Amos Bairoch, biochemist

When I was little, I wanted to be an astronaut. When I realised I wasn't made out of the right stuff, I decided to become an astronomer. However, by the time I was 18, I had developed a keen interest in exobiology ! My parents looked on, bemused, and were delighted I was enjoying life and had found something that interested me.

I enjoyed my student life very much. In particular, the exchanges I had with fellow students and our endless discussions. One professor made a lasting impression on me, and that is Bernard Fulpius, whom I thank for sharing with me his passion for biochemistry.

Do I think there is something pushing me in a certain direction in life? Yes! But we can influence it… Despite my first hopes of becoming an exobiologist, I ended up as a biochemist and then, quite rapidly, I got involved in the world of bioinformatics. So you see...

If you want to do research, I think it is essential that you have a sense of humour, that you are both patient and impatient, curious and have the drive not only to learn but also to share knowledge. What I like most is creating something which is useful for many people and sharing it with them.

If I were to encourage a student to follow his or her aspirations, I would say:

"Don't listen to anyone else's advice. Just do what you want to do. It's your life!"