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Good Education – High Costs

Finance and diploma recognition are the main problems about studying in Switzerland. But there is usually a solution.

We are not in a position to say exactly how many Swiss Abroad are at present registered at universities and higher education institutions in Switzerland. But the number must be very high, since in the last twelve months alone

about 800 potential new students sought advice and information from AJAS (see Box).

Apart from general information on how to register, courses available, etc., the main problem dealt with is finance. This applies less to the actual cost of the courses as to board and lodging in Switzerland, which is much too expensive for many Swiss Abroad. Here is one example. Carlos Duran, the son of a Swiss mother and a Salvadoran father, grew up in El Salvador and is now studying

engineering at the Technical School in Horw, Lucerne. The parents are able to pay for the school materials, but no more – mainly because their earnings in El Salvador are much too low by Swiss standards. But Carlos Duran has received a scholarship from his canton of origin. Because his two brothers are also studying in Switzerland on similar scholarships, the three are able to live together and so reduce costs.

But there are also problems of language and diploma recognition. Carlos Duran had to learn German before he could start, and he had to adjust to a completely new mentality. After a one year practical course – compulsory for all high school-leavers – he had to spend half a year on a preparatory course for the Technical School's entry examination. University candidates must very often take preparatory courses to bring them up to Swiss entry standards. Attempts are still taking place to improve the degree of recognition of foreign diplomas, but this process has been slowed by Switzerland's No to EEA entry.

Nevertheless the idea of education in Switzerland is attractive to many Swiss Abroad. It may be because they would like to live and work in Switzerland; or – as in Carlos Duran's case – they may prefer "peaceful" Switzerland to the political and economic instability of their homelands and also want to obtain a degree from an internationally recognised higher education institute.

René Lenzin

SSA Youth Service

Ski camp 1993/1994



Those taking part in last year's camp at Splügen (Photo: SSA)

The two SSA ski camps both promise lots of fun in the snow with young people from all over the world. They take place at Christmas in Splügen/Grisons and at Easter in Grimentz/Valais. Young Swiss Abroad will be introduced to skiing and snowboarding, and beginners will get special attention. Optional programmes (cross-country, snowboard, curling, skating, free half-days, excursions, etc.) provide constant change of scenery.

Dates, Places

December 27, 1993 – January 5, 1994, Splügen, Grisons

April 1–10, 1994, Grimentz, Valais

Price: About Sfr. 600.– for each

camp, including ski pass, ski school and ski hire

Leader: Edith Locher, head of the SSA Youth Service

Conditions: Age 15–25. Mother or father must be a Swiss citizen.

Last application dates:

Splügen: November 15, 1993

Grimentz: February 2, 1994

To:

Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad Youth Service

Alpenstrasse 26

CH-3000 Berne 16

Tel: 41 31 44 66 25

Fax: 41 31 44 21 58

Only the first 60 applicants can be accepted!

AJAS

The Association for the Training of Young Swiss Abroad – better known as AJAS – has been providing professional and educational advice for the last 30 years. It answers about 1,000 new requests for advice every year, provides all necessary contacts and helps students in obtaining scholarships and other financial help. The AJAS Annual Report provides detailed information on these activities and may be obtained from:

AJAS

Alpenstrasse 26

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