneurship."

The creative industry as a whole is in a different place than it was eight years ago, and that's a good thing. Britta Friedrich emphasizes that Creative Hub has played its part with its work and has emphasized the importance of the creative industries and their eligibility for support.

“And so Creative Hub has also left its mark on the promotional landscape: profitability and support for economic sustainability have increasingly found their way into training and support in the industry. Creativity is a recognized economic and innovation factor today. Above all, creativity is one of the so-called future skills. It is a discipline that plays a key role in solving current challenges, and as such, it deserves support. Even if the chapter of Creative Hub is now closing, its success story will continue to be written.”

Cohesion in the creative industry itself, networking of the various actors and the possibilities for more effective lobbying, have all been major topics at Creative Hub since its founding. Claudia Acklin sees networking as the great strength of Creative Hub. At the same time, she regrets that support for the creative industries is still not coordinated at national level.

“In the first few years we also worked on a so-called coordinated cultural promotion at the national level, in which Creative Hub was an organization that did not support design and art in the actual sense, such as the Federal Office of Culture or Pro Helvetia, but the process that accompanies such work to make design products ready for the market. Looking back, I think: What made Creative Hub so successful, the networking of structures and actors, was in a certain way also its weakness. Today there (still) seems to be no coordinated cultural promotion in which the strengths and competencies for entrepreneurship are bundled in one place. This is a pity. But there is now a new mainstream: entrepreneurship courses and incubators at every university. That’s a good thing!”

And Regula Staub, too, would like to see stronger cohesion and less federalism in the creative industries in the future.

“It is extremely gratifying that in the area of promotion in Switzerland a lot has changed and moved in all sectors over the past eight years. Young entrepreneurs can choose from a wide range of high-quality funding opportunities. Despite the density of support, I still see shortcomings. In my opinion, the small-scale creative industries in Switzerland must network much better in the future and make more innovative use of the numerous interfaces that exist. Hopefully, the relevant federal authorities will better recognize that the creative and cultural industries produce relevant economic sectors for the future that meet the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and, ultimately, that the creative and cultural economy represents a great added value for a sustainable Swiss economy.”

Securing long-term funding for promotional initiatives remains a challenge.

Yannick Aellen, founder of mode suisse and advisor to Creative Hub, would also like to see more financial sustainability for the promotional initiatives themselves.



“Creative Hub is and was a great initiative, important and smart, connecting, showing what is really necessary, friendly and open, copied over and over and now unfortunately in the final spurt. I wish the creators of Creative Hub every success and fulfillment in their new tasks and I wish rich, supporting Switzerland to realize that promotional projects also need sustainable (i.e. long-term support) also in daily business, so that talent can fly.”

Either way, the work of Creative Hub has been met with great approval, even internationally. The networking of Swiss creative work and the creation of platforms in the international market will be missed, says Jens Nyman Christensen, formerly Deputy Director General for Education and Culture at the European Commission and Senior Advisor of the Creative Business Network.



“Creative Hub has been a very important voice for the creative industries in Switzerland. The support offered to startups and innovators in the creative industries has made a big difference and offered the opportunity for many Swiss based companies to develop a successful business model. Creative Hub has also grown over the years into a strong partner in the Creative Business Network, which today includes national partners in more than 85 countries on all continents. The closing down of Creative Hub will leave the Swiss community for startups and innovators in the creative industries poorer and the global network will miss a strong, dedicated and highly competent member.”

One thing is clear: Creative Hub has done pioneering work. It not only worked on a large scale and shaped the awareness of creative industries and the importance of their promotion, but it has also—and above all—worked on a small scale: Hundreds of creative professionals were able to benefit from the know-how of Creative Hub and are now on safe footing. Raphael Rossel, long-time colleague, main coach and advisory board member of Creative Hub, also sees it like this:



“In the eight years of its existence, Creative Hub has accompanied countless creative people into independence and success. With the most precious thing that a start-up can offer: know-how and experience from industry experts. Close to the cause and the people, Creative Hub offered a service that turned business ideas into viable projects and small businesses. Low-threshold, unpretentious and independent. In doing so, it was doing pioneering and fundamental work at the same time. Its end is a great loss for creative professionals.”



Figure: Creative Hub closing event on 2. December 2021 at the Kornsilu in Zurich. (Photos: Florian Spring)

Thank you

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